

**EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE CHAIRPERSONS OF  
THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN THREE RURAL SCHOOLS: A  
LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE**

**School of Education  
College of Humanities  
University of KwaZulu-Natal**



A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements of a Master degree  
of Education in the field of Educational Leadership, Management and Policy

By

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December 2019

**DECLARATION**

I

**NOLUNDI DANDALA**

Do hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and the views of authors in my researcher have all been duly acknowledge and listed in the bibliography.

This research has not been submitted previously for a degree at this or another University

.....

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(Researcher)

.....

Date

## SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT

This dissertation has been submitted with ~~without~~ my approval.

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December 2019

## **ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**



13 March 2018

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Dear Mrs Dandala

**Protocol reference number: HSS/0204/018M**

**Project title: Exploring the experiences of female chairpersons of the School Governing Bodies in three rural schools: A leadership perspective**

**Full Approval – Expedited Application**

In response to your application received on 12 March 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has 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

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**100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

## DEDICATION

- Firstly, the acknowledgement goes to the Almighty God for keeping me alive and making everything possible for the completion of this study.
- I would also like to dedicate this work to my late brother Thobelike Isaac Futshane, I miss you so much and thank you for being a wonderful brother to me, you may not be here with me but you have been there for me.
- Finally, I dedicate this to my late mother Nongekho Futshane and my late father Teko Futshane who had never been to any formal school but who encouraged me to go to school. Thank you mother and father.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of female chairpersons of school governing bodies in rural areas when executing their leadership roles. It is hoped that the study contributes to the understanding of their experiences, the challenges that female chairpersons in rural areas encounter in their work and how they overcome them. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants of the study and it consisted of three female chairpersons of School Governing Bodies. It made use of qualitative approach, using case study methodology to generate data using semi-structured interviews with three female chairpersons of SGBs in three selected rural schools. Documents reviews was also used to triangulate data obtained through the semi-structured interviews. The study was located in the feminist theory. This theory provides an explanation about women under-representation in leadership positions. The main findings indicate that female chairpersons of the SGBs in these three rural schools experienced and internalised negative gender stereotypes as a strategy for survival. The participants expressed that men did not trust that women can hold positions similar to those of men and perform the activities that men do. The findings also revealed that gender inequality and discrimination between men and women still prevail.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

DoE	Department of Education
GPS	Green Primary School
DH	Departmental Head
LTSM	Learners and Teacher Support Materials
PPS	Pink Primary School
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
YPS	Yellow Primary School

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction

The study sought to explore the experiences of female chairpersons of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in their leadership positions in rural schools. The intention of this chapter is to introduce and provide the background to the study. In this chapter, I discuss the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the rationale for the study, significance and the objectives of the study, the critical research questions, the definition of key concepts and the structure of the study. This chapter concludes with a brief summary of the chapter.

#### 1.2 Background to the study

The issue of females in leadership and management positions in rural areas has been a subject of debate for a long time. Gender equality has been a debate in a number of countries, and literature reveals that gender differences has been a research focus for a number of years (see, Burns, 2007; Sperandio, 2011 cited in Parsaloi & Teryn, 2013). According to Ngcobo (2015), historically, South African females' especially African women, were disadvantaged in many ways. This is because females in rural areas were regarded as people who served as housewives and just looked after children. In patriarchal societies, where traditional patterns are linked with masculinities, these barriers may be greater in terms of customs and expectations of the male and female roles, and this precludes them from seeking senior positions (Faulkner, 2015). This study is aimed at exploring the experiences of female chairpersons of School Governing Bodies in rural schools. I have noted that, in some instances, a female chairperson of the School Governing Body in school is ill-treated by other members of SGB simply because of her gender. I have also noted that some people still hold stereotypes and do not yet believe that females can lead in the same way as men do.

Since the new era of democracy in South Africa came into being, the government has strived to promote equality and justice by correcting the imbalances of the past created by the apartheid system. Various policies and laws have been implemented in educational sector of which the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 is one of the most important policy.

Under this policy, the roles of parents in school governance has been clearly defined. For instance, Section

20 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, (henceforth, the Schools Act), determines various functions to all the SGBs in the country (Republic of South Africa, 1996). For example, SGBs may also request additional functions as listed in Section 21 of the Schools Act from the Head of Department (HOD) in each province (Republic of South Africa, 1996). It is unfortunate to note that 25 years after democracy in South Africa, there is still discrepancies in relation to female representation in school management and governance in top positions. In Africa in general, and in South Africa in particular, when it comes to gender equality, particularly, in terms of representation in public structures, the implementation of decisions relating to such matters have not yet been achieved. Drawing from my own experience, rooted in cultural and religious values, I can say without doubt that African societies are mainly dominated by males. Parsaloi and Steryn (2013) argue that the under representation of women in leadership positions in primary schools is common in many developing countries, thus raising issues of equity, social justice and sustainable development. This view is also maintained by Burns (2007) and Sperandio (2011) who argue that gender equality has been an issue in a number of countries, and studies reveal that gender differences have been a research focus for a number of years.

A liberal feminist perspective identifies and highlights a variety of inequalities between men and women in the workplace (Nandraj, 2003). Liberal feminists face these inequalities by fighting for equal opportunities for women. If war against women is won it is believed that, it will improve the position of females in various sectors and government's departments. This study's significance lies in its focus and approach of exploring experiences of female leaders in school governance structure, through the lens of female chairpersons of School Governing Bodies in rural schools. In the next section, I move on to present the statement of the problem arising from this brief background I have provided in this section.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

The phenomenon of gender based challenges faced by females in leadership position in South Africa is not an isolated case. The majority of African countries in general are still rooted into the culture that considers women as being inferior to men (Moorosi, 2010). In that regard,

Schmidt and Mestry (2015) indicate that South African researchers found that many South African female principals face triple oppression, namely race, class and gender. Although the constitution addresses gender equality, females in education sector still do not experience equal right in the practice. To compound the problem, very little is known about how such female leaders feel and experience discriminatory treatment from their fellow compatriots. This study attempts to close that gap. The exploration of the experiences of female chairpersons of School Governing Bodies in rural schools will provide a light to better understand the challenges faced by females in management and leadership positions in the education system.

#### **1.4 The rationale of the study**

Being a female person myself and a member of School Governing Body in a rural area, I have experienced injustice, inequality, and a lack of professionalism in a society that claims to strive for quality education, effectiveness and inclusion. I have been motivated by the story of a female chairperson of the Governing Body in one school. She has, on several occasions, been confronted by members of the community where the school is located, who had summarily judged her as not being able to hold the position of chairperson, apparently, because of her gender. This may be one of the recurring stories of gender stereotypes that some people hold dearly. These gender stereotypes often lead to women being undermined and treated unfairly (Moorosi, 2006). In that regard, Rarieya, (2015) argues that several negative factors hinder the advancement of female leaders and female leadership. These scholars (Moorosi, 2006; Rarieya, 2015) identify a number of factors that inhibit women leaders' advancement, and these include certain gendered perceptions of female's societal roles, men's dominant positions in organisations and females' negative self-perceptions of being leaders.

In my informal conversations with other teachers, they have expressed a view that female teachers, particularly those in management positions face injustice and inequality. This may be associated with patriarchy which is still dominant and accepted as a norm in many rural areas. It has become an accepted reality that females have to work harder with less rewards, they are thought of as less capable and have fewer favourable options to succeed (Moorosi, 2010; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis,2010). Realising that such narratives are still common in

rural areas, I found it important to explore why such injustices and inequalities persist, and how people directly affected by these feel about them.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The significance of this study may have numerous dimensions. For example, the findings of this study may assist in understanding some of the perceptions that females in leadership positions have about their work. The findings may also raise awareness about some of the daily gender challenges faced by females when working as leaders in School Governing Bodies. It can also help some policy makers to understand how far South Africa has moved toward promoting the rights of women and, perhaps, they may provide support for effective school governance in terms of gender equality and equity. The study may also provide deeper insights about why many female leaders still face an uphill battle in South Africa in terms of gender stereotypes. Such insights may engender an urgent need to change the misplaced perceptions of male who still consider women as inferior to their male counterparts.

### **1.6 Objectives of the study**

The objective of this study are as follows:

- To explore the experiences of female chairperson of School Governing Body.
- To understand how the female chairpersons of the School Governing Bodies deal with challenges they faced daily when doing their duties.

### **1.7 Critical Research questions**

The research questions flowing from the above are:

- What are the experiences of being a female chairperson of School Governing Body?
- How do female chairpersons deal with their challenges when doing their duties?

### **1.8 Definition of key Concepts**

There are three concepts that I define in this section, and this is because they constitute a backbone for the whole study. These concepts are female chairperson; rural schools and School Governing Body. They are defined next.

### **1.8.1 Female chairperson**

A female chairperson is the highest officer of an organised group such as a board, a committee, or a deliberative assembly (Herselma, 2003). The person holding the office is typically elected or appointed by the member of the group. In this study, a female chairperson refers to chairperson as defined in the School Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996), this person is elected for a period of 3 years holding the leadership position of the School Governing Body and more importantly, is a woman.

### **1.8.2 Rural schools**

There are various definitions of rural schools globally and in South Africa. According to Herselman (2003), rural schools in the South African context are those schools that faced imminence of inequalities and socio- economic challenges. The majority of rural communities have poor socio- economic background characterised by poor housing, poverty, unemployment and lack of fiscal power (Herselman, 2003). In this study, I use the term rural schools to refer to schools as defined by Herselman (2003). Therefore, I make no distinction between schools located in the land under the authority of traditional leaders as defined in the KwaZulu-Natal Traditional Leadership and Governance Act, No. 5 of 2005), and those that are not in such areas.

### **1.8.3 School Governing Body**

The School Governing Body (SGB) is according to the South African Act (Act 84 of 1996), a body that is required to make policy pronouncements on issues relating to the governance of schools in South Africa. These areas where SGBs have policy - making powers include admission policy, the language policy, rules about religious observances, a code of conduct for learners (the school rules and disciplinary policy implemented by the school), and the rights and responsibilities of school-based stakeholders. The School Governing Body is a

statutory body of parents, educators, non-teaching staff and learners (from Grade 8 or higher) who seek to work together to promote the well-being and effectiveness of the school community. This term is used in the sense described above, and as contemplated in the Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

### **1.9 Delimitation of the study**

The study focuses on female chairpersons of the SGBs in rural areas. Females play a significant role in our society including rural areas. Schools that are located in any other contexts are excluded from this study focus.

### **1.10 Outline of the study**

As this topic is about understanding the experiences of female chairpersons of the School Governing Body in rural area, I will be discussing the role of females in leadership position in rural areas, the issue of gender equality, gender equity and gender challenges they face when doing their duties of female chairpersons in schools. The first chapter also deals with specific issues relating to the background, the statement of the problem, the rationale of the study and other related issues.

Chapter Two focuses on literature review and the theoretical framework of the study. Definitions of key concepts such as the School Governing Body history, the composition and functions; the role of the School Governing Body chairperson; the challenges faced by the school governing body chairpersons and the gender inequality is discussed. This chapter closes with the theoretical framework and a short conclusion. Chapter Three discusses the research design and methodology. Chapter Four focuses on the presentation and analysis of data emphasising on the findings of this study. Finally, in Chapter Five, conclusions and recommendations are made.

## **1.11 Conclusion**

In Chapter One, I have briefly elaborated on why I sought to explore the experiences of female chairpersons of school governing body in rural areas. A concise background of the study was presented. The statement of the problem, the rationale and significance of the study were discussed. Objectives and critical research questions underpinning the topic, were also discussed.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the literature related to the School Governing Body in order to understand, contextualise and explain the experiences of female chairpersons of School Governing Body in three rural schools. It gives a better understanding of gender related challenges faced by females in leadership positions globally and locally in different contexts and societies. This chapter discusses the School Governing Body, its role and composition. It also discusses the role and powers of School Governing Body; the role of the chairpersons. This chapter further discusses the females who occupy leadership positions and the internal and external pressures they face and various challenges faced by females in management positions. It is also important to point out that a lot has been written about females in management and leadership positions but the focus is on gender differences and under-representation of females in management positions. To date, very little has been said about female experiences when working in managerial position in rural areas. The chapter ends with a brief conclusion.

#### 2.2 Definition of key terms

There are five terms that are defined due to their importance in driving this study. These are female chairperson, leadership, rural school, Rural Area and School Governing Body, and these are defined below.

##### 2.2.1 Female chairperson

A female chairperson is the highest officer of an organised group such as a board, a committee, or a deliberative assembly (Herselman, 2003). The person holding the office is typically elected or appointed by the members of the group. In this study, the female chairperson is the highest person, elected for a period of three years holding the leadership position of school governing body in terms of the provisions of the Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

### **2.2.2 Leadership**

The second term to be defined is leadership. Like many other terms, leadership is defined in varied ways. For instance, Early and Weanling (2004) define leadership as the activity of leading people, which implies that things are done through people, with the emphasis on relationships, communication, motivation and emotional intelligence. Gunter (2001) defines leadership as a process by which an individual or a leadership team drives a group of people to pursue the objectives of an organisation. Drawing from the above definitions, I use the term leadership and management in this study to refer to the activities that are performed by a person group of people in a position as a head of an organisation or department. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, I regard the chairperson of the School Governing Body as a leader who has to influence and drive the activities of the SGB to achieve its set goals.

### **2.2.3 Rural school**

As I highlighted in Chapter One, the term rural school has varied definitions internationally and even locally. One of the ways to define rural schools is to relate them to their geopolitical spaces, for example, to refer to schools that are located in lands under the jurisdiction of traditional leadership as defined in both the Traditional Leadership Framework Act, No. 21 of 2003 (Republic of South Africa, 2003) and the KwaZulu-Natal Traditional Leadership and Governance Act, No. 5 of 2005 (KwaZulu-Natal Legislature, 2005). However, according to Herselman (2003), rural schools in the South African context are those schools that faced immense inequalities and socio – economic challenges. The majority of rural communities have poor socio – economic background characterised by poor housing, poverty, unemployment and lack of fiscal power. In this study, I use the term rural school to refer to those schools described by Herselman (2003) above. This scholar’s description does not exclude those schools that are located in the areas under the control of traditional leaders.

### **2.2.4 Rural Area**

Rural areas comprise the people, land and other resources, in the open country and small settlements outside the immediate economic influence of major urban centres (Sharpely & Sharperly, 1977). Rural areas are often categorised as disadvantaged because they have the same deprivation characteristics as disadvantaged communities (Herselman, 2003). According Herselman, (2003) a disadvantaged a group or community is characterised by the lack of resources and face various barriers to socio-economic development.

