

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCES OF TWO WOMEN
PRINCIPALS IN HIGH SCHOOLS AT OBONJENI DISTRICT
IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

By

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**Management experiences of two women principals in high schools
at Obonjeni District in KwaZulu-Natal**

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for the Masters degree in Educational Leadership, Management
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of women principals in high schools when executing their management functions at Obonjeni District. It is hoped that the study would contribute to the understanding of the challenges woman principals encounter on their work and how they dealt with them.

The methodology used was qualitative. A case study method was adopted. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with two school principals, two deputy principals and four heads of department in two selected high schools. Documentary analysis was used to triangulate data obtained through the interviews. Two high schools at Obonjeni District were purposively selected for the study. The data gathered was transcribed, coded, organised into themes, categories and sub-categories. Finally, the data was analysed using content analysis technique.

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

Findings indicate that staff members that were of the view that women principals were incapable of leading based this view on gender stereotypes, societal norms and cultural factors. Furthermore, some staff members view female principals as capable of managing and providing effective leadership in high schools. The study also revealed that women principals experience challenges, but despite them, they managed to perform their official duties effectively and also provided good leadership quality in these schools.

The study recommended that in-service training, sufficient workshops and seminars must be organised to empower women in leadership positions. Again, it was recommended that women principals must avail themselves with numerous educational opportunities to upgrade their knowledge.

Declaration

I, Faith Myeni declare that:

- The research titled '**Management experiences of two women principals in high schools at Obonjeni District**' is my own work.
- This dissertation has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.
- The dissertation does not contain other persons' data, graphs or information(s), unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Signed:.....

.....

F. MYENI

DATE

SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT

This dissertation is submitted with/ without my approval

.....

Mr S. Bayeni

December 2011

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated firstly to my late soul mate Bhekisisa Aaron Cele for his love, care and support. Secondly to my late grandmother MaNhleko who had never been at school but who took my mother to school.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

High schools education in South Africa is an important sector of education in which middle class man-power is being produced. It acts as some kind of a conveyor belt by producing entrance to the tertiary institutions and other job opportunities. This sector receives its learner population from primary schools. It is worthy to note that products from this educational sector may either go for further studies or move to the labour market. Mohlala (2010) reports that eighty two percent of products from high schools in South Africa, is in the labour market and the majority is male. Important as this education cadre might be, majority of the managers who are principals are men while women make up at least one-half of high school teachers (Coleman, 2001). The situation was alarmingly high during the apartheid government era in South Africa. After the demise of apartheid in 1994, the employment of principals in high school terrain started tilting towards female folks. It is reported that between 1994 and 2010, the situation has drastically changed although female principals in high schools are still facing an uphill task (Kotecha, 1994; Oplatka & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2006). They are being seen by the South African society as ‘people who were not created for leadership position in spite of their educational attainment’ (Baxter, 2009, p.58). This wrong perception towards female high school principals prompted me to investigate the experiences that women principals were facing in high schools at Obonjeni District.

1.2. Background

Prior to 1994, South African male teachers occupied most senior positions in high schools while most women worked as post level one (PL1) without any senior positions (Owen & Todor, 1993). Female teachers occupied leadership positions largely in pre-schools and junior primary schools. According to Bush and West-Burnham (1994) the general perception was that female teachers were not assertive enough to take up challenges in high schools like males do. Therefore, their employment in senior positions was not supported although there was no policy that guided such a practice (Mukasa, 2008). Ouston (1993) argues that primary

schools have learners who are not well mature and therefore, they require a lot of support. Female teachers were found to be appropriate to provide that kind of support. Furthermore, Oplatka and Hertz-Lazarowitz (2006) held that high schools are masculine organisation and that they need control abilities.

In contrast, Pillay (2005) is of the opinion that the notion of what is feminine and what is masculine leads to the division of labour according to gender. Even the decisions about selecting and developing women for a management post, is influenced by judgment about the extent to which they are seen as capable of meeting a masculine conception of its demand (Koch & Irby, 2002; Hemson, 2002). Moreover, it was not a matter of academic attainment of woman that was in question rather; the perception was based on myopic and self centred motives. Coleman (2003) suggests that three norms exist that is related to gender and leadership, and these are:

- Orthodox leaders are male.
- Leadership style stereotypically “macho”. Macho in this context means to disapproves males and
- Theorising about leadership has a tendency to marginalise gender (p. 336).

In his development the first and most obvious orthodoxy contends that leadership is normally vested in the males. In many societies there are deep-rooted beliefs that continue to support male dominance (Coleman, 2003).

After the demise of apartheid in 1994, South African high schools educational landscape underwent dramatic and evolutional changes. These changes included, addressing gender discrimination and imbalances in all educational sectors. To facilitate this change, the government enacted the equality clause for the protection of women against unfair discrimination on one or more grounds including race, gender, sex, ethnic group, marital status, age and disability (Mukasa, 2008). However, it is evident that even today discrimination of the past persists. For instance, Inglehart and Welzel (2005) claim that women are confronted with societal disadvantages that make it more difficult for them than

men to develop their talents in careers outside the household, including management. Given that women make up at least one half of high school teachers, the fact that leadership positions in high schools remain a male domain (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Coleman, 2001) is a major concern. Therefore, the under-representation of women in public school principalship positions was also among the changes that needed to be attended to.

These major changes for instance, gender equity in senior positions have produced challenges for people in leadership positions. Among the challenges was the implementation of the Acts and policies that prescribe gender equality in terms of employment. This was made possible by numerous pieces of legislations such as the Labour Relations Act (Act 66 of 1995), South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996), Employment of Educators Act (Act 76 of 1998) that were enacted (Heystek, Nieman, van Rooyen, Mosoge & Bipath, 2008). These legislations provide employees with certain rights in the workplace regarding labour practice, unfair discrimination, freedom of association and safe working conditions. Furthermore, the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 stipulates that measures should be taken to ensure that suitable qualified people from previously disadvantaged groups including women should get equitable employment opportunities and should be equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce (Department of Education, 2000).

In compliance with the policies mentioned in the above paragraph, women were employed in senior positions in different sectors. It is worthy to mention that even in high schools women started to take up senior positions such as head of departments, deputy principals and principals. On the basis of the above, it is pertinent to understand how women in management and leadership positions in high schools take and enforce decisions that are binding to all in that sector. Notwithstanding the considerable body of research in which gender issues have been investigated, in current empirical research which compare male and female leadership styles, researchers have found that women tended to behave in more participative and democratic ways than men (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Furthermore, how women exercise that authority is worth investigating because some of them are serving in the communities which have wrong perceptions about women in management and leadership positions. Such wrong perceptions held by people about women in management positions,

have given me the curiosity to investigate how women principals were able to work with their communities and deal with challenges that were associated with the positions they occupied.

1.3. Statement of problem

Historically, women have been marginalised, oppressed, discriminated against and excluded from participating in leadership positions (Mannah, 2008). Even today, in the Department of Education women are seen in large numbers as post level one educators (teachers) whereas, their male counterparts occupy management positions in the department. Despite their large number in high schools across the country they constitute only thirty eight percent of people in leadership positions (Hemson, 2002). Under-representation of women in management position is strongly visible in high schools. This assertion is supported by Wrushen and Sherman (2008) when they state that the scarcity of women in management position in high schools is a worldwide phenomenon. This situation is pathetic when considering the fact that the appointment of women for leadership position is supposed to have gender orientation, in terms of policy. The big question to ask is who does the appointment of educators into these positions? The answer is that male counterparts still dominate in carrying out this exercise. According to Coffey and Delamont (2000) a male majority in interview panels disadvantage women and results in men favouring other men.

Owen and Todor (1993) mention the example of the study that was conducted in England by Wentling in 1992. In that study, one woman was denied promotion in spite of her excellent performance because, her boss felt that she would not be with the company for long as she would leave the company in order to have children. Furthermore Nkonyane (2008) argues that one principal was not recommended for appointment as principal in spite of her good performance; because the School Governing Body (SGB) felt that the staff is composed of many females than males. Davidson and Cooper (1992) view the association of masculinity, male authority and school leadership as pervasive in the life of the school. This leads to the decision about selecting and developing women for management which is influenced by the association made between management and masculinity. This explains why there is lopsidedness in the appointment of women to leadership positions in our schools. In recent time, women started to be employed for the position of principals in our high schools. Thus it is imperative to examine how women carry out their roles by taking and enforcing decisions

which are binding to all and to deal with challenges associated with her position. And it is on this basis that I am curious to investigate how women high school principals experience their roles and responsibilities in Obonjeni district.

1.4. Rationale for the study

In South Africa, women who were principals in high schools were few (Bhengu, 2005). After South African democratisation in 1994, the situation started changing for the better as lots of women were employed in senior posts. As a woman principal during the post apartheid period I have come to realise that my experiences as a woman principal are not the same as my male counterparts. The experiences I have are more challenging compared to my male counterparts. For instance, I was told by a male teacher that I would never make it in the position since according to him “women never do well in the position of authority”. Again, there are other complex demands from the government officials, communities and the staff. Till to date, the widely held views even by the some educated people that ‘women by nature are confined to child bearing and other domestic activities, still exist (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008).

This stereotypic assumption about women is being questioned by scholars. For example, Wrushen and Sherman (2008) maintain that these assumptions about women not aggressive enough to lead cause women who are educated to be sidelined in the senior positions. Literature has shown that women principals in high schools face a lot of challenges in the course of exercising their official functions (Pillay, 2005; Koch & Irby, 2002; Bloom & Erlandson, 2003). Makura (2009) concurs with the above scholars about women challenges in management but indicated that some of these challenges are not official but attitudinal, institutional, societal and cultural. Therefore, the widely held impression in the minds of the people about women in leadership position prompted me to investigate the experiences of women principals in some selected high schools at Obonjeni District.

1.5 Focus of the study

The focus of this study is to examine management experiences of woman principals in two high schools at Obonjeni district.

1.6 Purpose of the study

Literature reveals that women principals in high schools face contradictory expectations (Grogan, 1996). Women principals on the one hand, are confronted with challenges emanating from change in South Africa's educational landscape, which requires every school leaders and leadership styles to adapt accordingly (Heystek, Nieman, Van Rooyen, Mosoge & Bipath, 2008). On the other hand, women principals are expected to prove themselves as being capable of leading. This position makes women principals work in stressful environment to satisfy and correct the wrong assumption held by their male counterparts, their subordinates, as well as the community. Moreover, despite facing challenging role of producing and sustaining a vital public school system (Fullan, 2003), in the environment which still bears the legacy of apartheid, they are being compelled to prove themselves as efficient and effective managers. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate how women principals experience their management roles and responsibilities in some selected high schools. A qualitative case study approach used to address the following research questions:

1. What are the experiences of women principals as they practice their leadership role?
2. How do women principals deal with challenging experiences in schools?

1.7 Significance of the study

What makes this study significant is that the management and leadership style plays a vital role in the success of the school. Hence the condition under which the principal executes his/her duties impacts on the development of the school either positively or negatively. This study also sought to question the issue of gender imbalances in management positions within high schools. Woman principals of high schools particularly, in rural areas needed to share their experiences of their work and reflect on their management practices. Therefore, this study hoped to achieve the following:

- As the study would be conducted on women high school principals in rural communities, it was of utmost importance to hear their voices sharing their management experiences.
- Since the school principals are directly involved in the implementation of policies they can contribute to make the policymakers, departmental officials and other principals to be aware of conditions under which women principals work in high schools.
- Furthermore, the study would help researchers and authors to know and understand how women principals engage in management of their schools for the accomplishment of their school's goals and mission statement.
- The researcher also hoped that the study would be valuable by upgrading management skills of women principals and those who are interested to become principals.

Moreover, the findings of this study would help policymakers to ensure that policies addressing gender imbalances were implemented and monitored.

1.8 Methodology

A case study is an appropriate methodology for my study as it is one of qualitative research approaches. According to Christensen (2007) a case study is an intensive description and analysis of a single individual, organisation, or an event based on information obtained from a variety of sources. In qualitative research the aim is “to pronounce rounded and written understanding on the basis of rich nuanced and detailed data” (Mason, 2002, p.3). McMillan and Schumacher (2006) suggest that qualitative research approach examines a bounded system or a case in detail, employing multiple sources of data found in setting. The multiple sources that were used in this case study included interviews and a review of documents such as the time book, log book, attendance registers, minute books, leave registers and other administration documents. Semi-structural face to face interviews would be conducted with eight participants in two selected high schools. In each school the principal, deputy principal and heads of departments would be selected for semi-structured interviews. Interviews would be audio recorded while field notes would also be taken. Interviews data would be

triangulated with documentary evidence. The data collected from documentary sources will be coded, recorded and analysed qualitatively using the general principle of codification (Giacchino & Kakabadse, 2003). These issues are discussed in full in Chapter Three.