#### **2.2.4 School Governing Body**

The School Governing Body (SGB) is according to the South African Schools act (Act 84 of 1996) a body that is required to make policies on issues related to the governing of the school. They have policy making powers on issues of learner admission, the language of learning and teaching, rules about religious observances, a code of conduct for learners (the school rules and disciplinary policy implemented by the school) and the rights and responsibilities of school-based stakeholders. According to Hartell et al. (2016), School Governing Body is a committee which is democratically elected to deal with the governance of a particular school (Department of Education 1996). They further state that in other words, the SGB is in effect the ‘government’ of the school, established in terms of the South African Schools Act (Act no 84 of 1996). The SGB is the official mouthpiece of the parents of the learners, the educators and the learners of the school on all matters other than those relating to the professional, administration and management of the school (Mahlangu, 2008). In this study the above-mentioned view forms the basis of the understanding and the application of the term. It is therefore, important that I briefly outline the history of school governance and the School Governing Bodies in South Africa.

#### **2.3 History of school governing bodies**

The concept of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) has a long political history in the South African context. Its roots are based on the idea expressed by the people of South Africa when the Freedom Charter was drafted and presented at Kliptown on 26 June 1955 (Eastern Cape DoE, 2012). For example, the first clause of the Freedom Charter begins with the word, “the people shall govern”. The notion of stakeholders governing in the country is captured in that statement.

During the apartheid era, the structures that were in place for purposes of school governance were referred to as school committees in certain entities of African communities, while in others, the term 'School Board' was used. These structures (School Committees) were dominated by school principals reporting directly to the government bureaucracy responsible for education (Mabasa & Themane, 2002). Prior to 1994, statutory school level structures did not exist, and structures that existed in some schools were known *inter alia*, as school committees, school boards, management councils and parent- teacher- student associations (Bagarette, 2011). According to Mabasa and Themane (2002), the dream of having an inclusive system was realised when the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) was passed two years after the advent of a post- apartheid government in 1994.

According to Bagarette (2011), with the introduction of the Schools Act, the shape was given to the guiding principles of education in South Africa; namely the principles of access, redress, equity and democratic governance (Bagarette, 2011). This democratisation of governance in education meant the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in a particular society in matters of school governance (Mbatsane, 2006), which did not take place in the past. Bush and Heystek (2003) maintain that the idea of introducing the SGBs in the Republic of South Africa after 1994 was the actualisation of the idea of community involvement. The Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996) mandates all public schools in South Africa to elect a School Governing Body as part of the governance structure in schools. At the heart of the Schools Act is the idea that parents need to "go back to school" and take responsibility for education of their children in partnership with the government. The Schools Act introduced a structure and measures that would oblige parents and schools to begin this partnership. It can be said that the enactment of the Schools Act started a new tradition in our schools, the tradition of governance. Unlike in the previous governance structures, the School Government Body was constituted differently and in an inclusive manner.

### **2.3.1 The composition of School Governing Body**

Bush and Heystek (2003) assert that the composition of South African School Governing Bodies is similar in most countries. For instance, the composition of School Governing

Bodies in England resembles that found in the South African School Governing Bodies in terms of its constituent stakeholders. For instance, Section 23 of the Schools Act clearly states that parents should make the majority of the members of the governing body of a school. The membership of the SGBs should consist of elected members, the school principals and co-opted members. Elected members of the School Governing Body are parents of learners at the school, educators at the school, members of the staff at the school who are not educators, and learners in the eighth grade or above. The National Guidelines for the SGBs (2012) define a parent as a biological parent, adoptive parent or legal guardian of a learner, or a person legally entitled to the custody of a learner, or the person who undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a parent or guardian towards the learner's education at school. An educator is a person who teaches, educates or trains other people, or who provides professional educational services, including professional therapy and educational psychological services at an institution (Eastern Cape Department of Education, 2012). Members of staff who are not educators refer to all institutional staff members appointed according to Public Service Act, No. 103 of 1994, who are not educators at the institution (Republic of South Africa, 1994).

The governance of a public schools is placed in the hands of parents and the principal of a school as stipulated in Section 16 of the Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996). According to Section 23(3) of the Schools Act, a parent who is employed at the school may not represent parents. This implies that parents who are employed at the school can only participate in the School Governing Body as representatives of educators or members of staff who are not educators. Parents must form the majority of members on the School Governing Body (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). The Schools Act also states that the number of parents in any SGB must be at least half plus one of the total combined number of members with voting rights (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). This is consistent with the requirement that parents in the SGB must constitutes a majority, and this is done to avoid domination of parents by other stakeholder, thus, ensuring that the power balance in the SGB remains with the parents (Karlsson, 2002). The Schools Act also indicates that people who are not parents of learners but are co-opted because of their expertise, and therefore, hold no voting rights.

### **2.3.2 Role and powers of the School Governing Body**

The role and powers of the School Governing Bodies are divided into ordinary roles, which all School Governing Bodies must perform, and allocated roles and powers, which are performed by School Governing Bodies that have been granted permission by the provincial Head of Department to perform. These SGB roles are subject to the provisions of Section 20 and Section 21 of the Schools Act, in terms of which, the SGB of a public school must, *inter alia*, develop a mission statement of the school. This means that the SGB with the participation of the school community should put in writing what they consider to be the direction, the purpose and the values underpinning the school's activities. Here, the School Governing Body should strive to make the mission statement representative of the views of the school community so that the mission statement can hold the school community together. In addition, the mission statement should set out the goals and shared values of the school. Among other functions, the SGB must adopt a Code of conduct for learners in a school after consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the schools. The Code of conduct cannot be in opposition to the South African Constitution Act, No. 108 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) or any other law passed by the National or provincial government (Motimele, 2005). This means that the School Governing Body cannot, for example, decide that they will use corporal punishment or that they will not allow pregnant learners to continue with their education. Another function is that the SGBs have to determine the admissions and language policy of the school within the framework laid down in the South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) and the South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). Such an admission policy cannot unfairly discriminate against any learner on the basis of gender, race, religion, language or social class (Motimele, 2005). The Schools Act further stipulates that it is the duty of the SGB to promote the best interests of the school by providing quality education for all learners. Furthermore, the Schools Act states that it is also the responsibility of the SGB to administer and control school property, buildings and grounds occupied and used by the school. The Schools Act also specifies that the SGB should determine the extra- curricular activities of the school and be fully involved in the procurement of the learner and Teacher Support Materials (LTSM) and non- LTSM.

It is crucial to highlight two specific roles mentioned in Section 20(1) of the Schools Act, which may be powerful for School Governing Bodies to improve the quality of education which is the promotion of the best interests of the school and to strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school, and to

support the principal, the educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions. Section 36 of the Schools Act, as well as, Section 5(1) of the 2001 Education Laws Amendment Bill (Republic of South Africa, 2001) strengthens Section 20 of the Schools Act in that a School Governing Body of a public school must take all reasonable measures within its means to supplement the resources supplied by the state in order to improve the quality of education provided to all learners at the school. According to Squelch (2001), the SGB, standing in a position of trust towards the school, has a duty to act in good faith and not engage in any unlawful conduct or behaviour that may jeopardise the interests of the school. In addition, the SGB may apply for functions such as the maintenance and improvement of the school property, determining the curriculum and subject choices (in context of further education), as well as, the purchasing of books.

### **2.3.3 Role of chairperson of School Governing Body**

The Chairperson of the SGB has an important role to play in terms of ensuring the effectiveness of the functioning of the SGB and the school. He/she is a key player and will facilitate the governance of the school not alone as a leader but as a team leader. Many researchers (Karlsson, 2002; Mncube & Naidoo, 2015; Motimele, 2005) have stressed the role of the chairperson of the SGB. Mncube and Naidoo (2015) highlight the leadership role that the chairperson of School Governing Body plays. These scholars emphasise that she/ he is the leader among leaders, the chairperson co-ordinates or chairs this important committee at school. Mncube and Naidoo (2015) further state that the chairperson ensures that all constituencies are represented as per regulations, that normal regular meetings of the SGB are called for at least once a term. Khuzwayo (2007) asserts that chairpersons and principals, as leaders of SGB and School management team respectively, have influential roles to play within these structures. Chairperson has to motivate Governing Body members, learners and members of the community to render voluntary services to school. Davidoff and Lazarus (2002) assert that the functions of the SGB chairpersons cannot be separated completely from the functions of the school principal. The Schools Act states that the management of the school and the supervision of teachers and the curriculum is the domain of School Management Team (SMT) and the principal (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). The chairperson and SGB members must respect this and not interfere or disrupt the professional management process of the school. The Chairperson and his / her team should support the

principal and the staff of the school by providing resources and motivate sub- committees to action their plans and decisions to improve the school. According to Lotter, Waddy, Naicker and Goolam (2015), the chairperson is seen by many people as the official mouthpiece and any statement that he/ she makes is regarded as coming from the SGB as a whole.

#### **2.4 Females into leadership positions**

This study explores female chairpersons' experiences in rural schools. It also investigates the challenges that these females faced when occupying these leadership positions. The experiences of female chairpersons of the SGBs in rural schools are still characterised by gender inspired challenges. Yet, there is little research conducted on this important issue in the context of South Africa. The existing literature reveals that females still face challenges in their leadership positions such as directors of board, school principals, Departmental Heads and so forth. International studies show that there is still a gap when it comes to women representation in leadership position and gender inequality around the world. For example, research conducted by Shava, Tlou and Mpofu (2019) in Zimbabwe reveals that successful educational leadership entails possessing knowledge and understanding of effective leadership skills along with personal ability to effectively implement those skills. However, in Zimbabwe the occupational and leadership status of women are still suffering a wide gap, as there is unequal representation in leadership positions between men and women. In Asia, the World Economic Forum (2016), Gender Gap Report ranked China 99<sup>th</sup>, India 87<sup>th</sup>, Indonesia 88<sup>th</sup>, Japan 101<sup>st</sup>, Korea 106<sup>th</sup>, Malaysia 106<sup>th</sup>, Sri Lanka 100<sup>th</sup>, and Thailand 71<sup>st</sup> out of 144 countries in the combined evaluation of the economic participation, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment in term of women status compare to men counterparts (Cho, Mclean, Sun & Ghosh, 2017).

In Kenya, a study conducted by Dorothy (2017) on the relationship between female teachers' perceptions of selected factors and their aspiration for leadership positions in public primary schools in Kericho County showed that, despite more women joining the teaching profession, a gender gap in leadership in favour of men still persists. Osumbah (2010) states that, predominant societal and cultural expectations, explain the disparity between the number of male and female leaders. For instance, Saeeda (nd) points out that social expectations often

put men in positions of leadership and women in supporting roles. According to Mathipa and Tsoka (2006), women are under-represented in high and middle management positions in higher education, even in the current post- feminist climate when many people claim there is no need to assert that equality must continue to be striven for. Females remain under-represented in top leadership positions in organisations, a reality that reflects a variety of barriers that create a glass ceiling effect (Cook & Glass, 2014). This viewpoint is shared by Lalla (2013) who analysed the distribution of male and female educators according to rank and gender in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. His study shows that, while women dominate in numbers as educators or teachers in public schools, their numbers decrease as they go further up the management hierarchy in South African schools.

Elsesser and Lever (2011) assert that although acceptance of female managers has increased in the last half-century, negative attitudes toward female leaders still persist. These scholars further argue that some research suggests that female leaders are evaluated less favourably than their male counterparts, and that they are liked less than their male counterparts, and are penalised for adopting masculine leadership styles. Lockhart and Mollick (2015) stipulate that females are not considered the right candidates for leadership positions because they are often viewed as of limited leadership capacities, or are over emotional. Celikten and Sadani (2005), as well as Kunin (2008) also point out that there is a wrong perception that men are intelligent and powerful to hold leadership and management positions as compared to females. Moorosi (2010) asserts that even though female have made tremendous efforts to prepare themselves for leadership positions, and to make entry into the leadership accessible to female, there seems to be an insufficient effort to support the female who have broken through the glass ceiling in order to ensure sustainable equity.

Cubillo and Brown (2003) posit that it has not been easy for females to cast off this quasi-maternal role bestowed on them, and to enter into the perceived 'masculine' world of managerialism and leadership. From a societal prospective, the word 'leader' has masculine connotations. When a male is in a leadership position, he is simply referred to as leader; however, when a person is recognised as a female in a nation state context, she is often labelled as 'women or female leader' (Lockhart & Mollick, 2015). From the above discussion, it is crucial that we understand how female participants in this study experience

being in those leadership positions where they exercise leadership to a broad community as chairpersons of the SGBs.

## **2.5 Challenges faced by females in management positions**

There are many gender related challenges that female chairpersons faced. The first have had to do with gender challenges while others had to do with a range of internal and external pressures.

### **2.5.1 Gender related challenges**

The concept of gender has been defined by various scholars and, they emphasise different things. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) define gender as the structure of social relations that puts emphasis on the biological differences between men and women, and the sets of practices that also highlight the reproductive characteristics between bodies and social process. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) further state that gender relations are always constituted in everyday lives and that gender power arrangement of society involves social structures which all place men in authority over women. A study by Makhaye (2011) indicates that gender-based challenges are the main aspects that agitate female principals in leadership positions. As a result, female principals are wrongly assumed to be failures in managing schools. Such views form part of the discourses of gender (Bhana, 2009; Morojele, 2011) within the schools and communities. This above gender-based challenge is linked to the issue of socialisation. In African society particularly in rural areas, girls are normally socialised to believe that they are inferior in society and that they should serve boys. Harro (2000) calls it the cycle of socialisation, where particular devaluing stereotypes are constructed about girls, attributes and abilities and affirming stereotypes that are constructed about boys. The socialisation of females has a negative impact on anything females do or do not do (Maphala, 1996). As it is the case in this study, the socialisation of females may have an impact on the female chairpersons of school governing body of school in rural areas.

Another related gender challenge is the issue of gender inequality. This form of challenge is most commonly found in a society where women are confined to the home and denied the possibilities of participating in work outside and denied access to resources (Sithole, 2010). In South Africa, a study conducted by Nuraan Davids on gender inequality in South African

independent schools revealed that female teachers make up about 68% of the country's teaching force, but only, 36% of principals are women. This implies that although females constitute a majority at grass root level, they are still a minority when it comes to holding leadership positions. Data from June 2018 shows that women made up 72, 5% of teachers and 37, 3% of principals on the state payroll (Davids, 2018). The findings show that gender inequity in leadership position of state-run schools persists.

Feidhahn (2011) points out that the belief that women lack the ability to control the influence of their emotions may not only affect whether they are seen as rational and competent, but it may also affect judgements about women's ability to integrate critical feedback and improvement over time. Furthermore, being perceived as uniformly deficient in these abilities is likely to diminish people's confidence in women's overall leadership ability. Brescall, (2016) argues that because women are less likely to control their outward display of emotions, people infer that women are less able to control the extent to which their emotions influence their thoughts and behaviours. This belief may foster the perception that, compared to men, women are less rational and objective, less able to cope with critical feedback, and are inappropriately soft in their dealings with subordinates. All these fallacies are likely to be believed and casts doubts in female leaders' capabilities to lead and be listened to.