1.9. Clarification of concepts

For the purpose of this study, operational meaning has been attached to the terms listed below as used.

1.9.1 Management

Management, according to Heystek *et. al.* (2008) refers to the more structured approach of working within the confines of the rules, regulations and boundaries provided in a school situation. However, Bush (2003) defines management as the attainment of organisational goals in an effective and efficient manner through planning, organising, leading and controlling organisational resources. Chancer and Watkins (2006) take management and leadership as the same activity but distinguish it from managerialism, that is people are led but processes are managed.

1.9.2 Leadership

Leadership is defined by Early and Weindling (2004) as the activity of leading people, which implies that things are done through people, with the emphasis on relationships, communication, motivation and emotional intelligence. According to Bush and West-Burnham (1994), it is an aspect of the relationships between members who are coordinating their efforts for the achievement of common goals.

In the light of the above definitions, management and leadership mean the activities that are performed by a person in a position as a head of an institution. This suggests that a person may become a manager and a leader simultaneously depending on the situation. Some people tend to be more managers, that is, structured, rule- bound and taking people or an organisation to new levels because the rules require it. Meanwhile others are more inclined to be leaders, that is, working with people and challenging them to new levels through motivation (Heystek, *et al.*, 2008).

South Africa tends to follow the trend of using management rather than leadership as the preferred concept for the activity of leading a school or school department. Viewed this way, one can state that, women are associated with leadership while men are associated with the management (Du Preez, 1998). In that way, the concept leadership has been elevated above normal everyday usage to convey a particular meaning of a process of persuasion which Gunter (2001) describes as a process by which an individual or leadership team induces a group of people to pursue the objectives of an organisation.

Although definitions show some distinction between the two concepts but a considerable overlap and shared meaning, at some point, has been established. In view of the above terms leadership and management, as well as, leader and manager will be used interchangeably in the study.

1.10. Outline of the chapters

1.10.1 Chapter 1

This chapter provides an orientation and overview of the study. The researcher provides the historical background regarding the position of women principals. This stands in sharp contrast to their male counterparts during the period prior to and after the demise of apartheid in 1994. The rationale of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose statement, the foci in the form of critical questions, and the clarification of key concepts are presented. In addition, issues of the literature review, theoretical frameworks, methodology as well as data collection methods for the study, are highlighted.

1.10.2 Chapter 2

This chapter presents the review of literature related to the study and also describes the theoretical framework used in the study. The framework for research, according to Creswell (2008) provides guidance for the researcher as study questions are fine-tuned, methods for measuring variables are selected and analysis is planned.

1.10.3 Chapter 3

This chapter describes the research design and methodology that was used in carrying out the study. The chapter also discusses the instruments that were used to collect data, the substantiation of choice of instruments is done and it also indicates how the instruments were administered and what difficulties were encountered. Furthermore the sampling methods used are explained, the justification of the choice of two high schools and why the researcher regarded the method employed to be the most suitable is also discussed.

1.10.4 Chapter 4

This chapter discusses the presentation of data that was collected in two selected high schools.

1.10.5 Chapter 5

This chapter presents the conclusion of the study and the recommendations that were made. This chapter also attempts to provide the reader a picture of what is taking place in schools under the leadership of women. However, a caution is also made that the total picture is more than what has been discussed in this piece of work. Finally, the suggestions are given on possible solutions to this area of challenge which might assist education managers and education planners so that the findings can have a positive future impact.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the literature that was solicited in order shed light on gender studies with specific reference to women in education management. Given that leadership in education arena was predominantly a male domain and women were had an inferior social position in every society, it was therefore necessary to focus on the position of women in management positions as prior to and the post democratisation of South Africa. Issues of andocentric bias and gender concept of leadership as well as, the impact it has upon women in positions of leadership is discussed. A lot has been written about women in management positions but the emphasis is on under-representation and the challenges they encountered in their positions of leadership. Very little has been said about women experiences when executing their managerial duties particularly in high schools in rural areas.

2.2 Literature Review

In order to give direction and focus to this study, I have arranged the literature under the following headings:

- The position of South African women in management positions prior and post democratisation in 1994.
- The woman paths to principalship.
- The differences between men and women principals.
- Gender differences in leadership styles and management styles.

2.2.1 The position of South African women in management positions prior and post democratisation in 1994.

Before 1994, the South African public service was characterised by its division and segregation in terms of race, gender and lack of representation. The South African education system was shaped by the ideology of apartheid. There is documented evidence that indicate

that women were under-represented in the management positions in schools (Van der Westhuizen, 1991; Bush & West-Burnham, 1994; Mohlala, 2010), to cite just a few. Management positions in high schools were occupied by male teachers while women teachers worked as post level one, with fewer opportunities for them to be appointed in senior positions. Kotecha (1994) argues that women in the management positions, particularly African women were few. She further maintains that studies conducted on white women managers showed that limited positions were occupied by women.

When the African National Congress led government took over in 1994, the government had to address the imbalances and disparities of the past. To do this effectively, new policies had to be formulated and implemented in order to change the old practices of apartheid government. One of the prominent policies that were introduced was the Employment Equity Act (No 55 of 1998; Employment of Educators Act (No 76 of 1998; Labour Relations Act (No 66 of 1995), all of which were aimed at doing away with unjust practices of the past. These included the discrimination of women particularly in management positions. Employment Equity Act 76 of 1998 addressed issues of women discrimination and other races that were equally the victims of gender-based discrimination. After 1994, there has been an increase in the employment of females in the management positions both in high schools and senior primary schools (Kotecha, 1994; Nandraj, 2003). However some studies have established that women tended to face more obstacles on their way up the ladder (Pillay, 2005; Makura, 2009; Kanjere, 2009). Research on external and internal barriers that are faced by black female principals in the Eastern and Western Cape regions pointed out that the unique barriers such as sex-role stereotyping, low self-esteem and lack of role models and support systems, marital status and family disrupted women's progress in their careers (Pillay, 2005). Meanwhile, Makura (2009) argues that organisational factors, culture, women's personalities and colonial legacies are obstacles challenging the effectiveness of women in school management. Furthermore, the teachers' attitudes towards women school principals hinder them from managing and leading schools effectively. In support of this assertion, Bush and West- Burnham (1994) mention organisational constraints to be the barriers to the advancement of women, and they list them as follows:

- At the point of application;

- In planning a career path;
- Differential levels of opportunities within the post;
- The stereotypical roles that men and women tend to adopt in management (p.180).

Although there has been an increase in the employment of females in the management positions it has been established that discrimination and prejudice against women managers is practised (Owen & Todor, 1993). Women regard this as a deterrent to higher level of management. There are some people who have stereotypes about women believing that women would not perform the management tasks as their male counterparts. Stereotype disposition according to Globler, Warnich, Carrel, Norbert and Hatfield (2006) negate people's individuality and limits their potentials. In another development, Maphaha (1996) submits that negative attitudes of males towards female managers create tensions and stress to them (females). The widely held perception that female managers are less intelligent, emotionally unstable and lack focus is not only unfortunate but are also very disturbing (Maphaha, 1996). In fact, research shows that competency, ability and capability are not related to gender (Ouston, 1993). Maphaha (1996) also points out that one of the experiences of woman managers is inadequate freedom of adopting the styles of their own in the way that accord themselves. The above literature reveals that women principals experience major challenges in management positions. In fact it is this reality that drew my attention and raised interest in me to explore and investigate the experiences of woman principals in high schools since it has been a male domain for quite long.

2.2.2 The women paths to principalship

The under-representation of women in senior management positions in schools is well documented in many countries (Oplatka & Hertz- Lazarowitz, 2006). Given that the under-representation of women is most strikingly in high schools principals in contrast with women's over representation in the teaching occupation (Lad, 2000), it is evident that woman path to principalship is not easy. Therefore a number of scholars have suggested various explanations to account for low representation of women in leadership positions in education. All explanations revolve around cultural factors which associates masculine attributes as a contributing factor to effective leadership while feminine attributes and traits contribute to

ineffective leadership (Blackmore, 1993). This view is shared by Bush and West- Burnham (1994) in their argument about the theories of management which give an impression that those who practise management are expected to have male qualities. This implies that when an environment assumes that men's values and practises are the norm for leadership, women are excluded from principalship. As a result, even in the school management teams, under representation of women has been witnessed. Those who are lucky to aspire for senior positions of management face discrimination (Coleman, 2001).

Some writers view under-representation of women principals as a result of male dominated power structure and relations in schools (Coffey & Delamont, 2000; Morris, 1999). Van der Westhuizen (1991) defines power as the ability to and the manner in which an educational leader executes his authority. However, Pillay (2005) reveals a different concept of power. He claims that a democratic concept of power means that one can achieve ultimate power by giving it to the people who are led. People have wrong impression of power as if controlling and managerial capability requires physical appearance or power. Pillay (2005) further contends that the notion of what was feminine and masculine leads to the division of labour. Power structure and relations to schools not only reproduce male dominance in educational administration but also hinder the leadership opportunities of many women (Oplatka & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2006). As leadership positions are dominated by males they end up recruiting other males in principal's positions. The impact of power structure is worse in interview panels which are mostly dominated by the males, thus disadvantaged female applicants due to the conservatism taking place in principal's appointments (Evetts, 1994).

Apart from the external factors alluded to above there are also internal aspects that hinder women's access to educational management. Cubillo and Brown (2003) note that 'even in the 21st century there is a glass ceiling shattering around women in positions of leadership. A view of this position means that women are still prevented to rise on the top as male domination of privilege and power within organisations make it difficult for them to progress in their management positions. Oplatka and Hertz- Lazarowitz (2006) highlighted internal barriers that lead women not to decide to apply for promotions. This includes the lack of necessary aspirations and lack of confidence that they will succeed as likely reasons for low female application rates. She goes on to say that some not apply because of the fear of failure. Furthermore, gender based socialisation, lack of awareness of the promotion system, lower

competitiveness; lower self-esteem and interrupted career development (p. 57) are some of these internal barriers.

Masculine nature of principalship and leadership, besides impeding superiors' biases, it also perpetuates low aspirations of women to attain a management position (Coleman, 2003). This argument concurs with Inglehart and Welzel's (2005) claim that societal disadvantages make it more difficult for women than men to develop their talents in careers outside household including management positions. The tendency of associating leadership and management with gender has led to the debate about how gender based differences between male and female principals influence their management functions.

2.2.3 The differences between men and women principals

According to Van der Westhuizen (1991) women and men principals experience the world around them and also accept challenges in the same way as their male counterparts. This gives a clear picture that there are no remarkable differences between males and females principals which can hinder women principals to manage and lead effectively as men. For instance, a Vice Chancellor of the University of South Africa, Mrs. Gourley describes herself as being outspoken, possessing a strong personality and believes in using humour to deal with aggression or conflicts. This implies that gender has nothing to do with executing managerial duties, and that the problem lies with that person who is supposed to do that task.

Some researchers argue that men and women differ in how they manage and assume leadership roles (Evetts, 1994; Fiennel, 1999; Nias, 1999). These differences are the results of different socialisation patterns and life experiences rather than to innate sources. The significant domains in gender differences are evident in human relationships. Gray (1993) identifies two paradigms when examining gender issues in schools, that is the feminine and the masculine paradigm. The feminine paradigm is associated with characteristics such as caring, creativity, intuitive, aware of individual's difference, non-competitive, tolerant, subjective and informal. Meanwhile, the masculine paradigm refers to characteristics such as highly regulated, conformist, normative, competitive, evaluative, disciplined, objective and

formal orientations. The judgments about what women can or cannot do, and the extent to which they can perform, is based on these paradigms. This is evident in the number of women that are employed in positions of management in high schools.

Although the view of feminine paradigm is more of nurturing, and masculine paradigm is more of controlling, but Inglehart and Welzel (2005) claim that women principals have the same talents as men. Furthermore, they (women) could develop beyond their traditionally limited roles. This means that women principals tend to focus on care and empathy for their subordinates, while they take into consideration effective teaching and learning (Shakeshaft, 1989). Furthermore, they focus on school-community relationships, day to day interactions, time management, job satisfaction, leadership style, power relations and evaluation and assessment. And, she further maintains that there are differences between men and women principals. Women principals are more likely than men to encourage and motivate teachers. They are also seen to be very attentive on the learners' relationships, the social and emotional development of the students. Women principals also tend to be attentive to the feelings of their teachers and look for teachers' personal effects on the lives of children. Moreover, they place more emphasis on the technical skills of teaching content and equality of the educational programme and they involve teachers in decision-making processes. Men are more likely to emphasise organisational structures to avoid conflict (Shakeshaft, 1989). In general, management researchers in contrast, have found less conclusive support for gender differences between men and women principals (Butterfield & Grinnel, 1999).