According to Hoyt and Murphy (2016), gender stereotype-based expectations not only affect people who see as "fitting" the preconceived notion of a leader, but they also affect women themselves. Hoyt and Murphy (2016) further state that women are often acutely aware that their treatment in leadership situations may be contingent upon their gender. Sealy and Vinnicombe (2013) maintain that the issue of gender diversity has certainly received attention, the promise of greater diversity on corporate boards does not seem to have been delivered upon and there is clear evidence that gender discrimination exists and persists. Vial, Napier, Victoria and Brescall (2015) argues that despite great educational advances for women in recent decades in the United States, gender bias continues to serve as an obstacle for the advancement of female candidates to leadership role. While sharing similar views as the scholars cited above, Phelan and Nauts (2012) further this debate by arguing that the challenges facing women go beyond issues of access. In fact, their difficulties do not end once women get into positions of power, but go beyond that.

Rink, Ryan and Sotker (2012) argue that women are not oblivious to the difficulties they face in legitimising their authority. In fact, research has shown that women are very sensitive to the possibility that their subordinates may not accept them, and this anticipation leads them to expect lower levels of influence and to evaluate potential leadership positions more negatively, whereas for men, there is no such a link. Female authorities are less accepted than their male counterparts (Brescoll, 2011). According to Moletsane and Ntombela (2010), cultural constructions of gender and, in particular, the social status of women and girls in rural communities contribute to the intensity of their lived experiences, rather than for their male counterparts and those living in urban spaces. Ryan and Haslam (2007) assert that the glass cliff predicts that females are more likely than men to be promoted in positions that are struggling, in crisis or at risk to fail. They further identify several mechanisms that may contribute to the phenomenon by which women leader are promoted to risky positions (Ryan & Haslam, 2007).

Koenig et al. (2011) mention that women are associated with communal characteristics that highlight a concern for others, whereas men are viewed as possessing rationality and agentic characteristics that emphasise confidence, self-reliance, and dominance. Koenig et al. (2011) further state that the qualities used to describe men are similar to those used to describe effective leaders resulting in men being viewed as a better “fit” with the leader role compared to women. Vial et al. (2010) assert that more research is needed to expand our understanding of the ways in which subordinates may behave negatively when led by female versus a male manager, both in terms of negative work-related behaviours that may directly impact the group’s bottom line.

### **2.5.2 The internal pressures and external pressures**

Females in leading positions are faced with internal and external pressures that they have to deal with in order to lead successfully. In the SGBs which are in rural areas female chairpersons might work with members of the SGB who are not used with the female chairperson. Magee and Frasier (2014) assert that women in leadership positions need to garner respect and admiration from subordinates in order to legitimise their authority. Magee and Frasier (2014) further state that it is more difficult for female leaders to legitimise their

role among subordinates with more traditional gender attitudes, because for them, powerful women represent a threat to important personal values. The literature suggests that obstacles to women's progress into senior management derive from several sources such as constraints imposed upon them by society, by the family, by employers and by women themselves (Thurairajah, Amaratunga & Haigh, 2007). Shapira, Arar and Azaiza (2011) assert that among women in senior positions, the majority faces resistances, a change of societal norms and that willingness to accept women's leadership would enable many more women to fill public roles and to contribute to their society's progress.

Fische, Eagly, and Oosterwyk (2013) assert that when a woman is in an employment context, and particularly when she occupies a leadership position within that context she may experience a mismatch in the emotional displays expected of her as a woman and those expected of her as a leader. According to Alice and Eagly (2007), in the United States, women are increasingly praised for having excellent skills for leadership, and in fact, women more than men, manifest leadership styles associated with effective performance as leaders. Nevertheless, more people prefer male to female bosses, and it is more difficult for women than men to become leaders and to succeed in male –dominated leadership roles.

### **2.5.3 Stereotypes**

According to Maime (2011), another issue related to female holding position of leadership and management is about gender stereotypes. Gender- role stereotypes are that males and females operate differently and that their roles are not equal. This does not allow females to become leaders; instead, they dictate that females must serve men and do household works. This is very common as indicated above in African society and particularly in rural areas where the participants of this study were selected.

### **2.5.4 Attitudes displayed towards females in leadership positions**

At the point when females hold capable positions, they have hard times than men inspiring appreciation and profound respect from subordinates. Thus, female power-holders are viewed

as less real than male power-holders (Vail, Napier, & Brescoll, 2015). The position of chairperson of Governing Body, which, according to the Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996b) should be elected amongst the parents, is still customarily an exclusively male position (Sithole, 2007). Furthermore, it is clear that it is still very difficult to convince some members of the SGB that everybody including women, stand a chance to be elected as chairperson of SGB. There is evidence that some community members do not accept females when they are in the positions of leadership. According to Makhaye (2012), females are not recognised by staff members and also by members of the community. Sithole (2007) reveals that the SGB of a school studied tried by all means to transform in as far as gender representation is concerned, with a 50% representation of women. However, respondents raised their concerns about the SGB portfolios such as the position of chairperson which continues to be occupied by males, thus confirming and perpetuating existing gender stereotypes. Female have a difficulty being accepted by colleagues in cross- racial, ethnic or class communities and can face systemic community prejudices (Boris-Schacter & Langer, 2006).

## **2.6 Theoretical framework**

Corley and Gioia (2011) define theory as a statement of concepts and their interrelationships that show how and or why a phenomenon occurs. These scholars further state that theories deeply influence the way we understand and make sense of the world; theories name things and in the process of naming and communicating, a reality is constructed. Swart and Pettipher (2014) define a theory as a set of ideas, assumptions and concepts ordered in such a way that they tell us about the world, ourselves or aspects of reality. Mudemb (2013) moves on to define a theoretical framework as a process of identifying a core set of connectors within a topic and showing how they fit together or are related in some way to the subject. Thus, it involves the grouping of thoughts and theories related to a research question into the themes that frame the subject (Hauser, McGriff & Retel, 2012).

The framework for this study is provided by the feminists and falls within the liberal feminist theory. There are few feminist theories such as liberal, radical, Marxist, socialist, black feminist and cultural feminist theories. All these theories highlight that oppression and inequality based on gender, is common (Smkange, 2015). These theories are based on the

rationale that the “organisation of society has contributed to inequality between females and men, and that such inequality has contributed to females and girls having less access to power, economic, empowerment, lower social status and generally limited opportunities than men and boys” (Samkange, 2015, p. 34). These feminist theories, according to Samkange (2015), differ only on the approaches they advocate to have these imbalances in society addressed. For example, Higgs (2015) stresses that all forms of feminism, though, they focus on certain issues such as sexual stereotyping, creating a bigger place for women in the world, and rejecting the view that women are inferior to men.

In an African society generally, females are considered to be inferior to men and in rural society there is a stigma that a female cannot lead or do men works. Hartmann (2003) argues that feminists critique the notion of male supremacy and suggests that measures should be made to change, and that females should not be denied the equality of opportunities because of gender. Hooks (2000) points out that this provides an explanation as to why females are highly under- represented in the management and leadership positions in education. This view point is also supported by Eisenstein (2004) who indicates that feminists have focused on the oppression of females and address the possibility of considering the needs of females. Harman (2003) asserts that feminists believe that females are not treated the same as men, and that there is a need to promote justice and liberation of females. In this study, I chose liberal feminist theory guided by the previous experiences as SGB member and the gender-based challenges I faced while occupying the leadership positions working in a rural area. Therefore, it is crucial that this study explores the experiences of female chairpersons of School Governing Body and the challenges they face in these leadership positions in rural areas. It is for this reason that I chose Liberal feminist theory as a theoretical framework for this study. I now turn to a detailed discussion of this theory.

### **2.6.1 Liberal feminist**

Liberal feminist theory is the framework that underpins the study of female chairpersons of the SGBs. As indicated in the previous section, the theoretical framework for this study falls within the liberal feminist theory which, according to Mannah (2008), supports the belief that all individuals have the right to freedom and autonomy. A just society is one in which all individuals have the right to exercise their autonomy and to fulfil themselves regardless of

their gender. Liberal feminists understand female subordination in society in terms of unequal rights or artificial barriers to women's participation in public world, beyond the family and household (Beasley, 1999). Liberal feminists (Friedan, 1974; Rossi, 1970; Wollstonecraft, 1792, 1975) developed out of political philosophy, arguing that through legal and political avenues of the mainstream, females can change laws and politics and therefor achieve gender justice (Lorber, 1997). Liberal feminists want the state to advocate for change in behaviour and consciousness that they hope will become virtually permanent, passed from generation to generation as gender prejudice eventually dies out (Wendell, 1976). Likewise, in this study, the South African education system has embraced, promoted equality, fairness and justice when designing the South African School Act which highlights the important function of the SGB when it comes to school governance.

According to Miller (2010), Liberal feminists work within the structure of mainstream society to integrate women into it and make it more responsive to individual women's rights, but does not directly challenge the system itself or the ideology behind women's oppression. Liberal feminists suggest that women need to be offered the same civil liberties and economic opportunities as men for their potential to be developed (Hooks, 2000). Brooke (2008) argues that liberal feminists believe that the equality of men and women can only be achieved by changes being brought through political and legal reform; they want the eradication of institutional bias and the implementations of fairer laws towards women. Lobber (1997) asserts that liberal feminists argue that females and men are essentially similar, and therefore, females should be equally represented in public arenas dominated by men work, government, the professions and the sciences.

In the education system, for example, affirmative action is one of the principles that the democratically government implemented to correct the imbalance of the past and bring more women into leadership positions. Liberal feminists argue that "society has false belief that females are by nature less intellectually and physically capable than men" (Tong, 2009, p.2). According to Pasqual and Wimmer (2011), liberal feminists argue that patriarchal society fuses sex and gender together, making only those jobs that are associated with the traditionally feminine appropriate for women to pursue. Mannah (2008) posits that liberal feminists focus on women's access to what men have in society. Mannah (2008) further states that the liberal feminists aim for equality with men is sometime criticised for devaluing

women by encouraging them to absorb masculine values in the pursuit of equality of the gender. As this study is located in rural areas where the majority of community members still believes that women are inferior to men, and should not be doing men's work, it is important that I explore the context of this study and by doing so, highlights the gaps to better correct the imbalance of gender inequality and find ways of addressing the challenges faced.

Liberal feminists strive for equal opportunities and present affirmative action as an important strategy to improve the position of females (Coffey & Delamont, 2000). According to Nandraj (2003), liberal feminist perspective, points primarily at the inequalities between men and women in the work place. Liberal feminists in education according to Grogan (1996), aim at removing all barriers that prevent women as a disadvantaged gender from working towards their fullest potential. Women are encouraged to work up to their fullest potential. These above-mentioned views assert the important role played by school policy, the Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996b) during the election process of the SGB which provides equal opportunities to candidates without any unfair discrimination based on gender or sexism.

Hartmann (2003) asserts that liberal feminists fight for equal right for all females and also argues against gender- role stereotypes and discrimination against women. Grogan (1996) states that liberal feminists appeal to the central principles of liberty, equality and fairness for all, to justify women's rights. The South African Constitution of 1996 promote equality, justice and the basic and fundamental human rights which do not discriminate based on gender, as it is the case in this study women involving in leadership positions (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). However, Jagger (1983) acknowledges liberal feminists, including Wollstonecraft and Mill, who also argue that many of female's traditional activities, especially childcare and management of a household, require reason and exercise of the mind to a far greater degree than men usually recognise. In that regard, Mill (1870) claims with an overwhelming evidence of female's equal, if not superior, mental capacities. Liberal feminists have long maintained that females have the same capacity to reason as do men, and are no more emotional by nature and no more determined by our bodily process (Wendell, 1987).

Finally, although significant gains have been made to correct the imbalance of the past and bring more females in managerial and leadership positions, it is alarming that in our society there is still a lot that needs to be done when it comes to consider females as equal to men. This is evident in this study where community members still some cultural and traditional beliefs that females are inferior to men. From the above-mentioned views, what is common amongst the feminists, is the acknowledgement that females are undervalued in social world, and that their voices and perspectives are not viewed as important as men's (Maime, 2011). Likewise, Weiner (1994) asserts that liberal feminists have failed to eliminate the belief that men and women are different, but have succeeded in proving the point that although they are different, women are not inferior. Therefore, it is critical that I, as a researcher, focus on getting the perspectives of women in managerial and leadership positions from their own experiences and voices. This will assist to better understand the challenges they are facing and how do they manage their daily duties working as leaders in the society where they are marginalised.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter reviewed literature on various aspects of school governance from both local and international perspectives. This is the third chapter which focuses on issues of design and methodology. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of female chairpersons of School Governing Bodies in three rural schools. As a research design and methodology chapter, I therefore, discuss the procedures undertaken in carrying out this research. I commence with the discussion of a research paradigm, research design, research methodology and a sampling technique to identify participants who would provide deep insights into the phenomenon studied. I also highlight the data generation methods used to get rich and authentic data for this study as well as, the data analysis method used to obtain better understanding of the phenomenon. Furthermore, as I move my presentation towards the end, discuss issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations, as well as, the limitation of the study.

#### **3.2 Research paradigm**

In this study, interpretive paradigm was used as an effort to ensure that views and responses from participants are prioritised and that the presentations of interpretations foreground their perspectives. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) state that a research paradigm constitutes a particular world view that defines, for the researcher who hold this view. There are many definitions of a paradigm and these differ amongst different researchers (Qurisha, 2016). For instance, Willis (2007, p. 8) explains that “a paradigm is thus a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field”, from a philosophical perspective. Drawing from this view, one can argue that research paradigm comprises a view of the nature of reality whether it is external or internal to the knower; it is a related view of the type of knowledge that can be generated. Creswell (2013) describes a paradigm as a set of basic beliefs that represents a worldview that clearly defines for the researcher, the nature of the world, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to the world

and its components. Interpretivist paradigm differs from other paradigms on the basis of ontological and epistemological underpinnings.

In this study I opted for interpretive paradigm as this research paradigm would enable me to generate qualitative data that projects and articulates reality from the perspectives of the participants as the study was about their experiences. Beck and Perkins (2016) assert that the research paradigm is concerned with understanding the world as it is from subjective experiences of individual. Therefore, interpretive paradigms essentially strive to understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors (Cohen et Al. 2000). I used interpretive paradigm to provide female chairpersons of SGBs an environment to freely talk about their own experiences and share their feelings and daily life challenges during their experiences of being in leadership positions in school governance positions. The view expressed above is also shared by De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2002) who assert that interpretive paradigm is about understanding the everyday lived experiences of people in a specific area or a historical setting.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) also argue that interpretivist paradigm is characterised by a concern for the individual person. Its central endeavour is to understand the subjective world of human experience. Furthermore, Yanov and Schwartz-Shea (2015) claim that interpretivist researchers discover reality through participant's view, their own background and experiences. Creswell (2013) describes a paradigm as a set of basic beliefs that represent a worldview that clearly defines for the researcher, the nature of the world, the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to the world and its components. However, Qurisha (2016) indicates that it must be noted that interpretive paradigm has some limitations as well. The first limitation is that interpretive paradigm does not aim to employ scientific measurement techniques, nor does it intend to generalise the findings of the selected case to other contexts (Flick, 2015). Nevertheless, there are certain techniques that are used to ensure that what is found can be generalised specifically to the sample used to generate qualitative data. There are measures to ensure trustworthiness of the findings, and in the context of this study, I fully explain in Section 3.9 how I ensured that the findings remained trustworthy although they cannot be generalised across the whole population.