2.2.4. Gender differences in leadership and management styles

A style of leadership as defined by Evetts (1994) is a manner of working, an approach, a feeling and a method in such a way that it is elusive and intangible, problematic to measure and to demonstrate. Research findings across all settings reveal that females tend to adopt a democratic, participative style whereas males display autocratic and directive style (Adler, Laney & Parker, 1993). Similarly, Blackmore (1996) suggests that women in educational management prefer different management style from that of men. These includes the style that is less hierarchical, more democratic, flexible and sensitive, foster cohesiveness value trust and openness and are more humane (Nandraj, 2003). Also, collegiality and involving other constituents in decision making process is displayed in women leadership process

(Oplatka & Hertz- Lazarowitz, 2006). Coleman (2002) suggests that female principals she studied, identified themselves as collaborative and caring but not democratic. In contrast, Grace (1995) argues that some findings reveal that distinction does not exist between male and female styles of management but the nature and behaviour of certain gender attaches different meanings to the same leadership style. For example, women principals accept teamwork as a normal and organic process whereas men refer to teamwork as an important innovation in the school culture.

Another distinction as reported by researchers between male and female principals is the extent to which a principal adopts instructional leadership (Oplatka, 2004). Mashall (1995) argues that woman principals focus on teaching, curriculum and instructing children because they have spent more time as teachers and mothers before they became principals. Similarly, Shakeshaft (1989) argues that women principals put more emphasis on teaching and learning, classroom problems, teacher's professional development and the monitoring and evaluation of student learning than their male counterparts. Furthermore, women principals were found to pay attention towards change initiation and implementation despite the difficulties in getting male teachers to hear them compared to male principals (Acker, *et al.*, 1995; Fiennel, 1999; Lee-Dedrick & Smith, 1991). Some writers claim that 'feminine style' which comprises caring, creativity, intuition, awareness of individual differences, non-competitiveness, tolerance, subjectivity and informality is appropriate to educational organisations (Gray, 1993). Bolam *et al.* (1993) appears to claim that effective school leadership relates to leadership styles that are more democratic, collegial, open and consultative as well as team oriented, and these styles are evident in women styles of management. Ouston (1993) points out that competency, ability and capability are not gender-related. This tempted me to conclude that women can make good managers if they could be given adequate freedom of adopting the styles of their own.

In contrast, other writers argue that neither a masculine nor a feminine style is enough for effective principalship, but every good leader should adopt androgynous style (Oplatka & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2006; Ouston, 1993). Androgynous style is defined as the style which comprises from both sets of males and females characteristics from which a manager selects

the most appropriate for the situation (Ouston, 1993). The concept of androgynous manager according to this scholar is based on qualities which should be available to every manager regardless of gender. According to Hall (1996) androgynous principals recognise the need to manage both the tasks and the people and to combine instrumental and expressive behaviour. Therefore the possible false equation of management with masculinity may be used to discourage women from moving into management positions. Coleman (2003) in the study she conducted with women principals in England reveals that many woman principals adopt androgynous style. Similarly, Oplatka (2004) argues that prospective teachers in Israel adopt androgynous leadership including both caring, strong and control. Based on the above argument competition and comparison between males and females leadership styles should be discouraged instead, collaboration should be emphasised. In my own opinion, it is high time that the ability and capability of women are identified, developed and utilised for the betterment of the society. Davidson and Cooper (1992) argue that some women are successful in education as in other areas of management but the expectations of their behaviour differ from those held about equivalent male manager.

2.3. Theoretical frameworks

This study is located in implementation analysis theory as a theoretical framework. This theory posits that the implementation of the policy is complicated compared to its formulation. This is caused by the lack of proper consultation between the policy makers and implementers. In addition to that, there is also a lack of capacity building to those who are supposed to implement the policy is a serious problem. However, it is suggested that in order for people to implement policy successfully they must possess a range of skills and expertise. In this study, women principals tasked with government policy implementation need to have such skills and expertise in order to be able to implement policies successfully.

In addition, the study also drew from feminist theories. This is mainly because what is seen happening in schools today can also be explained in terms of assertions that are made in the feminist theories. Feminist theory critiques the notion of male supremacy and suggests that measures should be made to change it. These theories include liberal, social and radical feminist. Radical feminist theory questions the notion of women as subordinates to men and

looks at patriarchy as the perpetrator of domination, exploitation and oppression of women by men (Msane, 2006). Socialist feminist are concerns about the issues of social class on the one hand, and gender liberal feminism on the other hand, and suggests that both men and women should have equal rights. Chancer and Watkins (2006) claim that the form of constraints that hinder such development and achievement should be abolished (Chancer & Watkins, 2006). Feminist theories also propose that all people are created equal; therefore women should not be denied the equality of opportunities because of gender.

2.3.1 Feminist theory

Naples (1998) defines the feminist methodology as the approach to research that has been developed in response to concerns by feminist scholars about the limits of traditional methodology, in capturing the experiences of women and others who have been marginalised in academic research. The reason why the researcher located the study in this theory is that, what is seen happening in schools today particularly high schools can be explained in terms of assertions made in the feminist theory. Feminist theory seems to provide an explanation as to why women are highly under-represented in the management and leadership positions in education (Hooks, 2000). Feminist theory critiques the notion of male supremacy and suggests that all people are created equal and women should not be denied the equality of opportunities because of gender. From the 1970s to the present, a variety of feminist perspectives have appeared on the American cultural landscape. This includes liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, socialist feminism and black feminism (Chancer & Watkins, 2006). The emphasis will be on the basis of feminism as emancipator praxis challenging and acting against all injustices women experience.

2.3.1.1. Liberal feminist

Liberal feminist, according to Chancer and Watkins (2006), is derived from liberalism itself which is defined as individual rights that failed to include women from participating in the development and enrichment of society. They further argue that women have as much potential as men do. Liberal feminists suggest that women need to be offered the same civil liberties and economic opportunities as men for their potential to be developed. This study is located in liberal feminist because of its focus is on women principals in management positions. It is also on the basis that women principals for so long were denied senior

positions because of this assumption. Therefore, it is significant to investigate what is taking place in high schools that are led by women principals against what is suggested in this theory. Equal rights form the basis for the remedy for the injustices that were done to the women in the past. Women's inequality is unfair and must be remedied if the goals of liberalism are to be realised for the society as a whole. Liberal feminists appeal to the central principles of liberty, equality and fairness for all to justify women's rights (Grogan, 1996).

2.3.1.2. Radical feminism

Radical feminists suggest that the division between nature and culture, public and private, which is at the heart of gender, is the source of subordination (Chancer & Watkins, 2006). They further point out that it should be transformed. Radical feminist aligns the concept of patriarchy to radical feminist theory while the concept of capitalism to Marxist theory. In patriarchal societies men hold positions of power in all decision making processes. Some scholars view feminism as being the key to patriarchal power and justification of subordination in an entire gender. Moreover, the control that is exercised over women bodies is justified through cultural and religious ideologies of various kinds (Grogan, 1996; Oplatka & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2006). Stone (1994) argues that from a structural point of view all educational institutions are still patriarchal in nature. She further maintains that men control these systems through their domination of the national political systems. The transmission and acquisition of knowledge is controlled by them. Thus schools are used as the main politically oppressive factor for conveying and perpetuating stereotyped images that prevent women from getting ahead. Stone (1994) suggests that feminist pedagogy must oppose patriarchal discrimination and injustices towards women.

2.3.1.3. Marxist feminism

Marxist feminists regard gender as important but also question the class-based differences between women and men. Marxist feminists' thinkers contend that economic problems faced by women were central to maintaining their dependent and subordinate status (Chancer & Watkins, 2006). They further postulate that Marxist feminists advocate attempts to call social attention to the need to compensate women's work in the home (p.39). Therefore, it was suggested that gender subordination could be reduced to a function of class.

2.3.1.4. Socialist feminism

While Marxist feminism tended to use class to explain women's subordination, socialist feminism was noticeable of their commitment to understanding how capitalist class oppression and gender-based subordination are inter-related (Chancer & Watkins, 2006). The main goal of socialist feminists was to merge the most important insights of radical and Marxist feminist theories. This meant that socialist feminists are committed to the development of historically specific and universalistic analysis of how both systems interacted in women's day to day life experience. A theory of capitalist patriarchy presents six different class positions in which women found themselves in: wealthy/ not working, working/ professional, and working non-professional through housewives, welfare recipients and unemployed. However, there are five specifically gender-related aspects of women's situation: reproduction, child-bearing, maintenance of home, sexuality and consumption (Chancer & Watkins, 2006). Irrespective of gender commonality they share, both are potentially affected by any restrictions that may develop on women's rights to reproduce freedom. Well-to do women are likely to enjoy more reproductive freedom in practice compared to the poorer women. In the light of the above class-based differences and capitalist oppression is stressed in social feminists. Thus socialist feminism suggests the following about women: those women are producers of cheap labour; women are subject to capitalist oppression and are economically dependent on men.

2.3.1.5. Black feminist

According to Chancer and Watkins (2006) Black feminists' are concerned with issues of racial differences between women; problems that many women of colour encountered along with gender -based and class -based biases. Many writings in American history left out black women situation by prioritising problems faced by white women, and as a result, black women remained invisible in the literature. Also Van der Westhuizen (1991) argues that the absence of women in leadership position resulted in theoretical framework with regard to leadership in educational management being constructed around male behavioural culture. Thus, the perspectives that reduced the understanding of black women's circumstances to a sole matter of either race or gender failed to consider the multi-dimensional complexity of all women experiences. Therefore, Hooks (2000) in his work aimed to show the past invisibility, to stress the importance of simultaneously taking gender, class and race into account and to

understand the complex forms of discrimination faced by black women and other women of colour.

As I conclude with feminists theories if we deem gender as a valid way of looking at leadership and management Grogan (2000) says that we need to draw from women's experiences and voices. Unfortunately women have been denied opportunities to occupy senior positions in areas of leadership and management. For a change to take place in employment practices, it is suggested that women must be autonomous human beings worth of personal freedom.

2.3.2. Policy implementation analysis theory

This theory implies that the implementation of the policy is complicated compared to its formulation. It has been established that a lack of proper consultation between the policy makers and implementers being the cause. In addition to that, the lack of capacity building to those who are supposed to implement the policy is a serious problem. However it is also suggested that in order for people to implement policy they must possess skills and expertise. For instance women principals as policy implementers need to be developed on how to implement policies.

According to McLaughlin (1987), policy executors do not always do as told and also they do not always act to maximise policy objectives. That is why in this theory it is argued that successful implementation of policy depends on two main factors, namely the will and local capacity. Capacity is an issue that policy can address through trainings, providing funds for development programmes and engagement of consultants to furnish the missing expertise. However, the will is more complicated to address as it involves individual's motivation accompanied by beliefs, attitudes and implementers response. Motivation as defined by Heystek, *et al.*, (2008) is the force that energies behaviour, gives direction to behaviour and underlies the tendency to persist, even in the face of obstacles. What makes us do the things we do and two individuals in similar circumstances choose two different options is motivation. Provided with all the necessary support and interventions policy implementation depends on implementers' discretion for its success. Thus the successful implementation of policy lies with the force behind an individual's decision to commit or not to commit to a certain action. The managers irrespective of their gender can provide all necessary knowledge and skills to manage but the success is determined by the implementers' understanding and

interpretation of the policies. This means that motivation is influenced by factors beyond the reach of policy which includes environmental stability and other aspects of socio-political milieu.

The Department of Education may enact policies that mandate gender equality and equal employment for all but the mandate cannot compel implementers to accept female principals as potential good managers. This indicates the external policy has limited influence on policy outcomes (McLaughlin, 1987). Meanwhile motivation and commitment reflect an implementer's assessment on the value of policy. In short, policy could envision outcomes but at the same time it cannot mandate what actually happens. In the light of the above impression individual's energy, enthusiasm and effort plays a vital role for policy to be successfully implemented. Laws and policies enacted by the Department of Education, mandate for fair labour practice and equal employment opportunities in management position could not compel policy implementers to accept women principals as equally as men.

2.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have reviewed literature focusing on the experiences of women principals in senior positions from both international and South African perspectives. The findings have indicated that although women are starting to be employed in positions of leadership but those who are interested to aspire and those who are already in positions face a number of obstacles. This includes seeing women in traditional theoretical lenses, of being incapable of leading and managing.