### **3.3 Research design**

This study was located within the broad area of a qualitative research design. It explored the experiences of female chairpersons of SGBs of three schools in rural areas. It aimed at eliciting the experiences of these female chairpersons and how they interpreted their daily life working in leadership positions of school governance in rural schools from their own perspectives. A qualitative approach allowed me to put emphasis on understanding each participant/ female chairperson's experiences rather than to generalise these cases. Therefore, during the study, I emphasised the importance of subjective experiences of each participant, making sure that equal opportunities were given to each during interviews and that sufficient time was provided during documents analysis.

Different scholars describe a research design differently, but they seem to agree on its essence. For example (Kumar, 2014) describes a research design is a complete strategy for data generation. The purpose is to specify a strategy for producing evidence that will be used to answer the research questions (Dixon, Singleton & Strait, 2015). McMillan and Schumacher (2014) state that a research design is a general plan that describes how the research will be conducted. Similarly, Kumar (2014) defines a research design as the road map that the researcher decides to follow during the research journey to find answers to the research questions as validly, objectively, accurately and economically as possible. Viewed from this perspective, one can describe it as the connection between the research paradigm, research methodology, and methods of data generation (Smith, 2015). In other words, it can be described as a “procedural- cum-operational plan that details what and how different methods and procedures to be applied during the research process” (Smith, 2015, p.122).

According to Kumar (2014), the main focus in qualitative research is to understand, explain, explore, discover and clarify situations, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences of a group of people. It is concerned with the individual's perspective (Howitt, 2010). From the above view, this study focused on understanding female chairpersons' experiences in leadership position in three rural schools SGBs. It sought to understand their daily life experiences and trying to get insights about some of the challenges they face

working in leadership positions in their schools. I have also considered the context and situation of the location of their place of work (rural areas) where schools played an important role but women are still marginalised and considered to be inferior to men.

Qualitative research allows for the researcher to explore people's perceptions and experiences as these may be difficult to measure (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Qualitative research design is usually used when the object of the study is in some form of social process or meaning or experience which needs to be understood and explained in a rounded way (Cohen et al., 2007). In addition, qualitative research is an empirical research where data do not take the form of numbers but words (Punch, 2004). Therefore, to obtain a clear picture about what was happening in the research sites, I used a strategy of prolonged first hand presence in the field, eliciting feelings and opinions regarding many issues facing the participants. These included dilemmas they face in running school governing bodies in rural areas. More on this is provided in the trustworthiness section of this dissertation.

### **3.4 Research methodology**

The research methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the procedures applied to a field of study (Kothari, 2004). It involves procedures of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena so as to solve a problem. In other words, it is the 'how' the process and techniques of conducting research proceeds. It also offers the theoretical underpinning for understanding which procedure or set of procedures can be applied to a specific case (Kenpro, 2012).

A case study methodology was adopted for this study. In this study of female chairpersons, the case are the experiences of the female chairpersons of the School Governing Body in three rural schools. I used a case study as a methodology to research an in-depth, how females chairpersons of the SGBs in three rural schools experiences their daily work life as chairpersons of this body or structure. Case studies can be described as an approach to research that facilitates an exploration of the phenomenon within a specific context through a variety of data generated (Yin, 2009). The context of this case study is School Governing Body and boundaries of this case study are school governing bodies and rural schools.

I have found the case methodology to be relevant for this study because during data generation, the phenomenon was explored (Yin, 2009) using a variety of lenses or methods rather than one. A research methodology can also be described as referring to procedural rules for the evaluation of research claims and the validation of the knowledge gathered (Creswell, 2003). A case study methodology or approach can be regarded as a comprehensive exploration of an extensive amount of information about a very few components for one period or across multiples of time (Neuman, 2011). Therefore, I have selected only female chairpersons of school bodies in rural areas for the limited period of time. Their perspectives have provided insights onto the qualitative case study and a better understanding of the challenges they faced being females in leadership positions in their respective governing bodies.

Baxter and Jack (2008) define a qualitative case study as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity; phenomenon, event, process or social group. Nworgu (1991) states that case studies employ a variety of data gathering techniques such as observation, document analysis, interviews and questionnaire. It allows the researcher to explore individuals or organisations, through complex interventions, relationships, communities, or programmes and supports the deconstruction and the subsequent reconstruction of various phenomenon (Yin, 2003). Furthermore, Yin (2009) points out that a case study design should be considered when the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions; when you cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study; when you cannot cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under the study; or the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and the context. Drawing from the above view, I used more than one method of data generation, including semi-structured interviews, documents reviews. For instance, the use of semi-structured interviews facilitated knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Semi-structured interviews helped me to give voices to female chairpersons of SGBs who were faced with gender related challenges working in rural areas. These female chairpersons were marginalised by members of the communities for various reasons including cultural stereotypes and were typically underrepresented in leadership positions and management. I also used documents reviews to augment data generated through semi-structured interviews. The use of documents reviews brought more insights and enriched the quality of evidence generated during interviews. I also used documents reviews because some situations may

have happened before this study was conducted; therefore, to rely on interviews only was not sufficient as people cannot always remember exactly how certain events happened. Hence, reviewing and analysing written information created more credibility to the evidence. In this case documents that were reviewed included attendance registers, agenda and minutes of meetings.

### **3.5 Sampling methods**

Sampling refers to making decisions about which people, settings, events or behaviours to include in the study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). In this case study, I used purposive sampling in which the population of the sample is based on personal knowledge and the expertise about the population. Purposive sampling can be described as a process in which a researcher handpicks the participants that will be used in the sample on the basis of established characteristics (Cohen et al., 2011). I used purposive sampling because the selected schools and participants (female chairpersons) were chosen for a specific purpose regarding their experiences of working in leadership positions in the SGB. Dixon et al. (2015) argue that purposive sampling is based on case selection rather than random selection of the population. For example, the three schools selected for this study had female chairpersons in the SGBs and were located in rural areas. In addition, I focused only on female chairpersons not any member of SGB.

Sampling is about deciding the place and the participants from whom the data will be generated or produced (Punch, 2006). Kumar (2014) argues that quality findings largely depend upon the way researcher selects the sample. In the context of this study, I selected female chairpersons based on the assumption that they are the most relevant people who would provide rich data about female leaders' experiences serving in the SGB. Furthermore, since qualitative inquiry is concerned with acquiring in-depth and to get the rich understanding of the case being studied, I therefore, made specific choices about which participants to include in the sample. By selecting only three female chairpersons, I wanted to get a deeper understanding of their experiences of working as chairpersons of SGBs in schools located in rural areas.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) assert that purposive sampling is used in order to access knowledgeable people with in-depth knowledge about the particular issue. So, I have identified the following features from the participants; female chairpersons were selected because of their gender and rejection in leadership positions in rural society, their number of years working as chairpersons in rural areas; their various years of experience in leadership positions and also my own interest as a female to understand their own view. Furthermore, Maxwell (2005) states that one cannot study everybody everywhere doing everything, even within a one case. Therefore, I have chosen people who can shed more light in terms of advancing the purpose of the research and most importantly, people who are likely to have knowledge into the case. The sample of this study consisted of three female chairpersons of School Governing Bodies located in three rural schools in KwaZulu-Natal, one of the nine provinces in South Africa.

### **3.6 Data generation methods**

Atkins and Wallace (2012) define data generation as a series of interrelated activities designed to gather information in order to answer emerging research questions. In this study, I opted to use semi-structured interviews in order to elicit information from the participants that would give answers to the research questions, and also enable them to express their voices on their own experiences of being female chairpersons of SGBs. I also used documents reviews in order to obtain rich and authentic data appropriate for better understanding of this study. In the following subsection, I will describe the two methods of data generation named above.

#### **3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured interviews are a form of interviews which contain a list of topics or questions that are drawn up prior to the interview session (SOURCE). Such interviews are non-structured in the sense that the interviewer is free to formulate other questions in the light of the participants' responses and is able to probe interesting and important areas which arise for a given situation (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2015). In this study, I used semi-structured interviews where open-ended questions were asked to generate data and to encourage

participation of interviewees using probe and sub-questions for clarification. This, according to Greeff (2011), is a conversation with a purpose which Rule and John (2011) say allows more flexibility during data generation. Cohen et al. (2004) also emphasise that semi-structured interviews enable the participants to project their own ways of defining the world. Furthermore, Kumar (2011) points out that semi-structured interviews are used in order to generate more data relevant to the study. Therefore, I used the semi-structured interviews because it provided an in-depth, relevant and reliable qualitative data. During the interviews, I used open ended questions which allow probing, and formulations of sub-questions that arose naturally. The semi-structured interviews allowed me to converse and create rapport with the participants.

The approach I used during interviews was to explore the experiences of female chairpersons of SGB in rural schools asking them questions such as, what challenges do you as a female chairperson face in SGBs in your school which men in similar position do not face. I also planned and prepared the questions of the interview as guideline before meeting the participants. This view is shared by Maima (2013) who indicate that semi-structured interviews are data generation methods where researchers approach the interviewees with some pre-written questions in the form of an interview guide. I also made use of such a flexibility because it gave me freedom to modify and prompt questions. This view is supported by Abawi (2013) who states that semi-structured interviews include a number of organised questions, but the interviewer has more freedom to modify the wording and order of the questions. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews allowed for probing as well as exploring any other themes that may not have been identified in the literature. I probed and transcribed the interviewee's responses to get insight, better understanding of the topic.

Ngcobo (2010) states that semi-structured interviews are sometimes referred to as guided interviews; the guides allow the researcher to develop the "area of enquiry" during the interview. Galletta and Cross (2013) state that the semi-structured interviews have a number of advantages. These include the fact that semi-structured interviews are well suited to explore attitudes, values, beliefs and motives as they provide the opportunity to evaluate the validity of the participants' answers by observing non-verbal indicators, which is particularly useful when discussing sensitive issues, while also ensuring that the participant is unable to receive assistance from others while formulating a response. In this study, I made sure that

interviewees were comfortable and had good knowledge of the topic we were discussing. Their views were respected and they were free not to answer questions they felt were not comfortable with. I also allowed participants to write down what they felt they could not verbally discuss with me. I also observed the body language of participants and took notes when necessary.

I conducted interviews on face-to-face setting. Face-to-face interviews can be carried out in a variety of situations such as in the home, at work, outdoors and on the move (Williman, 2011). The face-to-face interviews also allowed me to get closer to the participants, creating a good rapport with them. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) indicate that the use of semi-structured schedule leaves room for building rapport. However, while this is true, I believe that building a rapport is a skill that one develops over the years. An inexperienced interviewer may find it difficult to build rapport and make their participants comfortable. Zhang and Wildemuth (2006) point out that the success of an interview depends on the researcher's uses of techniques to present him/her self for the interview. May (2011) states that one of the weakness of using semi-structured interviews is that they are time consuming and are not reliable.

### **3.6.2 Documents reviews**

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, I used documents reviews as a second data gathering method with the aim to, supplement the semi-structured interviews. Different researchers have categorised documents in different ways. Public records and personal documents are two common types that have been used in qualitative research. For instance, Merriam (2009) states that public documents include mass media, government documents and police records. Since the focus of the study was on School Governing Body chairpersons, documents belonging to School Governing Body were reviewed. For example, attendance registers for School Governing Body meetings, agenda and minutes of School Governing Body meetings were reviewed. I undertook a careful analysis and interpretation of factual information as set out in these documents. My aim was to check whether claims made by the participants during my semi-structured interviews were corroborated or refuted by information found in the documents. The main reason I used this method in this study was to

explore the evidence of experiences, relationships and cooperation among female chairpersons and other members of her School Governing Body. It was also used to obtain more quality and authentic data relevant to enhance a better understanding of the phenomenon under study. The information obtained from these documents shed light on some of the research questions outlined in this study. Before the actual process of reviewing document commenced, I developed a detailed plan reflecting on the specific issues to focus on. In using document reviews, I found it was easy and manageable.

### **3.7 Qualitative data analysis**

There are various approaches and methods that are used to analyse qualitative data, and one of them is thematic coding analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe thematic coding analysis approach as a method for finding, interpreting and reporting themes that emerged from the data. They developed six phases to analyse data which this study utilised. These phases are as follows: familiarising of the data, generalising initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing the report. Both the data generated from the semi-structured interviews and documents reviews were analysed using the steps mentioned above as proposed by Braun and Clarke.

Semi-structured interviews with participants were recorded using a digital voice recorder. The audio- recorded information was transferred from the audio-voice recorder to the computer system for manual transcription. For analysis, I started by preparing, reading and transcribing the data from audio to textual format. Then the transcripts were studied and organised so that I could familiarised myself with it. After familiarising myself with the data, I then identified initial codes that are meaningful. The coded data was then organised into various themes. These themes were defined and named to produce the report. In this study, the analysis of data was guided by the methods used to generate data, namely, semi-structured interviews and documents reviews. The answers that were received from the participants were analysed in a logical way as they responded to research questions. Generating data, all

I gave each participant and each research site a *pseudonym* to protect her identity and its location. *Pseudonyms* given to the schools were, Green Primary School for the first school,

Yellow Primary School for the second school, and Pink Primary School for the third school. Similarly, the *pseudonyms* given to participants were Mrs Cabbage for the Chairperson of Green Primary School, Mrs Spinach for the Chairperson of Yellow Primary School, and Mrs Carrot for the Chairperson of Pink Primary School.

### 3.8 Profile of participants

Below is presented the profiles of participants I interviewed to generate data for this study.

No	Name of participants	Qualification	Years of leadership experiences	Age group
1	Carrot	Matric	6 years	25 – 35 years
2	Cabbage	Standard 7	9 years	45 -55 years
3	Spinach	Standard 9	3 years	35 – 45 years

Table 1: Biographical details of the participants

### 3.9 Issues of trustworthiness

It is always important that the findings of a research can be trusted. Therefore, researchers employ a variety of techniques to ensure trustworthiness of the findings. Trustworthiness is the degree of which the interpretation and concepts have mutual meaning between the participants and the researcher (Schumacher & McMillan, 2010). Holloway and Wheeler (2015) refer to trustworthiness as the true value of a piece of research. Williams and Marrow (2009) indicate that there are three major categories of trustworthiness that must be attended by all qualitative researchers, including the integrity of data, the balance between reflexivity and subjectivity, and clear communication of findings. Therefore, to ensure trustworthiness of the research, I employed Guba's constructs as spelled out by Shenton (2004) and Bertram and Christiansen (2014). The construct has four criteria for trustworthiness, and these are, credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability, and these are discussed next.