This chapter has also presented a theoretical framework which was used to map out this research. Theories of leadership and management have been discussed and the researcher has revealed the theories her study is located. I have placed my research within constructivist/interpretive paradigm. In this paradigm the assumption is that knowledge is socially constructed by those in the research process therefore there is no objective reality that can be known. Therefore, by conducting interviews with women principals the reality of their experiences in their leadership and management function would be uncovered. In that way I will be in a position to explain their experiences in their terms. The researcher also revealed

that the study is drawn from feminist theory and policy implementation analysis theory. Feminist critiques the notion of male supremacy and suggests that leadership is not a biological function of a male. Meanwhile, policy implementation analysis theory suggests that successful policy implementation depends on implementers will. Thus policies and acts at its best, to support gender equity could not mandate the implementers to regard women as potential leaders and managers who could lead and manage successfully. The next chapter will take us to the methodology and methods employed in the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology, as well as, the methods that were employed in the study. Research method and methodology are terms that are sometimes used by many people even experienced researchers interchangeably as if they have a similar meaning. According to Harding (1987), methodology refers to a theory of producing knowledge through research and provides a rationale for the way a researcher proceeds. Similarly, Sekaran (2008) conceptualises methodology as academia's established regulatory framework for the collection and evaluation of existent knowledge for the purpose of arriving at, and validating, new knowledge. Also Creswell (2003) brings another meaning of methodology when he refers to it as procedural rules for the evaluation of research claims and the validation of the knowledge gathered.

A research method, on the other hand, means a technique (or way of proceeding) in gathering evidence (Harding, 1987). Having made a distinction between the terms *methodology* and *method*, I find it valuable to mention that qualitative approach informed this study and the methodology that was employed is a case study. The reason why I used this methodology is reflected in the title of the research and the instruments employed. The instruments that were used to collect data were semi-structured interviews and document analysis. These are discussed in details on the following sub-headings. In this chapter, the researcher also discusses the processes that were followed in collecting the data, and these include, the data analysis, sampling, sample size, reliability and validity and limitations of the study.

3.2 Research design

A research design is defined as a plan or a blueprint which specifies how the data relating to a given problem should be collected and analysed (Nworgu, 1991). It also provides an outline of the procedures to be followed in conducting any given investigation. The choice of a suitable research design stems on the validity of the results.

In another development, McMillan and Schumacher (2006) maintain that a research design is a set up of the research, the participants and data gathering methods that are used. In most educational research, qualitative and quantitative research designs are commonly used. In this study qualitative research design was employed. The choice of this research design is closely linked with its suitability to answer the research questions. Furthermore, the rationale for qualitative research is to provide valid and trustworthy results (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Against this background, the study was conducted in two high schools under the leadership of woman principals, respectively. Women principals' management experiences in high schools could not be explored through numerical analysis, but an in-depth thick description of what exactly was taking place in their schools. This could only be achieved through a qualitative research design. The procedure I used to gather data includes several visits to the research sites. The first visit entailed for asking for permission to conduct the study on the site; the second was for clarifying some issues that participants were uncomfortable with, and the third was for the actual gathering of the data using interviews and document analysis.

3.3 Research methodology

According to Terre-Blanche, Durrheim and Panther (2006), methodology specifies how researchers may go about practically studying whatever they believe can be known. In this study, the experiences of women principals in high schools needed to be known. This could be achieved through their participation in the study. A case study was selected for this study because it is one of the most commonly used qualitative research approaches. According to Christensen (2007), a case study is an intensive description and analysis of a single individual, organisation, or an event based on information obtained from a variety of sources. Similarly, McMillan and Schumacher (2006) suggest that qualitative research examines a bounded system or a case in detail, employing multiple sources of data found in the setting. In this study, the case that was studied was the women principals and their leadership experiences in managing high schools. The multiple sources that were used included interviews and documentary review of documents such as time book, log book, attendance registers, minute books, leave registers and other administration documents.

In this study, a case study methodology was adopted. A case study is used to refer to the process of conducting an investigation, the unit of study and the product of this type of investigation (Rule & John, 2011). Leedy and Ormrod (2005), state that the social unit may be an individual, a group of individuals, a community or an institution. The unit of analysis in this study were the two women principals. This assertion is supported by Terre-Blanche, Durrheim and Panther (2006) when they state that case studies are studies of particular individuals. It is on this basis that I viewed this methodology as suitable for my study; I was also researching individuals, who were women principals in rural high schools context. In order to gather adequate data in real context, I conducted the research in two selected high schools at Obonjeni District. And to generate an understanding of and insight into particular instance (Rule and John, 2011), two women principals were selected for this study. Similarly Christensen (2007) maintains that a case study is an intensive description and analysis of a single individual, organisation, or an event based on information obtained from a variety of sources. Thus, the researcher was able to give an intensive description and analysis of what was really taking place in those schools through in-depth interviews with principals and their assistants, deputy principals and head of departments and by also doing documents review.

In line with a view expressed by different scholars, Nworgu (1991) postulates that case studies employ a variety of data gathering techniques such as questionnaire, observation, document analysis, interviews, tests, *et cetera*. Only one or a combination of these could be employed in any one case study, depending on the objectives of the study (p.61). Interviews and document analysis were selected for the study. These are discussed in details in section that deals with data collection methods. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) claim that one of the strengths of case studies is that it can penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis. This suggests that through engagement with women principals in interviews, data gathered was more of analytical rather than statistical generalisation. In that way a theory which can help researchers to understand other similar cases, phenomena or situations regarding experiences of women principals in high schools was obtained.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006) suggest that qualitative research examines a bounded system or a case in detail, employing multiple sources of data that is found in a setting.

A case study methodology is appropriated for this study because it allows a researcher to examine a particular instance in a great deal of depth. Therefore, the validity of this study rests on the in-depth understanding of how women principals define their management functions in high schools. Hence, case study research is strong in reality, and is useful in providing relevant background information which may give rise to the extensive investigations. They provide insights into other similar situations and cases, thereby assisting in the interpretation of other similar cases (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Although two high schools under the leadership of women principals are a limited number compared to the number of high schools in KwaZulu-Natal Province, qualitative research does not require generalisation on the entire population. What makes case study limited is that it can embrace and build in unanticipated events and uncontrolled variables.

3.4 Research approach

Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that qualitative research approach can be used to better understand any phenomenon about which little is yet known. In a similar development, Cooper and Schindler (2001) argue that the determination of the research methodology is one of the most important challenges which confront researchers. This includes the selection of appropriate research approach and the extent to which researchers articulate their methodology. Qualitative research reports are typically rich in the details and insights into participants' experiences of the world. The qualitative approach is also applicable for the purpose of this study as it enabled me to understand and interpret the social phenomenon of how women principals experienced their management roles in two high schools at Obonjeni District. Having positioned the study in qualitative approach, the researcher employed a case study methodology and it is significant to mention that this study adopts the interpretivist paradigm. More details about research paradigms are discussed in the following headings.

3.5. Research paradigms and Paradigm Wars

A paradigm as defined by Mertens (1998), is a way of looking at the world and understanding that it is composed of philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action. According to Terre-Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006), it refers to an all encompassing system of practice and thinking, which explains for researchers the nature of inquiry. Scholars have identified three major paradigms for educational and psychological research, and these are positivism/ post positivism, interpretive/constructivist and critical/emancipator paradigms (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Terre-Blanche *et al.*, 2006; Mertens, 1998). This study is located in interpretive/ constructive paradigm. What is distinctive about interpretive paradigms is that they see people and their interpretations, perceptions, meanings and understanding and experiences, as the data source (Mason, 2002, p.56). The choice of interpretivist paradigm is influenced by the fact that it is guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). In this study, it helped the researcher to understand the way women principals experienced their management of rural high schools.

3.5.1. Ontology

Interpretivist paradigm differs from other paradigms on the basis of ontology underpinning it. Ontology confirms that reality can be understood by studying what people think about, their ideas and the meanings that are important to them (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). According to Terre-Blanche, *et al.* (2006), ontology specifies the nature of reality that is to be studied and what could be known about it. In this study the nature of reality to be studied is the way that women principals define their experiences. In this paradigm researchers believe that reality is socially constructed. As reality is constructed socially, this implies that there are many ways of seeing the world and through the course of study the perceptions will vary. That means that there are many ways of discovering the truth according to the interpretivists (Mertens, 1998). Interpretivist value the participants' account as more valid than that of the researcher. As the study sought to understand how women principals experienced their management and the functioning of their schools, the researcher was able to uncover, understand and interpret the truth of what was going on in their schools. This is their own reality that is privileged.

3.5.2. Epistemology

The epistemology in the interpretivist paradigm specifies that knowledge is created, interpreted and understood from a social or individual perspective. Fundamentally, Terre-Blanche, *et al.*, (2006) specifies the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what can be known. Regarding this study what could be known is about the meanings that women principals studied attached to their experience of managing and leading high schools in the context of rurality and the domination of males in the sector. Although I happened to know what is taking place in high schools through informal discussions with my colleagues, that was not important for the study; what was important was the meanings that the research participants attached to their own experience and practices.

The basic assumptions of this paradigm, according to Mertens (1998), is that knowledge is socially constructed by those in the research process and that; it is the duty of the research process and the researcher to understand the complex experiences from the participant's point of view. This suggests that in this study the experiences of women principals were investigated from their perspective in order to understand their behaviours and from their individual viewpoints.

In contrast with post-positivists, who believe that the researcher and the participants are interdependent (Robinson, 2002), constructivists hold it that the inquirer and the inquired person influence each other. It is for this reason that the constructivists choose to employ data collection methods which are more personal and interactive. The researcher in this study adopted an epistemological stance by engaging in interviews as one of interactive methods of collecting data. In conclusion the values in this paradigm that influence the researcher are made explicit to the researched person as opposed to positivists who believe that the methods of studying the social world should be value-free (Mertens, 1998).

3.6 Research population

A population is defined as the limits within which the research findings are applicable (Nworgu, 1991). He further points out that population can be classified into two: accessible population and target population. Target population refers to all members of a specified group to which the investigation relates, while the accessible population refers to those elements in the group within the reach of the researcher. In this study the targeted group were all women principals that were heading high schools at Obonjeni District. But the district is too big in such a way that it was also sub-divided into circuits which are further divided into wards. Each circuit is composed of about 10 high schools that are led by women principals; and their location is far away from one another. Therefore, it would be inconvenient to work with all women principals in the districts, circuits or even wards. Thus I opted for the manageable and accessible group which are two high school women principals. Therefore, my sample size consisted of two female principals, two male deputy principals and four heads of department (2 males and 2females) in each high school at Obonjeni district.

3.7 Sampling technique

A sampling technique is a plan specifying how elements will be drawn from the population (Nworgu, 1991). Purposive sampling was used in this study. A purposive sampling is explained by Cohen, *et al.* (2007) as a feature of qualitative research where a researcher hand picks the cases to be included in the sample. This means that the researcher decides who will participate as this type of sample is based entirely on his/her judgement. Women principals were chosen because the focus of the study. Deputy Principals and heads of departments were also selected because they work closely with the principals and thus, were likely to share some of the experiences that principals encountered in their work.

3.8 Description of the sampled school

In order to give a clear picture and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, I need to vividly explain the sampled schools. Two schools that participated in there were located at Obonjeni District on the northern part of KwaZulu-Natal province. The circuit to which the schools belonged was Hlabisa which had 45 high schools. Of the 45 high schools, about 9 schools were headed by women principals. These schools were chosen because of convenience and accessibility. One is near my home and the other one near the school where I am teaching. School A was situated in a township, 10 km away from the nearest town. The school had the staff composition of 49 educators (including management) and 1526 learners. There were 2 deputy principals and 5 head of departments and 41 teachers (or post level 1 educators). School B was located 50 km away from the nearest town. The school had the staff composition of 39 educators (including management) and 1200 learners. There was 1 deputy principal, 5 head of departments and 32 post level 1 educators (or teachers). In School B the participants were the female principal, 1 male deputy principal, 1 male head of department and 1 female head of department. So, the total number of participants in School B was also 4.

The table below summarises the participants involved in my study

School	Principal	Deputy Principal	Head of Department	Total
A	1	1	2	4
B	1	1	2	4
Total	2	2	4	8

Although the focus was on women principals, the deputy principals and head of departments were included in my sample as their views added value in the information about experiences that women principal had and the challenges that they encountered in leading high schools. This was a form of triangulation technique using multiple participants which enhanced the credibility of the study.