#### 3.9.1 Credibility

The credibility addresses what quantitative researchers call internal validity, where assurance is made that the study measures what it is supposed to measure (Shenton, 2004). For

credibility checks, the audio recordings, transcriptions of interviews, as well as, the quotations of participants in their own words and language were provided for cross examination, remarks and necessary correction. Thereafter, this study was submitted to a colleague, senior educator with many years of experiences in leadership and management position. Polit and Beck (2012) indicate that credibility exists when the research findings reflect the perceptions of the people under the study. It deals with the focus of the research and refers to the confidence in how well the data addresses the intended focus. Bogdan and DeVault (2015) explain that the credibility of one's research determines the usefulness of the data obtained. In the context of this study, I utilised a variety of strategies such as notes taking during interviews, reading of body language and member checks to enhance the credibility of this study. I also gave participants the opportunities to refuse to participate in the study in order to be sure that the data generation sessions involved only those who participated voluntarily and were not coerced in anyway.

### **3.9.2 Dependability**

The dependability addresses the reliability, where the researcher employs techniques to show if the same study is repeated in the same context with the same methods and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained (Shenton, 2004). Quantitative researchers speak about reliability, and that refers to the consistency of data generation tool in obtaining the same answers when the research is repeatedly done (Creswell, Ebersohn, Eloff, Ferreira, Ivankova, Jansen, Nieuwenhuis, Petersen & Plano Clark, 2016; Gall, Gall & Berg, 2007). Yin (2011) points out that the goal of reliability is to minimise error and bias in a study. Therefore, for dependability of this study, I provided adequate information to explain how the data were generated, how it was analysed and the research procedures. I have also considered the consistency of data generation tools (semi-structured interview and documents reviews). All participants were subjected to the same questions during interviews.

### **3.9.3 Confirmability**

Shenton (2004) alludes that confirmability reveals all the steps that must be taken to ensure that the findings are the results of the information revealed by the participants, and not the

researcher. For example, I took the transcripts of the data generated back to the three participants to check for accuracy and see if anything was added to their responses or any information was omitted. This was done to ensure that my interpretations could be confirmed by the participants and that they accurately depicted their views and experiences.

### **3.9.4 Transferability**

Transferability addresses the external validity, where the main concern is with the extent to which the findings of the study can be applied to other situations and populations (Shenton, 2004). In this study, it was very difficult to demonstrate transferability because the findings of the study were particular to a small number of participants (3 female chairpersons of SGB's) in a specific environment (rural schools). Nevertheless, I made sure that I give a detailed description of the whole process of research in what is normally known as audit trail.

### **3.10 Ethical issues**

Ethical considerations are concerned with the responsibilities of the researcher as well as the rights of participants; the research participants' wellbeing needs to be top priority (Maimed, 2010). Ethics is an important consideration in research, especially when the study involves human (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Schumacher and Mc Millan (2014) point out that educational research is primarily focused on human beings. Therefore, the researcher is ethical responsible for protecting the right and welfare of the subjects who participate in the study. In this case study, I observed ethical issues by *inter alia*, requesting permission to conduct this research. I sought and obtained permission to conduct this research from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Then, I have obtained a permission to conduct research in the three selected rural schools from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. I produced the obtained permission letters to the principals of the three selected rural schools. These principals of schools gave me a written authorisation letter to interview the participants. Thereafter, I met all participants, explained to them about the purpose of the study and they were given consent form to be signed. Ryen (2010) states that informed consent means that the participant is informed that they are being researched as well as about what the research entails. All the participants signed the consent form and were informed about their right and

freedom to withdraw from the research if they so desired. This view is also shared by Cohen et al. (2008) who assert that the research participant has the right to refuse to take part or to withdraw once the research has begun.

Cohen et al. (2007) explain a number of ways that people have to follow as part of ethical practice. Some of these include observing the right for privacy anonymity, confidentiality and to do no harm to the participants. Maime (2013) states that maintaining confidentiality means that the participants' identities and the location in which the research takes place should be protected. Issues of confidentiality and anonymity were promised and observed as *pseudonyms* were used to protect their identities and the schools throughout the study. The safety and the security of the participants were taken seriously. Participants were requested to allow me to use an audio- recorder of phone recorder during the interviews. This indicates that the participants' autonomy and rights were observed.

### **3.11 Limitation of the study**

Price and Murnan (2013) assert that limitation of a study design is the systematic bias that the researcher did not or could not control and which could inappropriately affect the results. In this study, I was constrained by time as a limitation conducting this research in rural schools. Participants from this rural area were faced by challenge of transport and being a teacher, I had to contact and meet with them after school time. Therefore, to overcome time consuming, I managed time by arranging and meeting the participants ahead of the set date of interviews. In order to minimise limitations imposed on me by the conditions, I tried to create and maintain good rapport with the participants, and discussed beforehand, some elements of the topic for better understanding. Greeff (2011) argues

### **3.12 Conclusion**

This chapter has highlighted various elements of the procedures undertaken in carrying out this research. The chapter has explained the research design, the methodology, the research methods used for data generation, sampling and sampling techniques, measures of

ascertaining trustworthiness such as credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. The chapter also discussed the method of data analysis and presented the profile of participants. Finally, this chapter discuss on the ethical issues underlying the research and envisaged limitations of the study. It ends with a brief conclusion. The next chapter provides an analysis of the data.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a detailed discussion of the research design and methodology that was used to conduct the study. This chapter presents and analyses data using the thematic analysis. Data was generated through the use of semi-structured interviews and documents reviews. Thematic analysis was used to identify themes that emerged from the data generated from semi-structured interviews and documents reviews. These identified themes were also categorised and coded into subthemes to obtain deeper insights into the phenomenon discussed in this study. Furthermore, Chapter Four presents the data analysis and discussions organised under the key research questions provided in Chapter One to give meaning to data generated. It also attempts to understand if participants are making sense and understanding of their own experiences as female chairpersons of a School Governing Bodies in rural area.

To remind the readers, this study was located within the interpretive paradigm and uses a case study as its research methodology. It was conducted in three primary schools in rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal. The real names of all research participants have been purposefully withheld under the ethical reporting of human research data. *Pseudonyms* were used to confer anonymity, protect the identity of my sources, and maintain confidentiality. This chapter presents in detail the profiling of participants and schools. Before I present the analysis, I begin with the summary of the schools and the participants' profiles.

#### 4.2 Profiling of schools and participants

In this section I provide the profiles of the three schools together with the profiles of the three research participants.

##### 4.2.1 Profiling of School A and participant

The first school is named Green Primary School (GPS) for anonymity purposes. The school is a public school like other schools in the area. It is ranked Quintile 3, due to the fact that

the majority of the parents of this school fall below poverty line. The school was extremely poor and its infrastructure in a serious condition of disrepair. The road to the school was gravelled, and thus access to the school was guaranteed even in bad weather conditions. There is a government feeding scheme that provides meals daily for the learners in this school. Sometimes, some learners take food home to feed their siblings. Its socio-economic background is that most of the parents are not employed. It has one principal, two deputy principals, four Departmental Heads and 45 educators. The total enrolment of its learners is 1500. The principal used a container as an office, deputy principals used one of small classroom as their office and Departmental Heads used their classrooms as offices. This is indicative of the fact that facilities are in short supply.

Since the focus of the study was on female chairpersons, it is important to mention the structure of its SGB. It has 11 members (3 female teachers and 8 parents). The secretary is a female, the treasurer a male, a male deputy chairperson and a female chairperson and 4 other co-opted members including a male and 3 females. The chairperson of this school is Mrs Cabbage for (anonymity purposes) the first participant of the study. She is between the ages of 45 to 55 years. She has 9 years of experience as a member of the SGB, 3 years as member of SGB in a farm school where she was working and when they moved from the farm she was elected as a member of the SGB. She served as an ordinary member for 3 years and then 3 years as a deputy chairperson of the SGB. At the recent SGB election held in 2017, she was elected as its chairperson. Currently, she is the female Chairperson of 11 members of its SGB with 8 females and 3 males serving on it. She works closely with her school principal who is a male. She has a Grade 9 level of education.

School	Deputy Principal	DH	Educators	Learners	Total
GPS	2	4	45	1500	1551

Table 2: Staff establishment of Green Primary School

School	Number of SGB members in	Secretary Gender	Treasurer Gender	Deputy Chairperson Gender	Chairperson Gender

	total				
GPS	11	F	M	M	F

Table 3: Summarised SGB Structure of Green Primary School

#### 4.2.2 Profiling of School B and participant

The second school is named Yellow Primary School (YPS) for anonymity purposes. It is ranked Quintile 2. The school is poor and infrastructure need renovation and repairing. The road to the school was gravelled, and thus access to the school was guaranteed even in bad weather conditions. The school had a feeding scheme that provides meals for learners. It had a staff composition of a principal, a deputy principal, 3 Departmental Heads (DHs), 30 educators (Post-level one educators) and it has an enrolment of 1000 learners. The principal and the deputy principal share the office and the 3 Departmental Heads also share the prefabricated structure as their offices. The parents depended on the government social grant for income and some sell vegetables. The socio-economic conditions were so bad that there very low level of employment in the community.

Since the school is situated in a rural area, the majority of the learners' parents were unemployed. The structure of the SGB comprised 7 members. There were 4 females and 7 males. The secretary was a female, a male treasurer, a male deputy chairperson and a female chairperson. The chairperson of this school was Mrs Spinach for (anonymity purposes) the second participant of the study. She was between the ages of 35 to 45 years. She had 6 years of experience as a member of a SGB, 3 years as an ordinary member and other 3 years as the treasurer of YPS SGB. On this newly elected YPS SGB in 2017, she was elected as its Chairperson. Currently, she is a female chairperson of seven members of YPS SGB with 4 females and 3 male members. She worked closely with her school principal who was a male. She had Grade 11 level of education.

School	Deputy Principal	DH	Educators	Learners	Total
YPS	1	3	30	1000	1034

Table 4: Staff establishment of Yellow Primary School

**Figure 4.4: The table below summarises.**

School	Number of SGB members in total	Secretary Gender	Treasure Gender	Deputy Chairperson Gender	Chairperson Gender
YPS	7	F	M	M	F

Table 5: Summarised SGB Structure of Yellow Primary School

#### 4.2.3 Profiling of School C and participant

The third school is named Pink Primary School (PPS) also for anonymity purposes. It is ranked Quintile 2. The road to the school was gravelled, and thus access to the school was guaranteed even in bad weather conditions. Classrooms are conditions of disrepair and require to be renovated. There is no administration block principal and the deputy principal share a prefabricated structure as their office. Departmental Heads used their classrooms as offices. The staff compliment consists of the principal, a deputy principal, 3 Departmental Heads and 21 educators (Post–Level One educators). The school has an enrolment of 820 learners. Most parents of these learners were unemployed. They depended on the government social grant for income. The school’s SGB has 7 members consisting of 3 females and 4 males.

Since the focus of the study was on female chairpersons, it is important to mention the structure of its SGB. The SGB consists of 7 members, including 3 females and 4 males. The secretary was a female; the treasurer a male, the deputy chairperson was a male, while the chairperson was female, and the 3 co-opted members consisted of 1 female and 2 males.

The chairperson of this SGB was Miss Carrot for (anonymity purposes). She was between the ages of 50 to 55 years. She had 3 years of experience as a member of a SGB. She had been a member of SGB in a secondary school near her location. She was elected as a chairperson of its infrastructure subcommittee at this secondary school. She was also elected as a Deputy Chairperson at this secondary school in the last 2 years of her term on its SGB. On the newly - elected SGB in 2017, she was elected as its chairperson. Currently she is a female

chairperson of 7 members of its SGB with 3 female members and 4 male members. She worked closely with her school principal who was also a female. She had a Grade 8 level of education.

School	Deputy Principal	DH	Educators	Learners	Total
PPS	1	3	21	820	845

Table 6: Staff establishment of Pink Primary School

School	Number of SGB members in total	Secretary Gender	Treasurer Gender	Deputy Chairperson Gender	Chairperson Gender
PPS	7	M	M	M	F

Table 7: Summarised SGB Structure of Pink Primary School

### 4.3 Research questions

There are two research questions that underpinned the study and these are:

1. What are the experiences of being a female chairperson of a School Governing Body in a rural school?
2. How do female chairpersons deal with the challenges when they are doing their duties?

### 4.4 Presentation of the study findings

In this section, three themes emerged from the analysis of the data. These are, Being in charge of and giving support to the SGBs as prescribed by the Schools Act; Challenges experienced by female chairpersons of the SGB in rural schools and the strategies that female chairperson used to deal with the challenges. These themes are discussed in the following section.

#### **4.4.1 Being in charge and giving support to School Governing Bodies**

When participants were asked about their understanding of their roles as chairpersons of the SGB in school governance, two participants expressed similar views and one had a different view. Two participants felt that as chairpersons of the SGB, they were supposed to be in charge of the SGB. They also said that they felt hurt that they were not given enough opportunities to chair meetings in full and were not given enough support by the SGB members.

In this regard, Mrs Cabbage stated the following:

*As a chairperson of the SGB, it is my duty to chair SGB meetings because meetings of the SGBs and parents are called by me as the chairperson. Teachers and principals are not allowed to be the chair [for those meetings]. Sometimes we have conflict of position with the principal wanting to chair the meeting. It seems like there is misunderstanding between school management and school governance.*

Mrs Spinach shared the same view with Mrs Cabbage when she emphasised that being a chairperson of the SGB implies that she had to chair the SGB meetings. This is what she had this to say in that regard:

*It is my role to call parents and school governing body meetings and chair them. Very often, members come late to meetings without good reasons. Some other members are most of the time absent without any apology. It seems to me that there is a lack of knowledge and interest from some members.*

Mrs Carrot shared her experience, focusing on the importance of behaving in a disciplined manner and the need to observe policy by members of the SGB. One would assume that such a disciplined behaviour would be demonstrated when SGB meetings are held. She said:

*As a chairperson of the SGB, it is my role to see that the members are disciplined and respect each other. The policy should be followed by all the members to be sure that things are run smoothly.*

Besides those common issues raised above by chairpersons, all three chairpersons shared different experiences. These ranged from the drafting of the agenda of the meetings, management of the curriculum, ensuring that decisions taken at the meetings are in line with the Department of Education policies, and supporting the principal, the teachers and the non-teaching staff. Responding to the same question, Miss Carrot expressed a different view about her role as chairperson of the SGB. Her view was that the agenda of every meeting needs to be drafted and discussed with the principal first. She felt that agenda ought to have been agreed by herself and the principal. In this regard, this is what she said:

*The SGB chairperson meets with the principal of the school and discusses the issues that should be dealt within its meeting or in the meeting of parents. The chairperson works together with the principal and the school. It is in these meetings where we encourage parents to support the school with whatever they can do, for example, by providing free services.*

Mrs Spinach emphasised that her role as a chairperson was to provide support in ensuring that teaching and learning was promoted. She mentioned that they encouraged parents to render voluntarily services at school such as fixing broken furniture; they also provided support in terms of maintaining learner discipline. She then stated the following:

*My role as the SGB chairperson is to provide the necessary support to the school management team so that teaching and learning is promoted and that learners are performing to their best in a positive environment. We contribute in drawing the learners' code of conduct and if there is a learner who has a bad behaviour we try to intervene.*

In this regard, Mrs Carrot saw her role as that of ensuring that all decisions that are taken in the meetings are correct and in line with the policies of the Department of Basic Education (DBE). She also mentioned that she tried by all means to avoid deviations from policies of the DBE. Emphasising her views, this is what she had to say:

*The chairperson, together with the SGB, focus on governance issues, not the professional management. It is my role as chairperson of the SGB to see that the*

*decisions taken are in line with the Department policies. It is also my role to ensure that meetings of the SGB are held at least once a term.*

Mrs Cabbage was of the opinions that, as a chairperson, she needed to work together with the principal, but she did not have to manage the school. She also mentioned that the professional management of the school was not her role. She said:

*The chairperson works mostly with the principal because the SGB does not administer the school; it is the principal who does that. The management of the school and management of educators and the curriculum is the role of the principal with his school management team. As a chairperson of the SGB, I must not interfere or disrupt the professional management process of the school. The chairperson of the SGB and its members are there to support the principal and the staff of the school. As a chairperson I also motivate the parents to do voluntary work for the school.*

Though the participants mentioned the different roles that they expected to perform, it is important to note that all the things they mentioned are consistent with the provisions of the Schools Act. For instance, Section 20(1) of the Schools Act stipulates that it is the duty of the chairperson together with the members of the SGB to support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional duties and functions (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). This relationship between the government legislation and their understandings of their role demonstrates that they, as chairpersons of SGB, had clear understanding of their roles. This implies that what they did and discussed in their meetings was consistent with policy requirements.