3.9 Data collection methods

Data collection involves the gathering of information about the case in the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). It is clear that it serves as a vehicle through which the researcher collects data to answer his/her research questions. Mertens (1998) contends that there are many data collection methods in qualitative studies. According to Babbie (2007) the methods for collecting data in a qualitative research are mainly interviews and observation. Therefore, the interviews were employed in this study as data collection method. In-depth semi-structured interviews (Appendix E and F) were used because it enabled me to engage with the participants in a conversational way face to face format. This was done in order to get views on experiences of women principals in the selected high schools. In this way I was able to understand the world from the participants' point of views (De Vos, Strydom, Fouch & Delport, 2005). Data collected from interviews were triangulated with document analysis (Appendix G). It is significant to mention that the choice of these types of data collection methods stem on their ability to answer the research questions. Of many types of interviews, semi-structured interviews were preferred. Semi structured interviews were deemed appropriate for this study because they are less formal but very effective in capturing participants' point of view (Creswell, 2008). In addition, Schumacher and Macmillan (2006) claim that, establishing trust, eye contact and being genuine is amongst the things that help to elicit more valid data rather than a rigid approach. Thus, during the semi-structured interviews, I asked probing questions in order to get clarity from the participants on certain issues they raised. All interviews were audio-recorded to ensure an accurate record of what was said in the interviews. The use of tape recorder also helped me to focus on the discussion with the participants without trying to take down all what they were saying. Furthermore, tape recording allows the smooth running of interview proceedings and increases the accuracy and objectivity of the data collection (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Using the tape recorder, I was able to transcribe the participants' exact words.

Interviews data was triangulated with documentary evidence. Hargreaves and Goodson (2006) claim that archival data provides an important complete and sometimes a counterbalance to teacher' interview collections. The documents that were analysed and reported on, in this study included minutes of meetings, time book, control book, log book and all other records related to the management of school. Terre-Blanche *et al.* (2006) argue

that documentary sources such as newspaper articles, letters and official documents can be useful in all forms of qualitative research which in this study is a case study. Therefore by critically analysing the documents perspectives not obtained in the interviews were exposed. This also enabled the researcher to unearth some clues and truths in its construction.

3.10 Data collection process

The following section provides details about how the process of gathering information that would generate answers to the research questions, unfolded.

3.10.1 Interviews conducted with participants from School-A

The interviews in School-A started with the principal, followed by the deputy principal and ended with the heads of departments.

Principal (P-A)

My appointment with the principal was 9H00 but, I arrived an hour before that. This was due to the fact that I wanted to get enough time to prepare myself before engaging in the interviews sessions. Before the interviews started with the principal, I ensured her that the names of the school and names of participants would remain confidential. I also, asked for her permission to tape record the interviews. The interviews went on smoothly except for two instances where we were interrupted by an educator and a parent. The interview lasted for 55 minutes. .

Male Deputy Principal A (DP- A)

The interviews with deputy principal took place in his office. The main focus of the interviews with the deputy principal was to get his understanding on how women principals managed their respective schools. This was investigated through a set of questions (appendix F) which focused on the attitudes of teachers, learners, community and the School Governing Body members. Issues of confidentiality between the interviewer and interviewee were discussed, and the protection of the participants' identity was guaranteed. The interview was

tape recorded. The interview went smoothly except for one interruption. The interview lasted for 30 minutes.

Male Head of Department-A (HOD-A)

The male head of department's interview took place in his office. After clarifying all ethical issues such as confidentiality and anonymity, I sought for permission to use tape recorder for purposes of obtaining an accurate record of the interview content. This would be helpful during the transcription process later on. The permission was granted and he responded to all questions I asked. The fact that the venue was near the staff room, resulted in the interview being disrupted by high levels of noise at some instances. The interview lasted for approximately 47 minutes.

Female Head of Department-A (HOD- A)

The interview with the female head of department took place in her office. After briefing her about the study and its purpose, I explained all ethical issues such as confidentiality and anonymity. The interview went well and it lasted for approximately 40 minutes.

3.10.2 Interviews conducted with participants from School-B

The interviews in School-B started with the male head of department, followed by the deputy principal and ended with the female head of department and the principal.

Male Head of Department-B (HOD-B)

Before the interviews started with the head of department, I assured him that the names of the school and the names of the participants would remain confidential and anonymous. I also asked for his permission to use the tape recorder to record the interview. The interview was conducted in his office. The interview went on smoothly except for one time where we were interrupted by a phone call. It lasted for about 50 minutes.

Male Deputy Principal-B (DP-B)

The male deputy principal's interview was conducted in his office. This was the second interview I conducted in School-B. On my arrival, issues of confidentiality and anonymity were discussed and assurances made in that regard. The permission to use the tape-recorder during the interview process was sought and granted. The interview went well despite many interruptions which were of short durations by teachers and learners. The lasted for approximately 57 minutes. Due to many interruptions I could not accurately determine the exact duration of the interview.

Female Head of Department-B (HOD-B)

I conducted the interview with the female head of department in computer laboratory. I thanked her for being one of the participants in my study. The permission to use tape recorder in the interview process was sought and granted. After a short briefing about my study and ethical issues which included confidentiality and anonymity, I embarked on the interview itself. The interview went smoothly without any interruption and the interview lasted for about 40 minutes.

Principal-B (P-B)

My appointment with the principal was at 8h00 but I arrived 30 minutes earlier in order to prepare myself adequately. Before the interviews started I assured her that the name of the school and the names of participants would remain confidential and anonymous. Thereafter I sought for permission to use tape recorder during interviews, and this was duly granted.

The interviews with the principal in School B took place in her office. I also asked for her permission to use tape recorder in the interview. The interviews went on smoothly except for three interruptions by some high school principals came to school to collect circulars and phone call. The main focus of the interview was on her experiences as the woman principal in high school. The interview lasted for 60 minutes.

3.10.3 Documentary review

All administration documents were reviewed. By reviewing documents I wanted to find out how principals of both schools experience their management functions including interaction in meetings with the School Management Team, teachers, school governing body and parents. Punctuality and educators attendance was investigated in time book and leave registers. The log book was used to identify the issues of discipline at school as well as all the day to day operation of the school.

3.11 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of inspecting, transforming and modelling data with the goal of highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusions and support decision-making (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). According to Cohen, *et al.* (2007), data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data. In the same development, Terre-Blanche *et al.* (2006) suggest that data analysis involves selecting, organising and sorting data to get pattern among categories.

I listened to all the interviews and tried to identify similarities and differences among them. All the responses from the principals, the deputy principals and head of departments were categorised and coded. Equally, the themes were identified and categorised for possible elimination of errors. The researcher ensured that all the data collected from participants were analysed qualitatively and the sense making of the data was done on the participants' definition of their respective situations. A grounded theory and content analysis was done through a systemic series of analysis until the theory that explained the phenomenon being studied, emerged. The data was presented individually and the issues that emerged across all the participants were organised into categories. Participants' words were used during data analysis to support the claims that were being made based on the content of the interviews. All the notes from the documents and interviews were transcribed qualitatively in order to prepare for the meaning making process regarding the views and experiences of women principals' leadership in high schools. Such a process is supported by Cohen, *et al.* (2007) when they claim that case studies are most suitably written as descriptive narratives.

3.12 Ethical issues

Ethical issues are important when doing research and the credibility of the findings also lie researchers observing ethical behaviour (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Before conducting the interviews I had to ensure that all ethical considerations were adequately addressed. I first applied to the University ethical research committee to do research. After the University granted approval (Appendix A), I applied to the gate keepers, namely the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal (Appendix B) and principal of schools (Appendix C) to conduct research. Thereafter, I paid visits to schools to request women principals, deputy principals and head of departments to participate in the interviews (Appendix E and F). Participants were given the opportunity to sign a consent form (Appendix D) after they had agreed to participate in the study. The participants were also informed of their right to withdraw if they felt. I also explained to them the purpose of the study and gave assurances that their rights, dignity and confidentiality would be respected. Participants were informed that anonymity would be accomplished through the use of pseudonyms instead of their real names.

3.13 Limitations of the study

Choosing two high schools when there are more than two thousand high schools in our province can be regarded as a limitation. This is because the findings from only two high schools cannot be generalised on the entire population. One cannot assume that what happens in two high schools applies across all high schools in the province. However the data to collect was considered worthwhile because it provided an in-depth perspective of their feelings, emotions and attitudes of the participants.

3.14 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed description of the research design, methodological approach, and methods of data collection employed in this study. The population, sampling strategy and sample size were also discussed. Data collection process and its proceedings were also presented, as well as, the research findings which were based on the data collected and analysed. Then the next chapter summarises the study and the findings, and also makes recommendations that are based on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter research design and methodology were presented. This chapter focuses on the data analysis and discussion of the findings. Data analysis is a process where a researcher organises, analyses and interprets the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993).

As it was mentioned in Chapter 3, the data was gathered through a combination of semi-structured interviews and documentary review. The sample was made of 8 participants: 2 female principals, 2 deputy principals and 4 heads of departments. The participants were asked to respond to a set of questions. There was a set of 16 interview questions for principals, a set of 13 interview questions for deputy principals and a set of 13 questions for head of departments. Interviews were tape recorded and field notes were also taken. Document analysis was also used as a means of supplementing data from interviews. This data that was gathered is discussed in detail in the following sections. The two schools sampled for the study were named after School-A and School-B as it was mentioned earlier on. The research participants from School-A were named Principal-A (P-A), Deputy Principal-A (DP-A) and Head of Department-A (HOD-A). The participants from School-B were named Principal-B (P-B), Deputy Principal-B (DP-B) and Head of Department-B (HOD-B).

From the 2 principals interviewed, I had 1(one) tape recorded data of 2 hours. From the 2 deputy principals I had 1 (one) recorded tape of 1hour 45 minutes. From the 4 heads of departments, I had 2 recorded tapes of 2 hrs 30 minutes. I also had 2 pages of data collected from document analysis for both schools.

All the participants' responses were analysed using content analysis and interpreted to give meanings, focusing on the management experiences of woman principals in high schools as a unit of analysis. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) define content analysis as is a tool to analyse qualitative data. Content analysis was found to be appropriate for this study because the purpose of content analysis is to analyse raw data into a brief summary format in order to clarify the links between the objectives of the topic and the findings. One of the most common approaches to content analysis is a 'thematic analysis', where the coding scheme is based on categories that are designed to capture the dominant themes in a text (Hardy & Bryman, 2004, p.550). Another perspective to analysis comes from Elo and Kyngas (2008) who suggest that content analysis attain a condensed and broad description of the phenomenon. The choice for using content analysis was influenced by the fact that it is a technique of analysing verbal or written messages. Therefore, in this study, verbal messages refer to the data that was gathered through semi-structured interviews while, written messages refer to the data that was obtained through the document analysis.

First, I listened to each tape several times. This was done with the intention of identifying the similar or dissimilar trends about particular issues regarding women principals' management experiences in high schools. Thereafter, each tape was transcribed from being voice format to written words on paper. The transcribed data of all participants from School-A took up to 31 pages while that of School-B took up to 29 pages. Therefore, transcriptions from all participants came to a total of 60 pages.

Second, from the transcriptions, I looked for the emerging issues and put them in specific categories. All the issues that were found to be similar and those that were found to be dissimilar from all participants per school (principal, deputy principal and head of departments) were put together under one code.

Third, from both schools I looked for the issues that emerged across the sites and participants, and these were used to formulate themes. The following are the themes that emerged: (1) perceptions of staff towards female and male principals (2) challenges facing women

principals (3) the ways women principals dealt with challenges (4) attitudes towards women principals (5) management styles (6) school governing body interaction with the principals and (7) personal backgrounds and early influences.

All notes that were generated by reviewing documents were analysed in order to add or offer another perspective from that of the interviews. It was necessary in this study that information gathered through the use of interviews was triangulated through the use of another method in order to enhance the credibility of the findings.

4.2 Data presentation and discussion of findings

This section presents and discusses the findings. The responses I obtained from the participants were reported using exact words from my participants. The presentation of the data is done according to the themes listed in the previous section.

4.2.1 Perceptions of staff towards female and male principals

In response to the question about the perceptions of staff members towards female and male principals, two perceptions dominated the discourse. This includes the viewing female principals as incapable of leading by some staff members while others viewed them as being capable of leading. The responses from my participants from both schools (A and B) revealed that the staff held different perceptions about female and male principals. Principal-A (P-A) reported that majority of the male teachers were of the opinion that female principals were incapable of leading and managing an office as their males counterparts were. She further reported that this perception was attributed to purely gender role stereotypes. According to P-A, the teachers held the perception that was similar to many societies who still doubted women's ability to lead, hence they continued to believe that males were better managers. Confirming the gender role stereotypes Principal-A said:

The reason why the staff responds to females differently than to males is that, in their view, females will never be equal to males in our societies. Therefore they will always doubt the women's ability to lead.

This assertion is in line with Tyree (2005) who opines that women managers lack leadership skills and that in addition, they lack the support of the teachers in their schools.

The female Head of Department-A on the one hand, pointed out that negative perception from the staff towards female principals was attributed to cultural factors which, she argued, perpetuated the view that women were subordinate to men. She reported that:

Negative perception towards female principal emanates from our culture where a male even at home is respected because he is a father figure.

Still on the issue of perceptions towards women principals, the female HOD-B (P-B) indicated that the staff respected and feared males in the workplace compared to their female counterparts because of the position of authority they (males) have compared to the females.

Males have that dignity by nature, so automatically the treatment of the females differs to that of the males. Even our powers are not the same and most of the times the staff fear males than females (female HOD-B).

The HOD-B, pointed out that by nature, males were respected because of their gender and he further argues that, even the powers given to them by God were not the same as that of the females. Thus male principals sometimes got respect from the teachers just because they were males, and not necessary because of what they could do, yet the women principals worked hard in order to earn respect from the teachers. With regards to the issue of special respect that male teacher enjoyed, School-B head of department had this to say:

As females we worked hard to assist her in order to prove that female principal can do their work just like the male principals.

The above extract is in line with Eagly and Mladinic's view (2004) when they maintain that gender role stereotypes can be considered as one of the important cultural constraints, which affect the extent of the progress towards gender equity in school management position. Moreover, these scholars went on to say that gender role stereotypes have caused workplace discrimination against women managers. This implies that male principals, according to the above responses, were respected based on their gender rather than on what they did. This finding is in line with Gupton and Slick's (2005) claim that women in administrative positions are not given status or respect by their male colleagues. This showed a gap in terms

of respect given to males and females in leadership positions. While females earned respect based on their hard work, their male counterparts got it by virtue of them being males.

The responses given by the male staff regarding their perceptions of the staff about female and male principals revealed that the perceptions were the same. The 4 male participants indicated that staff members perceived the woman principal in the same way they did with male principal. Such a position depended on the management style the female principal employed. To this end, one male head of department (HOD-B) indicated that if the woman principal managed the school, and not the people, the staff viewed her in the same way they did to the male principals.

On the question of management of institution rather than people, one male HOD-B had this to say:

The perception is the same unless the principal managed the school not people.

The male DP-A reported that the staff's perception about male and female principals was determined by the management style the principal employs, and not the gender of that principal. Based on the above responses it is evident that male participants (HOD-B and DP-A) from both schools believed that the negative perceptions of the staff could be caused by the management style the principal adopts, rather than gender related issues. Otherwise the staff perceived female principals to be just as capable of leading as the male ones.

In contrast, the 4 female HODs from School-A and School-B held a different view. They reported that the staff responded to the women principals negatively because of their societal norms. Many societies still undermined women. They further argued that some people still associated women with domestic work, and as a result, they undermined their seniority. Most of the teachers maintained that although women were educated, they

(teachers), still held those baseless assumptions about women generally, and they took them to the workplace where they then undermined women principals.

On the same issue, the HOD -A had this to say:

If the principal brings to school departmental changes which needs to be implemented, males do not take it at first value; they weigh and only take it if they are convinced that it was from the department.

On the same issue highlighted above, the HOD-B had this to say:

I was exposed on both the male and the female leadership, so the approach and behaviour is not the same.

This argument is in line with the suggestion held by Hardy and Bryman (2004) who maintained that gender roles within the societal norms gained lots of interest within the subject of attitudes towards women's work role. This means that there is a lot of that gender differences regarding what roles female and male leaders could play. Some roles were viewed as suitable for the females, while others were said to be suitable for the males. Leadership is one of the roles that were more strongly associated with men rather than women.

The above extracts imply that female participants viewed the negative perception about the staff to female principals as being influenced by the staff's societal backgrounds rather than anything else. Although gender equality with regards to positions of management, has been an issue for too long. However, some teachers still linked women with nurturing roles while men were linked with controlling abilities. Against this background, women's ability to make informed decisions is questioned. This is in line with Shaw and Hoerber's (2003) submission when they argue that the creation of employment roles is influenced by discourses of masculinity and femininity. Shaw and Hoerber (2003) define masculinity as the willingness to make sacrifices, the tendency to think logically and analytically and the ability to manage stress. They explain femininity as sensitivity, concern for others and the display of emotion. The above clearly indicates how gender role orientations influence the perceptions of various people about female and male managers.

In response to the question on staff perceptions about women principals, the deputy principal and male and female heads of departments from School-A viewed it positively. But P-A mentioned that the staff responded towards her negatively at first, particularly the male educators but after sometime, they accepted her leadership role. According to her the male educators feared that female principals who are leaders would oppress them. In this context, oppress refers to treat somebody unfairly. In explaining this conception, this is what she had this to say:

When I took over as a principal, the male educators feared that as a female principal I would oppress them. And when I discovered that I sat down with the staff and discussed the issue thereafter, the perception of the staff changed.

This indicates that some males were of the view that female leaders could not give males equal rights as females.

Still on staff responses towards women principals, it was established that some members of the staff perceived women principals capable of leading. The two deputy principals (DP-A and DP-B) and a male HOD-B mentioned that they obtained good Grade 12 results when principals were the women.

It was for the first time in our school's history our Grade 12 obtains 56 bachelors out of 102 learners who sat for examination (HOD-B).

On the same vein, the deputy principal from School-A had this to say:

In high schools the principal's ability to lead is seen in Grade 12 results. Since she became a principal the school scored from 70% upwards. Furthermore, our school had Grade 12 learners in top 10 lists in the district.

Based on the above extracts, it is evident that the women principals were also regarded by some staff members as good managers and also that, they could lead effectively.

The findings from the participants (HOD-A and HOD-B) revealed that the staff who perceived women principals as incapable of leading based their perceptions on societal norms which included gender-role stereotypes and cultural factors. Meanwhile, those who perceived woman principals as capable of leading effectively believed that if the woman principal got support and proper assistance she could lead effectively sometimes even more than her male counterparts.

4.2.2 Challenges facing female principals

The responses from 8 participants from both participating schools revealed that there were challenges that were faced by women principals in schools, purely based on their gender status. Participants highlighted that challenges principals faced came in three different phases of human resource management processes. One, during the recruitment phase; two, on their assumption of duties and lastly, when performing their duties as principals. The three phases are discussed below:

4.2.2.1 Challenges during recruitment stage

After South Africa got democracy in 1994, the recruitment and selection of personnel in senior positions of schools were decentralised to the School Governing Bodies (Employment Equity Act, 1998; South African School Act, 1996; Education Labour Relations Act, 1997). Although the democratic recruitment and selection processes were aimed at arriving at objective decisions in terms of who got appointed, the practice of appointing people based on special subjective preferences, persisted.

When responding to the question about their appointments as principals, the two principals (P-A and P-B) indicated that they encountered problems. School-B principal reported that, there were 3 male teachers with whom she contested the post of the principalship. She alleged that there was a tension at school when she got the position. Rumours according to her, pointed out that the male teachers, on one hand, did not see her as being suitable to lead such a huge school while female teachers on the other, were behind her to give support. As she was acting in the post, besides the pressure of contesting, she was also confronted with the challenge of proving herself to her colleagues that she was indeed suitable for the post.

When the post was advertised we were two deputy principals (I male and I female) and both of us, as well as, the 2 male HODs, contested for the post. Even when we were about to go for interviews, rumours were saying that some males staff members felt that the school was too large to be led by the female principal. As a result there was tension in the school and that put me under a serious pressure.

Still on the issue of experiences of women principals during appointment phase, the School-A principal indicated that there were problems in the school after the ex-principal had left the school. As she was the only deputy principal at school, she acted as a principal when the post was declared vacant. She mentioned that the teachers and learners were uncontrollable. The school was totally out of control, and as a result, she was not interested in the principalship post, until some staff members approached her and asked her to apply for the post. The noticeable difference between P-A and P-B is that, School-A principal was approached by the staff and they asked her to apply for the post while the School-B principal was competing with her colleagues for the same post.

Reflecting on how she became interested in applying for the post, P-A expressed said:

I did not want to be a principal at this school because of the problems and complaints about the school. Teachers and learners were uncontrollable and the school was on its knees. But that was changed by the staff that sent delegates to ask me to apply for the post. The worst challenge was to start afresh putting everything in place at the very same time did not want to fail my colleagues who had put their trust on me.

Comparing the cases of these two principals, while P-A got support from the staff during recruitment stage, Principal-B (P- B) was struggling to prove to her colleagues that she was both suitable and competent for the post should she be given a chance. This implies that while some men supported women principals in leadership positions, there were some who were still reluctant. In P-B's response, she indicated that it was the male deputy principals and male head of departments who competed for the principalship post. Based on the response from P-B, one may deduce that male teachers applied for the same post because they doubted her ability to lead.

School's-B issue was in line with Nkonyane (2008) when arguing that the attitude of some panelists during the short listing and interviews processes left much to be desired. He made reference to one issue where a female candidate at one school got high scores than her male counterparts but the school governing body recommended a male to be a principal because the SGB believed that the school had too many women in the staff. Against this background, one can say that some women find themselves working hard if they aspire for senior positions in education institutions.

The findings from participants revealed that both principals encountered challenges during recruitment stage but differently. This includes P-B facing the challenge of proving herself to her colleagues suitable for the post while P-A tried hard not to disappoint her colleagues who showed trust in her.

4.2.2.2 Challenges women principals encountered on the assumption of duty

In response to the question where the principals were asked to highlight the challenges they encountered when assuming their duties as principals, both principals indicated that they encountered challenges. The challenges they encountered included poor co-operation, lack of discipline, late coming, absenteeism, early departure, uncertainty and lack of role models.

In response to these challenges that the principals encountered on their assumption of duties, P-A indicated that she had a problem of some male teachers who were not co-operative. She mentioned that they had a fear that she would oppress them.

P-A reported her story as follows:

On my assumption of duty it was very difficult to hold a meeting because the teachers, particularly males did not utter a word in the meeting. Even the submission of work was done after several reminders.

P-A indicated earlier on that after the principal left, there were many problems at school. Those included teachers and learners which were uncontrollable. Therefore, as a new principal she was confronted with the challenges of restoring the culture of teaching and learning to the teachers and learners on one hand, and to reconstruct the school on the other.

This was confirmed when perusing the time book to verify staff attendances during the times of former principal, and when she started acting as a principal, as well as, when she was appointed as the principal. The time book after the assumption of the female principal showed that the teachers came to school early and left school late when the learners had already left the school premises. All that changed when she became a principal in the same school. Even the leave register indicated that there were many leaves which were taken at that time compared to the time when she was the principal. The Log book had many cases of lack of discipline from both educators and learners recorded. But most of the challenges were dealt with when she was still acting as a principal. On her assumption, she said they had to keep up the good work.

Principal-A pointed out that co-operation between herself and the School Governing Body (SGB) assisted her to reconstruct the school. She stressed that since then they never looked back but accepted that they did have the ups and downs just like any other schools. The above responses show that this principal was able to work with the SGB. Based on the responses from School A's- participants, it is evident that P-A faced the challenge of restoring the culture of teaching and learning and to reconstruct the school on her assumption of duties.

On the same issue, Principal-B highlighted that there were some challenges but also that she was able to deal with them. The fact that she was acting on the post, she said she got the opportunity to explore ways and means of addressing some of the things that were taking place at school. The challenge that P-B highlighted was that, as she was in the position of responsibility and accountability for everything, she had to enforce discipline to the educators of different ages (young and old). Furthermore, she would have to account for everything taking place in the school. P-B indicated that the teachers who had been on the field for quite long were co-operative and disciplined compared to the teachers that had been recently appointed.

This is how P -B reported her story:

The old staff members understand me but the problem is with the young teachers who defied instructions and needed to be reminded about their work every day.

She also indicated that as she was the first woman principal in the ward, there were no female principals that she could use as her role models. That meant she had no one in terms of gender, whom she could refer as her role model. As a result, she was not certain if she would be able to do as required of her and to hold the position well.

P-B alleged:

In spite of a fear that if I would be able to hold the position well, I was also worried because there was no female principal nearby whom I would look for advice or help from her in case I face a problem (P-B).

The claim by P-B clarified that the work as such was not problematic but, she needed to adjust and be cautious that she was then accountable for everything was taking place in the school. Based on the above responses one may conclude that the principal in School -B found accountability and the fear of performing to the required standard as the problems she encountered on her assumption of duties.

4.2.2.3 Challenges woman principals encounter when performing their duties

The principals of both schools revealed that there were challenges that they encountered when performing their duties. The challenges included teachers who needed to be followed so that they could do their work. This includes the signing of time book and going to their classes to teach on time. It was also mentioned that the lack of co-operation of some teachers when they were supposed to carry out instructions, was a challenge. The learners' attitude towards learning and the lack of support from learners' parents were also identified the major challenge they encountered.