When the minutes of the SGB meeting held at Mrs Cabbage's school on 16 May 2017, were scrutinised it appeared that Mrs Cabbage experienced some difficulties chairing the meeting, and her deputy chair, a male, ended up having to chair this meeting. Though she delegated her chairing responsibilities to her deputy, but at least she understood that chairing was her responsibility. Even though, she had to ask her deputy to chair the meeting so that it could continue. It is therefore, important to highlight that the chairpersons' understandings of their roles can be, to some degree, be linked to the training they received after elections. In most cases, principals are required to train SGB members regarding their roles. It stands to reason that if principals trained SGB members in a correct way, then they would be able to understand and also play their roles in an effective manner. Having said this, this may also

imply that principals may can act as the main gatekeepers in terms of access to quality within the school. In the next section I turn to the challenges experienced by female chairpersons.

#### **4.4.2 Challenges experienced by female chairpersons of School Governing Bodies in rural schools**

When the participants were asked about the experiences they faced as female chairpersons of the SGBs in rural schools as they performed their duties, it emerged that they experienced a number of challenges that disturbed them when performing their leadership duties assigned to them. All shared similar sentiments and mentioned a number of gender related challenges. These challenges included gender inequality and discrimination, gender stereotyping, negative attitudes from male members of SGBs, culture and religion and a lack of self-confidence and self- esteem. These challenges are discussed next.

##### ***4.4.2.1 Gender inequality and discrimination***

When talking about gender inequality and discrimination, participants felt that gender inequality and discrimination was still a threat to them as female SGB chairpersons. From the interviews it was clear that men in rural contexts did not like having females as leaders. They claimed that they were not being taken seriously in their positions. All participants expressed similar views. In this regard, Mrs Carrot stated the following:

*In rural area, we are still oppressed as females. For example, as a female chairperson of the SGB, when I am directing the meeting, I can see that some of the members, especially males, do not like taking orders from me. I have also noticed that some of females the do not take me seriously as a leader. This is because they are not used to the idea of being be led by a female person.*

Mrs Cabbage shared ta similar view with Mrs Carrot, and pointed out that the issue of 50/50 in the area where she lived was not embraced. This is what she had to say in that regard:

*In this area, people do not believe that females and males are now equal. Here in our village, when you are in a leadership position as a female you are not taken seriously. There are females who still believe in men, they don't support us as females. I could observe this when I give the members of SGB work to do, they do not like to take*

*orders from me. In some cases, I had to ask my deputy for help so that the work could be done.*

The feeling of disliking to be led by women also arose from Mrs Spinach's response when she pointed out that the community members (parents) in her area did not support females as leaders. She said:

*In this area, people around the community (parents) feel ashamed and embarrassed to be led by a female; they feel it is a man's job. Very few females will give support when you want it. In some instances, there is still that feeling from other females that they cannot be led by female.*

Besides the above views expressed by the by different chairpersons, it has also transpired from the discussions with the participants that they felt being undermined in their positions by members of the SGBs and mostly by the principals of the rural schools in which they operated. Two participants, Mrs Spinach and Mrs Carrot, expressed similar views and beliefs about them being undermined because the heads of their respective schools were males. In this regard, Mrs Spinach said:

*My deputy chairperson is a male. My school principal is a male. When I am chairing a meeting and there is a misunderstanding amongst us, if I try to intervene as the chairperson the principal stands up and talks without giving me a chance to solve the problem. Members do not take me seriously. But they listen if the principal speaks. At times, I felt like quitting when I was being disturbed in the meetings I chair. I also felt sad at times to see that no one is on your side as you try to keep order. To me, that is a challenge of being a female chairperson.*

Mrs Carrot shared the same sentiments and said:

*I could see that a problem that my principal has with me as female chairperson is because he prefers to discuss issues with my deputy who is a male. What worries me is that the issues require my involvement as a chairperson. I never said he must not contact me when the need arises. What he does is undermining my authority. Maybe he does not believe in me because I am a female.*

In addition, Mrs Cabbage added that undermining became obvious when they were processing promotional posts. This occurred because, I believe, they were instructed by unions as to what to do. She said:

*The school governing body is the committee that is given a mandate to be involved in the selection of newly-appointed principals, deputy principals and heads of department. It is a major challenge that we face as female chairpersons when these processes take place. What I noticed when the interviews were conducted was that as a female chairperson of the SGB, I was often undermined by trade union members and male members of the selection committee. They ordered me to support a particular candidate. This is despite the fact that such behaviours are against government policy.*

The minutes of the SGB were also consistent with what transpired during the interviews. The minutes I read from Mrs Spinach's school raised a concern about the questions that members asked. The questions asked by some members during meetings revealed that most questions were expressing doubts about her capabilities and leadership since she was a female chairperson of their SGB. Again, with Mrs Carrot's school, what I established from the minutes was that, it seemed as if it was still a difficulty for some rural SGB members to accept her as a female chairperson and as an effective leader. The participants' views on gender inequality and discrimination is also shared by Khoso, Shafiq, Abdi and Shaiki (2011) who argue that the supremacy of male and subordination of female in African societies are very common and seem to be a norm in rural areas in many countries. In South Africa, a patriarchal society in which women are treated as chalet, are given to males through arranged marriages to spend their lives in the service of male dominated societal system, women are vulnerable to violence and discrimination.

According to Kolb (2019), gender inequality can be defined as allowing people different opportunities due to perceived differences based solely on issues of gender. Gender discrimination is prejudicial treatment of an individual or group due to gender. Kolb (2019) further indicates that gender inequality and discrimination are generally discussed as pertaining to women, but anyone can experience gender- based inequality or discrimination. The study by Moletsane and Ntombela (2010) revealed that cultural constructions of gender and, in particular, the social status of women and girls in rural communities contribute to the

intensity of their experiences, in contrast to their male counterparts and those living in urban areas.

#### **4.4.2.2 Gender stereotyping**

In our discussion with the participants, gender stereotyping also came out as a major challenge faced by these female chairpersons of the SGBs in their schools. Two participants, Mrs Spinach and Mrs Carrot, felt that gender stereotyping made it difficult for them when it came to giving orders and taking decisions. However, Mrs Cabbage had a different view about the gender stereotyping. This is what Mrs Spinach had to say:

*I find it difficult at times to ask parents who are males to come and render services at the school. These services are like fixing desks, windows, taps, doors and other services that need to be done. This is because of the remark they often pass that they cannot take instructions from a female. They say that I must use school funds to repair broken things. I can say without doubt that as a female leader especially in this community, is leading under the pressure of being discriminated against and not being accepted as a leader.*

Like Mrs Spinach, Mrs Carrots had similar experiences, and she said:

*Gender stereotype is at its worst in budget meetings with the parents. When parents observe that I am not the one who is assigned to deliver the financial report, they feel uncomfortable and think that monies have been misused. They believe that I should be the one who should deliver financial reports. If I try to explain the procedures, they refuse to understand since they perceive that a female cannot lead effectively.*

She then smiled and continued:

*To be elected as a female chairperson of the SGB, probably is because when elections were carried out, many males were unavailable since they were out of town working or seeking employment. When they come back they found out that a female was now leading the SGB. The challenge is that they did not accept a female leader when they returned to the rural area. You then need to work even harder to gain their trust and acceptance. They do not like to take orders from a female as a chairperson of SGB.*

In addition, Mrs Cabbage highlighted that gender stereotyping was even in their homes when their husbands felt inferior because their wives took up leadership opportunities. She explained:

*Sometimes, I leave home early and come back late. My husband comments by saying "I wonder who the man is in this house". By saying so, he meant that he is unhappy about the position I hold in the SGB. He thinks I want to be above him at home. We all know that this is not the situation.*

Moreover, Mrs Cabbage said:

*Other things that show it is a challenge to be a female chairperson or to hold any other leadership position in a rural area is that local males dislike to be led by a female. They dislike taking instructions from a female.*

From above excerpt, it is evident that the community at large needs to be work shopped about gender stereotyping and the roles that can be played by females in the society. Stereotyping is viewed by Maime (2011) as an issue to a female holding a leadership or management position. Gender-role stereotypes believe that males and females operate differently and their roles are unequal. They do not allow females to become leaders. Instead, they dictate that a female must serve a man, and do household work. This is common in an African society and particularly in rural areas from where the participants of this study were selected and interviewed.

According to the UN Women (2011), stereotypes exist in all societies. It is about how we perceive each other and this can be determined through oversimplified assumptions about people based on particular traits, such as race, gender, age and so forth. Based on the above statements it is evident that gender stereotyping still existing in some of rural areas. When the minutes of SGB meeting held at Mrs Cabbage's school were scrutinised, it appeared that Mrs Cabbage had a problem of asking the SGB male members to render some services for the school. The minutes revealed that when she had to ask members to do some work she delegated that to her deputy chairperson because he is a male person. The data also revealed that gender stereotyping is based on socially constructed norms, practices and beliefs. It reflects in my view the power relations between males and females very common in African patriarchal societies.

#### 4.4.2.3 *Negative attitudes from male members of School Governing Bodies*

Attitudes expressed by people (positive or negative) play an important role in relationships with people, especially in organisational setup. It also transpired from the interviews that female chairpersons of the SGBs in rural schools receive negative attitudes from their male counterparts in the SGB. Negative attitudes of male members of the SGBs towards female chairpersons of schools in rural areas was mainly based on patriarchy and notions of superiority that existed. This is the view expressed by the participants. For example, two participants Mrs Cabbage and Mrs Carrot, believed that there was still a belief that a female cannot lead effectively. The following comment was made by Mrs Cabbage:

*As I have said, both our principal and my deputy chairperson are males. I have noticed that if it was not for the Department of Education policy, they would not work hand in hand with me as a female chairperson of the SGB. They would try to change things. Everything that I suggest with them they do not take seriously. They will start discussing it alone. They leave me out or they do not accept my view at all. It is hard to work with a person who has a negative attitude towards you. It is painful.*

A similar sentiment was shared by Mrs Carrot who found it difficult to perform her duties as a result of negative attitudes she received. This challenge was also experienced by Mrs Carrot. This is what she had to say:

*In some situations, as a chairperson of my SGB, it is my duty to chair the parents' meetings and SGB meetings. But the attitude I receive from my principal, deputy chairperson, the parent members and SGB members is negative. To me, it is clear that they are unhappy to have a female as their chairperson. That makes my task difficult.*

In addition, Mrs Spinach raised the issue that negative attitudes from the members of the SGB working with her, made it difficult for her to achieve her vision and goals. She explained:

*For instance, even when the agenda of the meeting is given to the SGB members and parent for parents meeting, as early as possible, they will come to the meeting with negative attitudes and try to change everything. When you call them to order as the chairperson, they make sure that this results in a problem. It is difficult to work with a person who has a negative attitude and who undermines your leadership.*

From the above discussions, it appears that most participants were concerned about the negative attitudes they received when performing their duties. These are the implications of the lack of support and teamwork in some institutions. In reviewing the documents, for example, the minutes of the SGB meetings, attendance registers revealed that parents of learners from the schools of these three chairpersons were still reluctant to have a female leader of a committee. The attendance registers of these three schools also revealed a poor attendance by SGB members. I am aware that this study has only three participants, and therefore, these remarks cannot be generalised. However, it is clear from the participants' responses that they encountered difficulties to carry out their duties as required because of the negative attitudes manifested by the male members of the SGBs.

#### ***4.4.2.4 Culture and religion***

When participants were asked about some of their experiences as female chairperson of SGBs in rural schools, culture and religion was revealed to be a major challenge. Our discussions with the participants revealed that these challenges (traditional belief and religion) had made them to be unable to carry out their duties effectively as chairpersons of the SGBs. Culture and religion are taken seriously in rural areas. All three participants mentioned that they needed to gain the trust of community members, leaders of the community and other females because of the culture and religion that was prevalent in rural areas where this study was conducted. Mrs Spinach had this to say:

*It was obvious from the beginning that I needed to be patient, since in rural areas like ours, females are regarded as those responsible for housework. Now that I am working with different structures I needed to gain their trust and show them that I respect our cultures and religions. That was difficult and still is difficult.*

Mrs Cabbage said the following:

*The principal in our area is a very important person. I cannot forget the first meeting I had with him. He is also from our area by birth. I could feel that he did not want to accept me as chairperson of his SGB. At the meeting, he started by saying to me "do you know what you have put yourself into?" Since I was born in this area, it was difficult for me to mention that I am only going to carry out my responsibilities as chairperson of the SGB and that he should carry out his responsibilities as principal of the school. He explained what my responsibilities were as chairperson and what he*

*expected from me. As a person born in this area where patriarchy is dominant, I felt like it was not my duty to be above men in this situation.....although I was encouraged by some community members (parents) who were very supportive to me and expressed their joy at what one of their own daughter had finally achieved (being a SGB chairperson).*

From the above narrative given by Mrs Cabbage, it is evident that her meeting with her school principal was a challenge to her since she was scared to tell him about her role as chairperson of the SGB. In addition, Mrs Carrot mentioned how she tried to gain the trust of the community members (parents). She explained saying:

*Another challenge that I still remember was to meet with the chief (Inkosi) when attempting to gain his trust based to our culture and religion.*

She smiled and then continued as follows:

*Knowing that here, in rural areas, a female is not taken seriously when she is in a leadership position. I wanted to gain the trust of my community. I started by trying to gain the trust of the chief. That alone was a challenge for a female to meet with the chief. Therefore, I requested to meet with elders so that they could arrange a meeting for me with the chief (Inkosi) to discuss what needed to be done for our community especially for the schools. It was a major challenge since our culture and religion does not allow a female to sit in a meeting with elders especially the chief (Inkosi). I can see that some elders remain concerned that the SGB chairperson is female.*

It is evident that there are still people in leadership and management positions who still look down upon women and clearly, there are no credible basis for such thinking.

#### **4.4.2.5 Lack of confidence and self-esteem**

Another challenge that the participants faced is the lack of confidence. When asked about experiences they encountered as SGB female chairpersons, it was apparent that some of them lacked self-confidence and had a low self-esteem because of their cultural background. Interviews revealed that there were numerous factors that contributed to this. All participants

felt that they needed to have confidence to carry out their duties effectively. They also felt that their voices were major problem. Mrs Cabbage had this to say:

*First, my challenge was my voice. When I am with parents in a meeting at the community hall, often they cannot hear me. They then become uncontrollable. To control them is difficult since you need to be confident. I am trying to talk loudly but it is difficult.*

Sharing similar sentiments, Mrs Carrot had this to say:

*Most females dislike arguments. Their voices are not powerful like men's. Now, as a female chairperson, you need to talk loudly and be confident so that you can be heard and taken seriously. I do not have a loud voice and I don't like to talk loudly.*

Cook (2007) argues that the culture which is reflected in the set of beliefs, values, practices and norms associated with the local community, as well as, in the workplace, can adversely affect the operation of women leaders and their ability to exercise a positive leadership role. Furthermore, Metcalfe (2008) alludes to the fact that some cultural beliefs are reflected in associated leadership abilities and positions with men and not women. This implies that culture impacts significantly on the female chairperson of SGBs decision-making abilities, confidence and self-esteem to fully perform to their best. In addition, Mrs Spinach mentioned that since she grew up in a rural area where a female is not used to talk in front of many people, she found it difficult to talk loudly and show confidence. She explained as follows:

*Sometimes, to talk in front of parent members is difficult. Since in rural areas females are not used to stand up in front of members and to address them, I am trying hard to carry out my responsibilities. But, I find it difficult to talk loudly as if I am disrespecting them.*

Mrs Cabbage indicated other forms of her experience. In this regard she said the following:

*When I was in my second term of being the chairperson of the SGB, I learnt different things; for example, that to be a chairperson you sometimes find yourself in situations like these. Like the time that we were supposed to appoint our principal we come across difficult problems. I was shocked with the way things were happening. A chairperson of the SGB, sometimes one has to deal with situations when they need to be strong, and know what they want for the school. I also learnt that to be clear about*

*your position and your rights as SGB chairperson helped a lot, even though I was at first shocked.*

Mrs Spinach stated that she found it difficult to cope with some of her duties; hence, she needed to be confident. This is what she had to say:

*It is not easy to work with people who do not take you seriously since you are female. The minute you stand up to address them and noticed that members are not paying attention to you, then you start to feel nerves and lose confidence. Then even my voice will start shaking.*

Having described in detail some of the challenges that female chairpersons faced as they carried out their duties, in the next section I turn to a discussion about some of the strategies that they deployed to overcome the challenges.

#### **4.4.3 The strategies that female chairpersons used to deal with the challenges encountered**

When participants were asked about the strategies they used to deal with any challenges they encountered as they carried out their responsibilities, their responses revealed that they employed numerous strategies to overcome the challenges they faced while working in rural areas. These strategies included working as a team; adopting positive attitude and motivation; sharing a common vision and set up realistic goals; being able to delegate, as well as being a good listener and learner.

##### **4.4.3.1 Teamwork**

When participants were asked about what their strategies were that they used to overcome the challenges they faced, it transpired from the discussions that they used teamwork in order to deal with some of the challenges they faced. They stated for example, that working as a team was important because they were able to share ideas; the work is more done easier and faster, learning from each other and to get to know each other. They further stated that working as a team in decision making inspired other members of the SGB, and to support each other. They also mentioned that since they worked in rural areas, it was not easy to work as a team with

community members. This was because females in those communities were not generally taken seriously even when they occupied leadership positions. All the participants shared common views that they used team work in order to gain trust, support and good communication among the members.

Mrs Cabbage has learnt that working as a team enabled her to get to know other people. She explained for example, that she had been able to engage with them and respect their differences. She explained:

*I have learned to work with others. This has helped me to understand people and trust them. Even though it is hard to work with them, since I am a female, but being forced to work with them has helped me. Now that I understand them, I am patient with them, I do not feel like quitting anymore.*

Mrs Spinach also expressed a view that she survived through networking and teamwork. She said the following:

*Working as a team is very encouraging since you cannot work alone. Since members of this community are not used to work with the female as a leader, by using team work helped me because some of them they started to accept me as a leader. What I've noticed is that some of the members are motivated and encouraged to work with me as a female chairperson. Communication is important when you are a team.*

In addition, Mrs Carrot added that using teamwork has made her to gain more skills. She also mentioned that she used teamwork so that they could deal with the challenges faced in the school as a team. She said the following:

*I have used teamwork to foster my skills and empower myself. I have also used teamwork so that the members of my SGB and community can work with me to deal with the challenges that our school faces. I also used teamwork in order for the members to trust me and to show them that I respect them and I can be a good leader if they give me support.*

It transpired during our discussion about issues of teamwork that respect and support for each other was very important. The second participant Mrs Spinach stated that it is very important when you are a team, you have to support each other, and do not work against each other. This is what Mrs Spinach had to say:

*It is vital that people who are working together in any organisation or team support each other because if they do not support each other their team or organisation will not be successful. That is why I used the teamwork as a strategy to overcome the challenges of being a female chairperson in this rural area.*

From the above responses from the participants, it is clear as Wehbe (2017) attests, that teamwork is an important and essential strategy in order to accomplish the overall objectives and goals of an organisation. She further adds that teamwork motivates unity in the workplace. When teamwork is working, the whole team would be motivated and working toward the same goal in harmony. From the participant's responses, it is clear as pointed by Tarricone and Lucas (2002) that successful teamwork relies upon synergy that exists between all team members, thus creating an environment where they are all willing to contribute and participate in order to promote a nurture positive, effective environment. Teamwork can be defined as a group of individuals who work collectively to achieve the same purpose and goals to provide an excellent quality of services. Teamwork has the ability to enable the members of the team to have higher level of emotional security, self-confidence and ability to plan and decide with others positively (Sandal & Hisam, 2018).

#### **4.4.3.2 Positive attitude and motivation**

Positive attitude and motivation also emerged as another strategy that these female chairpersons of the SGBs used in their schools. Two participants, Mrs Cabbage and Mrs Spinach, were able to demonstrate that they had a good understanding of their responsibilities and that they were prepared to face the challenges that could emerged during their work. Participants mentioned that when you are a leader you need to be positive and be motivated by your work. They further mentioned that you need to make your team motivated and have positive attitudes towards their responsibilities, in this case, the SGB as they are elected by parents. Mrs Cabbage said the following:

*I am committed and strive for the best. I know, it is not easy; however, I am prepared to give it my best shot. If you have a positive attitude and persistently strive to give your best, even if people don't believe on you, eventually you can overcome any problem. I am motivated by some of the community members who are seeking the best for our children. I always stay positive in any situation I encounter as female chairperson.*

Again, Mrs Cabbage highlighted the feeling of support she received from the elders of the community. She explained:

*I also have a full support from Inkosi (the chief) and elders of this community. Remember that from the beginning, I met with the chief (Inkosi) to gain his support. I just told myself that I will stay positive and try to motivate all the stakeholders that are involved in order to build up our school. As a chairperson, it is my duty to keep the members of SGB and community positive and motivated so that they will want to work with me. That has worked for me.*

Participants like Mrs Spinach relied on experience and positive attitude in order to survive. She elaborated:

*I was in this situation before, since over the years. I have served on various committees and participated in different projects of the school. I climbed the ladder starting from a lower level. Experience and positive attitude keep me going for any problems that I come across with. Even though it is hard to motivate members who do not believe on you as a female. To stay positive helped me a lot to do my responsibilities effectively. Some of the members support me. I am working with them to gain other members of the SGB and the community to be positive and motivated so that we can work together.*

My take of the responses of the participants indicates that there are still individuals who undermine leadership of females. These females are motivated and do receive some positive attitudes from other members of the SGB and the parents. The minute books showed that during SGB meetings, some members exhibited positive attitudes towards a female chairperson. Mncube (2010) suggests that if parent members of the SGB are actively involved and fully understanding their role in the SGB, they can have a positive impact on the entire governing body by motivating them to be actively involved in other aspects of the school. Likewise, Stenger (2018) indicates that recently, researchers have uncovered evidence that suggests that a positive attitude can impact our ability to learn and solve problem. It is therefore, important to highlight that this strategy used by the participants had positively impacted on their work individually as leader and on the bodies they were governing, as well as, on the team members of various SGBs.

#### **4.4.3.3 Sharing common vision and goals**

Females serving as chairpersons of School Governing Bodies in rural schools believed that sharing a common vision and goals set, made it easier to work. All three participants believed that it was imperative to share a common vision when working as a team. This helped their personal motivation and helped team members to join together for the benefit of all, and share a dedication to achieve the goals set. Mrs Cabbage had this to say:

*It helps me to recognise contributions made by others and to have a clear vision of what needs to be achieved based on the goal-centred model. It motivates members, acknowledges how their efforts contribute to the advancement of the school.*

Mrs Spinach also shared the same sentiment, stating that when leaders share their vision and goals with their team members, they as leaders, can deal with any challenge they encounter. Spinach had this to say: *To share a common vision helps to address setbacks and challenges as a team and forge the way forward. Goals should be realistic and achievable over a set and well determine period of time.*

In addition, Mrs Carrot stressed that creating a strong, shared vision and the goals of SGB to the SGB members, and parent members paid dividends. She explained:

*From the start, I knew that it won't be easy to be accepted as a female chairperson. I started by generating and communicating my vision in a simple, clear way in order for members to understand the vision I had for our school. I wanted to gain the trust of all stakeholders making sure that they all have the same, and clear understanding of what we wanted to achieve for the benefit of our school. I made sure that we were on the same page, frequently reminding everyone of the expected outcomes.*

The participants' responses and approaches used of sharing a common vision and goals is supported by various scholars including Sanyal and Hasim (2018) who argue that teams with shared vision have better coordination and less conflicts than teams without a vision. Members are confident, share responsibility, which in turn, increases the leader's ability to adapt. Talking about the vision and goals, it is essential that I clarify the concept team vision and why it is important to share common vision in order to achieve set objectives and goals. A vision is a team declaration of its future. It is a long-term, over-arching team goal which provides a sense of purpose and direction, helping to distinguish one team from another by describing the team uniqueness (Arnold, 2007).

In education, a vision is important for schools; it is much more than few words of vague intention; it embodies the values of the community and is the foundation for actions that will lead to school improvement (West-Burnham, 2010). Thompson (2017) argues that successful leaders know the importance of creating a strong shared vision for their team. In teams with a strong shared vision, members have a common sense of the purpose and agreed upon goals, and are more likely to feel motivated, empowered, and committed to their teams' collective future (Zhang, Waldman & Wang, 2012).

#### **4.4.3.4 Delegation**

Participants also delegated some of the duties as a strategy to eliminate the challenges they face in their work. All participants had similar views on this issue. They pointed out that it was not easy for them to delegate duties to members of the SGB since they were females; men in rural areas were not used to be given instructions by females. But they mentioned that delegation helped them to increase trust, loyalty and growth opportunities among the members of the SGB. This is what Mrs Cabbage had to say:

*To delegate your responsibilities to someone else is not easy. In many instances, the person you delegate tasks to fills that he or she is working for you. For example, in my situation, it is difficult because members of the community and members of the SGB are not used to be led by a female person. In other instances, delegation was done based on various committee to which members belong. I also have also look at the person's skills and make sure that I follow up with monitoring and supervision. Even here, I use delegation skills.*

Moreover, she mentioned that, the more she delegated some of her duties to the members, the more they started to trust her. This is what she had to say:

*I also notice that some of them are becoming loyal to me and treat me like a leader, not a female chairperson. They started to trust me and feel important, for asking help from them.*

Mrs Carrot shared similar views. This is what she had to say:

*I prefer to work and complete my task. It is difficult to ask these people to do your work. Often, they try to make you fail, undermining what you do. But I noticed something when I delegated some of my duties to them; that they were motivated and willing to assist. In other words, I can say that delegation is one of my strategies to work with them.*

While also concurring with the views expressed by the two participants above, Mrs Spinach mentioned that she noticed that, not all members were against her leadership. She further stated that delegating some of duties to the members of the SGB assisted her to learn some skills, some were good and confident. This is what she had to say:

*I have given responsibility to some of the members as they were willing to support me in order to attain the common goals sets. I have discovered that when given space, some were quite good and excellent in completing the tasks they were assigned. However, I have made sure that the follow up was done regularly to avoid delays. They became more confident and very supportive in many projects. I have also learned that I needed to trust them, in order to get the expected outcomes. I have also noticed that delegation is important because it decreases delays.*

From the above responses it is clear that delegation was used as a strategy by Mrs Spinach and this has helped her to be more developed, to trust the team members and to improve the efficiency of the tasks assigned by means of monitoring and common development. Through delegation, Mrs Spinach had allowed team members to be more responsible, to feel secure and become experts and take personal interest in their own development as well as the development of the SGBs. Delegation being an assignment of responsibility and authority to someone in order to complete a clearly defined and agreed upon task while retaining ultimate responsibility for its success, is in my view, a very crucial step to take for teamwork sake. When team members are aware of their own responsibilities and rules, as well as, the significance of their output being relied upon, the rest of their team will be driven to share the same vision, values and goals. The results create a work place environment based on fellowship, trust, support respect .and cooperation (Wehbe, 2017).

From the participants' responses, the narratives indicate the view shared by Mind tools (2018) who attests that there is no such thing as single-handed success. Such a view is based on the assumption that when one includes and acknowledges all those in ones' corner, one

propels oneself, his/her teammates and supporters to greater heights. Therefore, delegating effectively can benefit everyone. When delegating, team members know that the leader is recognising their talents and efforts, and that they are important to the team.