The challenge mentioned by School-B Principal (P-B) was that some educators needed to be followed and channeled all the times before they did their work. For example, she had to put question marks against the names of teachers who did not sign the time book as a sign of

warning. In analysing document there were question marks made by principals against the names of the staff.

The P-B commented:

I do encounter challenges more especially the teachers who do not sign the time book when they arrive at school.

The above extract indicates that School-B principal experienced the problem of poor co-operation from other staff members. P-B also indicated that some teachers needed to be constantly reminded that they had go to the class during teaching time such that she was supposed to check if there were no teachers in the staffroom during their periods. That resulted in poor human relations between her and some individuals particularly those that were lazy.

In School-A, the problem of lack of co-operation from the teachers was more visible among those teachers that had been on the field for too long but not promoted (P-A and HOD-A). HOD-A mentioned that they became rebellious and defiant while, P-A expressed that they questioned everything she brought to the staff in such a way that she had to refer to the circulars to prove that it was from the education department and not from her.

Reflecting on these teachers that had been in the field of education for a considerable length of time, HOD-B had this to say:

If teachers were teaching for a long time they tend to be defiant and wanted to be promoted by force.

Still on the issue of challenges woman principals encountered when performing their duties, the 3 participants in School-B, revealed that there were challenges pertaining to the learners that the principals encountered. One participant (P-B) mentioned the negative attitude that some learners had towards learning. In her opinion, such negative attitudes resulted in poor performance as it was very difficult to teach somebody who showed no sign of interest to learn. The two HODs in School-B mentioned a lack of respect from learners particularly, the boys towards the principal as the challenge in School-B. The

female HOD-B mentioned the issue of bullying of young boys and girls by the old boys. This behaviour continued even after several warnings had been given. If the teacher threatened those learners to take them to the principal they did not care. But should the teachers threatened to take those learners to the male deputy principal or one of the male heads of departments they co-operated.

Still on the challenges posed by the learners, P-A mentioned the issue of learners' attitudes towards learning which she felt resulted in a lack of discipline among them. In her viewpoint, this emanated from the lack of support from the parents. According to her, the effective learning process relied on the support from the parents and the school. If the parents could instill discipline and respect in their children, teachers would teach without any problems of lack of discipline from learners.

4.2.3 The ways women principals dealt with challenges

As both principals revealed various forms of challenges they encountered on their management positions, the researcher found it valuable to probe for clarity from them in terms of how they dealt with those challenges. P-A and DP-A were of the opinion that co-operation between the principal and other stakeholders including School Governing Body and School Management Team assisted the principal in School-A to deal with the challenges. P-A went on to say that it was made possible by reviewing and putting in place various policies and the involvement of both stakeholders in decision-making processes within the school.

P-A had this to say:

In managing the school I work hand in glove with SGB and SMT.

The DP-A also indicated that if the principal happen to encounter any problem, she discussed it with the SMT and invited their opinions in trying to resolve the challenges. As a result according to him, collaboration and consultation remained the ways and means which helped her principal find solutions to most of the problems. The male HOD-A on the other hand claimed that P-A was very transparent. In this context, transparent referred to a situation where new proposal, requirement and procedures were discussed and made to clear to every staff member at school. He also pointed out the issue of decisiveness and firmness when it comes to decision-making process.

In response to the question on how women principals dealt with the challenges in School-B, the principal of School-B, and the female HOD-B had a similar views regarding the of delegation of duties to other SMT. They viewed it as being of great assistance to the principal in School-B.

P-B had this to say:

When I was acting as a principal I got enough time to know and understand my SMTs' strengths and weaknesses, and therefore, the delegation of duties was done on the basis of their abilities.

The female head of department (HOD-B) in supporting the above-mentioned argument, added that P-B also relied on networking and teamwork to deal with challenges at school.

On the basis of the above argument one may deduce that those two principals had common ways of dealing with problems. This included distributed leadership, collaboration and co-operation with other stakeholders (SMT and SGB). However it was revealed that both of them were able to take a firm stand on certain issues if and when there was a need to do so.

4.2.4 Attitudes towards the women principals

In response to the question on attitudes towards women principals, the 8 participants indicated that, woman principals experienced either positive or negative attitudes in the workplace from teachers, learners, male counterparts, and the community. The attitudes towards women principals from the participants was explored from the perspectives of the School Management Teams (SMT); Post level 1 teachers (males and females) and the parents.

In response to the question on the attitudes of SMTs and post level 1 teachers towards their principals as women, 6 participants from both schools viewed it as positive. P -A mentioned that she received no special treatment from both the SMT and the PL1 educator (teachers). She reported that they regarded her as a principal and her interaction with them was good.

On the issue of attitudes, P-A had this to say:

I receive no special treatment as a woman principal. The staff treats me as a principal not woman principal, and the interaction with my teachers is good.

The deputy principal concurred with the view that the attitude of the male teachers towards the principal, irrespective of the post level was acceptable.

DP -A reported:

The attitude is generally acceptable. She is the principal and all teachers do take instructions from her depending on the matter, sometimes we talk about it or she simple instructs us.

The Male HOD-A also shared similar view and in his response, he had this to say:

She receives positive attitude and she commands discipline she deserves male
(HOD-A).

However, responses from two female head of departments (HOD-A and HOD-B) contradicted the views expressed above. While the above participants viewed the attitudes of the staff as positive, they identified some teachers who expressed negative attitudes towards their principals. While female HOD-A mentioned that the teachers who had been on the field were the ones who were problematic in School-A, this was not the case in School-B.

This is what the female HOD-A had to say:

If a person has been in post level 1 for a long time he/she regards him /her due for promotion and starts to want it by force. This results in negative attitude towards everything said by the principal.

The above response is in variance with female HOD-B who revealed that in School-B teachers who have been on the field for a long time were the ones who were supportive. According to HOD-B the negative attitude towards the principal was found from young, newly appointed teachers.

The above responses indicate that the principal from School-A received positive attitude from both male School Management Team and male Post Level 1 educators (teachers), except for individuals who have been on the field for a long time but did not get promoted. As a result they were rebellious and contested everything that the principal did at school. This position is in agreement with Wilson (2007) who argues that the attitudes of women teachers kept them from accepting leadership positions.

Still on the issue of attitudes of the staff towards the principal, 3 participants from School-B (P-B, DP-B and male HOD-B) expressed the view that the attitudes of the SMT and post level 1 educators (teachers) towards the principal was positive.

In that regard this is the comment made by P-B:

I get all the support I need and males give me due respect just like the females do.

On the same issue, the male HOD-B added:

The attitude is completely good. They take her as their mother and respected her even age wise.

This implies that the teachers' attitudes in School-B towards the principal were acceptable from both the males and the female teachers irrespective of their post levels. The situation differed only when it comes to the newly appointed individuals. Based on the above responses one may conclude that the attitudes of female SMTs in both schools (School-A and School-B) were positive except for fewer younger educators in School-B and experienced educators in School-A.

These responses concurred with the findings from the minute books reviewed from both schools. The findings from the minute book of SMT meetings, staff meetings and subject meetings showed that meetings regarding the due dates for the submission of work, the delegation of duties, as well as staffing, end up with points of agreement. Even though there were disagreements at some points or burning issues but at the end they reached consensus. This includes the attendance of union meetings during teaching time when they needed to

decide if all of them would be attending. Minutes showed that most of the time they sent delegates to the meetings, and as a result, the school kept functioning although there were union meetings that were taking place simultaneously. There were no forms of rejection or unnecessary contestations that were observed. This includes the cases where the principal assigned or delegated responsibilities to other staff members. The minute books also indicated that their meetings were interactive and principals accepted ideas from the staff concerning raised issues.

The positive attitudes that prevailed between the staff and the principal created a conducive atmosphere for good relations and enhanced school effectiveness. One principal (P-B) indicated that she made sure that she created a positive atmosphere in order for learning to take place. But at the same time she was decisive and assertive as a principal. She also provided a nurturing and caring environment to their subordinates if it is needed.

P-B reported:

All teachers take it as luck to have a female principal as they are not afraid to approach me even about their personal problem.

The above responses revealed that female principals that participated in the study demonstrated effective leadership qualities which may not be found among male principals. I am aware that my study did not focus on male principals, and therefore, I cannot say much about them. It is evident though that these principals were easily accessible to educators and they could ask for assistance from the principals. That, without any doubt created a vibrant climate and good human relations in the organisation (school). One can surmise with confidence that such a climate contributed to school effectiveness which ultimately had a good impact in learners' good results more especially Grade 12. This is evidenced by the fact that both Schools were producing good Grade 12 results after the two principals took over in their respective schools.

4.2.5 Parents

In response to the question on parents' attitude towards the principal (P-A), the deputy principal (DP-A) and the female head of department (HOD-A) had similar view that parents had positive attitude towards their principal. P-A claimed that the long period (since 1988) she spent with the community enabled them to know and understand her abilities, and thus were comfortable with her leadership.

P-A highlighted:

I have stayed with them for a long time as a result they know me; understand my abilities, so they are comfortable with me as the principal of the school.

DP-A mentioned that parents' attending meetings was an indication that they (parents) were happy. Besides attending meetings, parents did participate in the discussions and decision-making process. This was evident when I peruse the minutes of the meetings the principal had with parents.

DP-A stated:

Our learners' parents are happy. The attitude is seen on their attendance and co-operation during meetings.

The female HOD-A further reported that the community was co-operative. She said that for a long time, P-A served as a principal, there was not even a single complaint from the community about her (principal) leadership, and thus they accept her.

The male HOD-A had a different view on the issue of parents' attitude towards the principal. He highlighted that some parents, particularly the males, still did not believe that women could lead. This became evident when there were problems at school, for instance if a parent was called to the school because his child has violated the code of conduct such as fighting another learner. Instead of looking at the problem of lack of discipline from the child, the parent usually viewed the cause to be the principal, usually because she was a woman.

The male HOD-A had this: *"This could not happen should the principal is still Mr X"*.

This implies that, some parents regarded woman principals as being unable to enforce discipline. Such a viewpoint can be regarded as being unfair because sometimes their

comments were also on the things that happened in the school even before women principals took responsibilities of running their schools.

Against this background one may deduce that, although some parents had trust in female principals, there were some who still associated leadership with gender. P-A indicated that there were some problems of parents who did not attend meetings, and as a result, they did not comply with the resolutions taken. The worst part of it according to HOD-A and DP-A, the parents did not take their children's education seriously. She also expressed the view that there were children who were the heads of their household from various reasons. Some of the reasons were that parents were working far away from their homes; some stayed with their grandparents because their parents had died, and that situation resulted in lack of discipline among them and a lack of proper guidance.

In response to the community attitudes towards the principal as a woman, P-B raised a different issue. She said that in the beginning some members of the community had a negative attitude towards her and she viewed their attitude as emanating from a tendency of criticising women in leadership positions.

P-B said:

Generally parents have that tendency of criticising a woman in the position of leadership; as a result, at first it was not easy to accept me as the principal.

Still on attitudes of parents towards the principal, DP-B mentioned that some parents whose learners were enrolled at school had a negative attitude towards the principal in the beginning. But he indicated that when they observed that discipline from the learners and the teachers, as well as the learners' good results, their attitude changed. In his point of view negative attitudes of parents towards the principal was changed by the good result obtained in Grade 12 and the principal's ability to maintain discipline in the school. On the basis of the above findings one may conclude that the display of good leadership skills by the principal caused parents to change their negative attitude towards her.

The perceptions of women subordinate to men still existed irrespective of whatever good they could do. This position corresponds with a position earlier held by Madlala (2007) who argued that communities have no faith in females and their expectations of women as leaders were very low. Similarly, a female HOD-B highlighted a case of parents outside the school to which the male HOD-B also referred to as community at large. She maintained that they undermined women ability to lead. She highlighted that they showed a lack of trust in women leadership, and they therefore put the blame on the principal for any wrong thing that took place at school.

HOD-B reported:

If a child misbehaved you can hear them saying that it was better when Mr X was a principal [referring to the previous male principal].

Another challenge mentioned by one female HOD-B was that P-B was from the same community. Parents knew that P-B was soft, and therefore they could not imagine her being able to manage such a huge school particularly high school. On the basis of the above responses, it was clear that the P-B was expected to work hard in order to prove to the community that she could lead the school effectively.

4.2.6 Management styles

In response to question about the management styles used by both Principal-A and Principal-B, 8 participants indicated that democratic leadership style was dominant on both principals. It was also noted that one style could not be useful at all times. That is why at times, autocratic leadership style and *laissez-faire* leadership styles were also used. Both principals claimed that they combined management styles depending on issues and situations they were dealing with. In support of this claim, Bush (2005) argue that management styles depends on the prevailing circumstance, and therefore that managers should employ a range of management styles and deploy them as appropriate.