#### **4.4.3.5 Good listener and learner**

When the participants were asked about strategies they used in order to cope with the work they do, it emerged that, to be a good listener and learner, was one of the strategies they adopted. All participants shared similar views about this issue. They highlighted a somewhat cultural dimension to show respect and good listening. For instance, African ways of showing respect to an adult person is by not looking in the eye, and to avoid eye contact. However, these participants argued that as a chairperson of SGB, they needed to show respect and active listening by keeping eye contact, and by nodding or by giving a smile at appropriate times to show interest. Participants also mentioned that they made sure that they understood everything that was being discussed in meetings. They also mentioned that to be a good listener gave them many benefits and encouraged the person who was a speaker to feel valued as well. Since females in rural areas were not taken seriously, they needed to show other members that they were good listeners and that they can learn from them. The following statements were provided by the participants. Mrs Cabbage had this to say:

*Taking time to listen to others is one of my strategy to gain trust from the members of SGB and parents. I have learned over the years to keep quiet and listen to others' views. Knowing that I am a human being I can make mistake.*

Mrs Spinach emphasised that when one is a leader, one must be a good listener and be prepared to learn from other people. She believed that people can reciprocate and demonstrate willingness to listen to you as well. She also mentioned that since she was not taken seriously as a female chairperson, to be a good listener had worked for her to gain the support of SGB members and community members (parents). She said:

*For me, listening first is learning. Secondly, it is a sign of respect that one a good characteristic of a good leader. As a female working with males, listening to them and what they have to say made them trust me and build confidence in me. I am, and will always remain, a good listener. Some of the members accepted me as female chairperson even though not all of them but we are getting there.*

In addition, regarding the issue of being a good listener, Mrs Carrot highlighted that to show that you are listening to a member when it is a meeting, gives them confidence that they belong to the team. She also mentioned that as a chairperson she needed to be a good listener in a way that when members deviated from the topic she could correct them nicely without annoying them. This is what she said:

*During meetings, I listen to all the members. But I make sure that we do not deviate from the agenda. Sometimes they talk without stopping. It then becomes a challenge to ask them to keep quiet. When you do so, it is a way of upsetting them. Some of them become rude. They will then challenge you since you are a female. But what I have learned is that to be respected you need to respect first and for people to listen to you, you must be a good listener.*

It is vitally important to create a balanced team that has an affinity to each other. This can be achieved when the team leader is willing to listen attentively to others in a calm and supportive manner. By encouraging team members to express their views and open up with each other and yourself as team leader will build up personal connections. Wehbe (2017) indicates that teamwork provides great opportunities, enabling team members to learn from one another's mistakes and experiences. You are able to avoid future errors, gain insight from differing perspectives, and learn new concepts from more experienced colleagues.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the analysis of qualitative data generated through semi-structured interviews and documents reviews which included the minutes books and meeting-attendance registers. Three female chairpersons of the SGB in rural schools in KwaZulu-Natal had participated in the study. The presented data indicated that female chairpersons of the SGBs experienced various gender related challenges when carrying out their duties. It was also revealed that not all their experiences were negative. In some instances, they were able to share their positive experiences and highlights on the success and support received from teamwork and from some members of their families, as well as, their communities.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings generated from data. This is the last chapter of the study, where I provide conclusions reached drawing from the findings discussed in Chapter Four, and make some recommendations. Before I present the conclusions, I begin by providing a brief summary of the study.

#### 5.2 Summary of the study

This study explored the experiences of female chairpersons of three rural schools. The purpose of this study was to understand how being female leaders of the School Governing Bodies in three rural schools in KwaZulu-Natal was like; to understand some of the challenges they encountered and how they overcame such challenges. The dissertation in which the study is reported is made up of five chapters, and these are summarised next.

The first chapter introduced the study by outlining the background, giving the rationale, declaring the purpose, the objectives and the research questions of the study. The second chapter presented a review of related literature expressing various debates from local and international arena. The discussion of the theoretical framework was also presented in the same chapter. The third chapter provided a detailed discussion of the research methodology which includes a discussion on research paradigm, research design and research methodology. The data generation methods and analysis that were utilised to produce data which helped in answering the research questions were also discussed. Furthermore, the issues of trustworthiness and ethics as well as the limitations of the study were outlined. The fourth chapter presented the data which was organised into three themes and subthemes, and these were discussed in details revealing the findings based on the participants own perspectives of their experiences of being female chairpersons of School Governing Bodies of schools in rural areas. The fifth and the last chapter presents conclusions reached after analysing the findings, and these conclusions are presented next.

### **5.3 Conclusions drawn from findings**

This section presents the conclusions that are derived from the findings of the study to address each critical question. This study was guided by the two critical questions listed below:

- What are the experiences of being a female chairperson of a School Governing Body in rural schools?
- How do female chairpersons deal with the challenges they face when they are doing their duties?

#### **5.3.1 Experiences faced by female chairpersons of the SGBs in rural schools**

This study has explored the experiences of females who are chairpersons of the SGBs in rural schools. Drawing from the findings discussed in the previous chapter, I conclude that the experiences of these female chairpersons of the SGBs in rural schools are characterised largely by negativities, and are thus unable to perform their duties freely. The study has revealed that the female chairpersons in studied schools faced numerous barriers emanating from a cocktail of stereotypes ranging from patriarchal, cultural and gender stereotypes. The study also revealed the female chairpersons bowed and, in some instances, succumbed to their male counterparts for them to survive in their positions. Although the females in this regard are given this critical role to play as chairperson they are found to be relying on their male counterparts in order to succeed. Examples of this can be found in instances where males had to deliver reports on their behalf. Such reports were supposed to be delivered by them, but could not due to resistance of some members of the community. Therefore, I conclude that the participants played a huge role in reinforcing the existing stereotypes that depict women leaders as incapable to leading without the presence of men. This is a concern for me.

Some men in rural communities believed that they have more power than females. This is also supported by their reluctances to cooperate in the meetings and deny authority of females. This may suggest that these female chairpersons are not confident enough to make

independent decision. The stereotyping and labelling that happens in their lives as female appeared as been internalised and shaped their identity of being dependent on men. These female chairpersons expressed that some of people with whom they worked regarded them as less capable as leaders, and therefore, not good leaders compared to their male counterparts. As I have indicated in the paragraph above, the responses of the participants is not helpful because they are entrenching the existing gender stereotypes.

### **5.3.2 The strategies that female chairpersons of the SGBs used to deal with the challenges**

The study has found that the school contexts pose a number of barriers that undermine efforts of female chairpersons to perform their duties as effectively and efficiently as they possibly could. Despite these barriers, the study has found that they are resilient and are engaged in the activities that assist them survive. The participating female chairpersons of the SGBs in this study indicated positive contributing factors to their survival. The skill of being able to listen to others assisted them to perform their duties to some measures of success. Being good listeners did not only help them play their roles, but also assisted them to build good human relations that made their schools to perform and meet some goals they had set. I conclude that these female chairpersons of the SGBs in rural school benefitted from the strategies they employed, and these included team work and networking. It is pleasing to note that these female chairpersons worked closely with others in order to benefit them in their contexts. They managed to do this because they embraced the notion of shared vision development.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

There are few recommendations that I propose for the Department of Basic Education, societies and school principals to consider.

### **5.4.1 Recommendations to the Department of Basic Education**

Emergent themes revealed the main challenges female chairpersons of SGBs in rural schools encountered in executing their duties and responsibilities. It also appeared that amongst the challenges they faced, there comes the perceptions of what the SGB chairpersons' roles

entail. It is clear from the participants' responses that capacity building workshops are needed.

I therefore recommend to the Department of Basic Education, specifically to the governance department to organise workshops that will capacitate females to execute their duties of being the chairperson in the SGB. I also recommend that once the workshops are facilitated, the governance section of the DBE should also organise follow up workshops to get feedback. If there are challenges picked up during feedback sessions, immediate assistance in resolving the challenges should be given. Policies that were made to address gender equity should also form part of the training.

#### **5.4.2 Recommendations to society**

The study has found that there are many reasons that impact the experiences of female chairpersons of the SGBs in rural schools. The main findings revealed that female chairpersons of the SGBs mostly in rural schools encounter numerous gender-based challenges, and such challenges were largely driven by gender stereotypes that negatively impacted on their roles and responsibilities. The responses clearly demonstrated that, while females held meetings as chairs, males were reluctant to obey instructions given. This shows that some men in rural communities are still trapped within the bondage of patriarchy. The following recommendation to the broad South African society to be acutely aware of the existence of such oppressive tendencies in some rural communities. Therefore, issues of need to be elevated to higher levels of society and be kept alive in our social discourse. Without the whole society being aware of this and being prepared to act, such attitudes and negative behaviours are likely to continue. There is a need for members of the community to adapt to the requirements of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, and thus move away from the old traditional stereotypes of gender and patriarchy which end up positioning males high up in the imaginary hierarchy.

#### **5.4.3 Recommendations to school principals**

The study also revealed how school principals exercised their powers to demonstrate their abilities as leaders and managers. An example of this is demonstrated when male principal failed to recognise the participants while she was still on floor. With this regard I therefore recommend that male principals provide support and be co-operative to female chairpersons

as much as they can. In fact, it is evident that workshops that I recommended that the DBE should conduct, need to be extended to the school principals as well. In any case, school principals are representatives of the DBE in local communities. Therefore, it makes no sense if they are the ones that undermine the policies of the government and the spirit of the Constitution of the country.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This study has come to the end and recommendations to various stakeholders have been made. The study was driven by two research questions which sought to explore and understand the experiences of female chairpersons of the School Governing Bodies in rural schools. A variety of critical issues have been raised and discussed. What is evident is the need to carry out further research on this topic. One area that requires attention is a quantitative study that explores the same issues but to assess the spread of these issues that the study has unearthed. We can be surprised that such tendencies and stereotyping is broader than we think it is.

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## Appendix A

Letter to DoE requesting permission to conduct research in KZN schools

98 Clair Avenue  
Manor Gardens  
Durban  
4001

Attention: The HOD of Kwa- Zulu Natal Education (Dr E.V Nzama)  
Department of Education  
Province of KwaZulu-Natal  
Private Bag X9137  
Pietermaritzburg  
3201

Dear Sir

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

My name is Nolundi Dandala, a Master student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree fulfilment, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in three schools under your jurisdiction in Pinetown District. The title of my study is: **Exploring the experiences of female chairperson's of school governing bodies in three rural schools.**

This study aims to explore how female chairpersons of school governing bodies cope with their duties especially since they are in rural schools. Study aims to explore how do female chairpersons meet the demands and expectations of parents, principals and the department. The planned study will focus on female chairperson of school governing body of the schools. The study will use semi-structured interviews with female chairpersons. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 40-60 minutes at the times convenient to them which will not disturb their schedule for the day. Each interview will be voice-recorded. Documents review will also be done.

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

You may contact my supervisors, UKZN Research Office or me should you have any queries or questions:

**Supervisors:**

Dr S.D. Bayeni

Tel. 031-2607026 (office)

Cell: 0734197200

E-mail: [bayenis@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:bayenis@ukzn.ac.za).

**UKZN Research Office**

Mariette Snayman

HSSREC-Ethics

Tel: 0312608350

E-mail: [snymann@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:snymann@ukzn.ac.za)

**My contact number:**

Cell: 0826445656

E-mail: [lihlithemba99@gmail.com](mailto:lihlithemba99@gmail.com)

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

Nolundi Dandala (Researcher)

## Appendix B



# education

Department:  
Education  
**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1063

Ref.:2/4/8/1480

Mrs N. Dandala

Manor Gradens  
98 Clair Avenue  
Durban  
4001

Dear Mrs Dandala

## PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"EXPLORING THE EXPERINCES OF FEMALE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN THREE RURAL SCHOOLS: A LEARDERSHIP PERSPECTIVE"**, 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 08 March 2018 to 09 July 2020.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma 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.

Ntshongweni Primary School  
Vusumuzi Primary School

Phangisa Primary School

Dr. EV Nzama  
Head of Department: Education  
Date: 08 March 2018

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa

Physical Address: 247 Burger Street • Anton Lembede Building • Pietermaritzburg • 3201

Tel.: +27 33 392 1063 • Fax.: +27 033 392 1203 • Email: [Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za](mailto:Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za) • Web: [www.kzneducation.gov.za](http://www.kzneducation.gov.za)

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## Appendix C

Letter requesting permission from the principals to conduct research in schools

98 Clair Avenue  
Manor Gardens  
Durban  
4001

The Principal

-----  
Pinetown District

Dear Sir/Madam

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

My name is Nolundi Dandala, a Master student and educator at Thembalihle Primary School. As part of my degree fulfilment, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct this research at your school. The title of my study is: **Exploring the experiences of the female chairperson's of school governing bodies in three rural schools.**

This study aims to explore how female chairpersons of school governing bodies cope with their duties especially since they are in rural schools. Study aims to explore how do female chairpersons meet the demands and expectations of parents, principals and the department. The planned study will focus on female chairpersons of school governing bodies of the school. The study will use semi-structured interviews with female chairperson. Participant will be interviewed for approximately 40-60 minutes at the times convenient to her which will not disturb the schedules of the day. The interview will be voice-recorded. Documents review will also be done.

**PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:**

- There will be no financial benefits that participant may accrue as a result of her participation in this research project.
- Her identity will not be divulged under any circumstance/s, during and after the reporting process.
- All the responses, and reviewed documents will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used to represent the school and name of the participant.
- Participation will always remain voluntary which means that participant may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without incurring any penalties.
- Participant purposively selected to participate in this study and they will be contacted well in advance for interviews.
- The interviews shall be voice-recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interviews.

You may contact my supervisors, the Research Office or me should you have any queries or questions:

**Supervisors:**

Dry S.D. Bayeni

Tel. 031-267026 (office)

Cell: 0734197200

E-mail: [bayenis@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:bayenis@ukzn.ac.za).

**UKZN Research Office**

Mariette Snayman

HSSREC-Ethics

Tel: 0312608350

E-mail: [snymann@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:snymann@ukzn.ac.za)

**My contact number:**

Tel: 031 261 2629 (Home)

Cell: 0826445656

E-mail: [lihlithemba99@gmail.com](mailto:lihlithemba99@gmail.com)

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

Nolundi Dandala (Researcher)

## **Appendix D**

Letter requesting permission from the Parent (chairperson of SGB) to participate in the research

98 Clair Avenue  
Manor Gardens  
Durban

The Parent (Chairperson of SGB)

Dear Madam

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH**

I am currently a Masters student in Education Leadership, Management and Policy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus. I am presently engaged in a research study which aims to explore the experience of female chairpersons of school governing bodies. The topic of my research is: **Exploring the experiences of female chairperson's of the school governing bodies in three rural schools.** I would very much like you to participate in this study because I believe that you can provide valuable insight in extending the boundaries of our knowledge on this concept.

Your identity in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I undertake to uphold your autonomy as the participant. You will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to yourself. However, you will be asked to complete a consent form. In your interest, feedback will be given to you during and at the end of the study.

You may contact my supervisor, UKZN Research Office or me should you have any queries:

**Supervisor:**  
DR. S.D. Bayeni

Telephone Number 013 260 7026

Cell Number 0734197200

E-mail : bayenis@ukzn.ac.za

**UKZN Research Office**

Mariette Snayman

HSSREC-Ethics

Tel: 0312608350

E-mail: [snymanm@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:snymanm@ukzn.ac.za)

**My contact number:**

Cell: 0825445656

E-mail: [lihlithemba99@gmail.com](mailto:lihlithemba99@gmail.com)

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Nolundi Dandala (Researcher)

## **Appendix E**

### **Turnitin Report**

# Exploring the experiences of female chairpersons of the school governing bodies in three rural schools : A leadership perspective

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