Principal-A stated:

One style sometimes does not work always therefore I just look at the situation and apply the suitable style.

DP-A reported:

At no point the principal introduces things without consulting us as SMT. She comes up with ideas on issues that surround the problem and allow us to contribute.

In a related development, DP-A agreed that not only one management style was perfect at all times, hence the principal happened to be autocratic thereby, giving direction depending on the issue at that point of time.

Still on the issue of the principal's management style, the male HOD-A described P-A as an open and a transparent person. He also revealed that she did not hold on to power. The female HOD-A concurred with that view by stating the principal shared the leadership with everybody at school. This brings us to the conclusion that participative management style was displayed in P-A leadership.

HOD-A said:

The principal does not impose but at the very same time have control over the execution of duties.

HOD-A went on to say that during meetings, P-A ensured that all educators were involved actively and everybody took part in decisions about what was going on at school. Therefore all educators at school access resources without any discrimination according to post levels.

She further disclosed that the principal ensured that work was properly done. There are clear categories and procedures in terms of discipline. Some cases were treated at the class level by the class teachers, the head of the departments and the deputy principals. It was only on serious offences that the principal got personally involved. This was confirmed when viewing school policy where clear procedures and guidelines on how disciplinary procedures should be followed. The code of conduct specified how cases should be treated, by whom and, when a case must be referred to the immediate senior. The principal also delegated some duties to other staff members. And the female head of department rated her principal's management style as being very effective.

The School-B principal described her management style as democratic but did not deny that she sometimes used other harsher style. She mentioned that she tried her best to make everybody feel part of the school life by allowing suggestions and ideas from others and use them if they were good. But she also stated that at times, she had to use the style where she had to give instructions and expected them to take them they were. When I probed for examples of such cases, she said that, if a teacher did not go to the class during his/her periods, such cases were not negotiable therefore, and that educator had to comply. Otherwise in her point of view those styles made her work manageable

The male HOD-B and DP-B also shared similar responses of the principal's management style being democratic. According to DP-B's judgment it was effective because everyone was allowed to present ideas to the principal.

The female HOD-B mentioned that everyone got a platform if he/she wanted to share or sell an idea to the school management team and the staff. If they saw that it would take the school forward they applied it. Even post level 1educators were allowed to come forward with their ideas, therefore everybody at school felt that they were part and parcel of the school because their opinions and contributions were respected. DP-B reported: "If they were good she was not afraid to buy in that idea". On the basis of responses from participants in School-B on may deduce that distributed leadership was displayed in P-B.

The responses from all participants from both schools indicate that democratic management style was dominant in both women principals. This is in line with Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) when submit that male and female leadership styles researchers have documented that women tend to behave in more participative and democratic ways than men. In the similar development, Oplatka and Hertz-Lazarowitz (2006) point out that democratic style of management is evident in female managers, whereas, authoritarianism is common among males' managers.

4.2.7 School Governing Body (SGB) and their interactions with the principal

All the participants from both schools suggested that the interactions and response of the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) towards their principals as females were acceptable. The principal of School-A, reported that the members of the SGB demonstrated readiness to learn and, that they also were very supportive of her management activities. On the basis of the above responses, it was clear that SGB members in School-A attended meetings fully. This was also evident when browsing through the minutes of SGB meetings. The SGB met once or twice per quarter. This was confirmed by the SGB constitution which stipulated that it (SGB) must sit at least once or twice per quarter depending on the needs. P-A further declared that they had one goal in mind, namely, that of keeping school going rather than wasting time fighting.

The head of departments (HOD-A) and the deputy principal (DP-A) had a similar view in that the interaction between the SGB and the principal was positive.

The male HOD-A said:

I know very little as I am not a member of SGB, but at a distance I assumed it was good, because they did attend meetings.

The deputy principal (DP-A) reported:

I happened to be a member of the SGB when the principal was a male but what I noticed that parents' attendance of meetings has improved.

In response to the question and reaction of school governing body towards School-B principal (P-B) as a female, she suggested that it was very positive. She mentioned that she considered herself very fortunate to work with such people. Both female and male School Governing Body members did respect her position and were trying by all means to give her the support they could. This claim was supported by both the deputy principal and a male head of department.

Male head of department HOD-B reported:

In all the requests we made to the SGB including study guides and other teaching aids, we always got positive response.

Therefore, based on the above responses one could conclude that the interaction between P-B and the SGB was acceptable. In other words, the above response revealed that if the principal works co-operatively with the SGB problems are minimal. This finding is in agreement with Nkonyane's (2008) position which maintains that the principal who was not recommended by the SGB because the school had too many women never enjoyed support from the SGB. He pointed out that the SGB mobilised the community against her and accused her of undermining the parents. That made the life of that principal very difficult, and her performance and functions as the principal, suffered. This implies that positive interaction between the principal and the SGB has a great impact on the performance of the principals.

4.2.8 Personal background and early influences

The principals were also asked to explain if their early influences and beliefs influenced the way in which they dealt with their staff. One principal (P-A) indicated that her upbringing helped her to see herself as the human being who can do anything. She further explained that growing up among boys assisted her to observe no difference between herself and the males. And that was the attitude she always had even when she was dealing with the staff. As a result, she performed her duties without a fear of her gender. P-A reported: *“Being a woman to me is not an issue”*.

This was an indication that School-A principal had faith and trust in herself and that she was not intimidated by her in managing the school effectively. While School-A principal expressed that personal background and early influences contributed to her leadership role, School B-Principal viewed personal background impacted her leadership role negatively. She noted that the fact that she was from the same community worked against her as people took advantage of her, and thus lacked trust in her.

HOD-B mentioned that, as the principals was teaching at the very same school and also from the same community her personal background hindered her in terms of enforcing discipline to

learners. From the above discussion, it is clear that personal backgrounds and early influences could have positive or negative impact in principals' management style.

Wrushen and Sherman (2008) argue that women early experiences influence their career path decision to pursue education as a field of study; and that negative experiences during their schooling contributed to their desire to make school life fun, enjoyable and appreciated. This implies that early influences and backgrounds had a role to play in the way principal managed their schools. This argument is supported by Sihera (2007) who submits that present knowledge, attitude and actions are influenced entirely by education and social background, parents, family, school, college and work.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed the findings from semi-structured interviews. The official documents such as minute books, school policy, leave registers, time books and logbooks were used to triangulate the data that was obtained from the interviews. In my presentation comparisons, correlations of common or different issues or themes from both schools were outlined. The trends and patterns that emerged from the data were highlighted. The findings from this study indicate that women principals experience some challenges when executing their official functions. But it was also established that not all experiences were negative, for instance they were able to provide care and support to their teachers. Moreover, it provides them with techniques of in dealing with the challenges they faced in their positions. The next chapter takes us to the summary and conclusions and on how women principals define their experiences as women managers in high schools.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the summary, conclusion and recommendation of the study on the management experiences of two women principals in high schools.

5.2 Summary

In the first chapter of the study, I began by giving a background, the focus as well as the purpose of the study. The chapter also discussed the rationale and motivation for the study. Key research questions, significance of the study and the operational definitions of terms used in the study were also presented. In Chapter Two, I reviewed both national and international scholarly literature which focused on women principals' leadership roles in schools. The review of the literature in South Africa focused on the part that was played by women principals in schools, and the differences between men and women style of management in schools. Furthermore, the theoretical framework for study and the paradigm of the study were discussed in this chapter.

In Chapter Three, I discussed the research design and methodology, as well as the methods that were used to carry out this study. Chapter Four focused on the analysis of data and the discussion of the findings and Chapter Five dealt with the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

5.3 Conclusions

This study aimed at examining the management experiences of two women principals in high schools. There is strong visible under-representation of women principals in high schools despite the fact there are large number of female teachers that occupies post level 1. The conclusions reached in the study are as follows: Women principals did experience both positive and negative attitudes from educators particularly post level 1s and parents; and these have both positive and negative impact on their leadership roles. Democratic leadership

style dominated the management style of these two principals and that autocratic and *laissez faire* leadership style were also employed at times. The positive interaction of the principal and the school governing body contributed to the effective and efficient management of these two principals.

The study also revealed that staff that held the view that women principals were incapable of leading based this view on gender stereotypes, societal norms and cultural factors. This position is in agreement with the argument presented by Ching (1995); Pillay (2005); Arslan (2009) and Makura, (2009). Furthermore, there is a claim by Gobbler, Wörnich, Carrel, Carrel, Norbert and Hatfield (2006) that stereotype disposition negate peoples' individuality and limits their potentials. Again, staff members who said women principals were capable of leading justified their argument using with Grade 12 results which they claimed were good compared to the period when the researched schools were headed by male principals. It is evident that these preconceptions about female managers' resulted in many departments under-utilising them in their top positions of management including the department of education. The literature in Chapter Two confirmed that in high schools women are seen in large numbers in positions of head of departments but when it comes to the deputy principals and principals' posts, very few are seen (Bush & West-Burnham, 2003; Mohlala, 2010). My assumption is that negative perception about women in management is the main cause of under-representation of women principals in high schools.

Again, the study has revealed that one women principal encountered challenges on the stage of recruitment as the principal. These challenges included the extent to which she was seen as capable of meeting masculinity demands. She indicated that only the males from the School Management Team had contested the post of principalship although there were also females because they (males) did not see her succeeding to manage a big school. This is in line with Ouston (1993) view when pointing out that the association of management with masculinity is a factor which discourages women from applying for management posts. While Principal-B had problems on her appointment, Principal-A did get support from her colleagues because it was them who had initiated the idea that she must apply for the post.

It was also established that the two women principals experienced challenges on their assumption of duties. The participants mentioned non-co-operation (negative attitudes) from some staff members, problems related to discipline and uncertainty as their main problems on their assumption of duties. One principal (P-A) highlighted that the male teachers had a negative attitudes towards her as a woman principal on her assumption of principalship post because they felt that she would oppress them. This means that male teachers did not see the principal balancing her personal feelings and management roles. This was in line with Arslan (2009) who claims that sensitivity and display of emotions are one of behaviors' that are typically held by women managers (Arslan, 2009).

On other hand, the finding indicated that P-B caused problems for herself by virtue of her personality. Two participants (head of departments) mentioned that she was shy. The principal (P-B) also reported that she had a fear of the responsibilities of the post; hence she was unsure if she would lead effectively. These problems were likely to hinder the effectiveness of the principal in terms of enforcing discipline and other roles where it would be required of her to take a firm position as the principal. One can argue that, it is for these reasons that educators doubted her ability to lead.

On the issue of controlling the staff by the female principals, it was established that the teachers needed to be pursued at all times to do their work, in spite of them having been instructed on what to do they still felt reluctant to take instructions. A good example of the disobedience by the educators was their refusal to sign time book on their arrival and departure from school.

Concerning the issue of attitudes towards women principals by the staff, it was established that no matter how hard the woman principal performed her duties, she would be always regarded as a person who could not succeed. This is because of the negative attitudes that male staff held against women principals. In contrast, study indicated that women principals' experienced positive attitude from their educators particularly from females.

Democratic leadership style was evident from both principals. It was established that decision-making was not the sole responsibility of the principal but it was shared with the entire staff. One principal (P-B) mentioned that the involvement of all staff members in decision-making made the staff own the process. This is in line with the argument by Smit, De Cronje, Brevis and Vrba (2007) when stating that in democratic style the trust is put on employees; therefore they are encouraged to take part in decision-making processes. While democratic management style was dominant in the leadership styles of these two principals, the findings showed that autocratic leadership style and *laissez faire* were observed at times but only on very few instances. It is obvious that not one style is effective at all times. In the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002) point out that in autocratic leadership style the managers closely supervise and control the workers. The findings also indicated that one principal at times allowed the educators to do things by themselves but also that she had to avail herself in case they needed assistance.

On the issue of the relationship between the principals and their School Governing Bodies, it was revealed that despite the SGB's low level of education attainment, they were supportive and ready to learn from the principal. This made her to enjoy the support from all members of the School Governing Body. Similarly, the principal were accorded adequate support from the community through the SGB. The implication is that if the principal gets support from the SGB her relationships with the community are likely to be good and this impact positively on the overall high performance of the school (Nkonyane, 2008).

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings presented in Chapter Four, I have come up with the following recommendations: Firstly, female principals in South Africa started their teaching careers during apartheid era in which they pursued their careers in an environment that was influenced by gender segregation. This negative perception towards them still persists in the post apartheid South Africa; therefore, there is a need to infuse in them a positive mind set which is in line with the democratic contemporary South Africa. This can be achieved through in-service training, seminars and workshops.

Secondly, to ensure that there is a decrease in the challenges faced by women principals on their management positions, there should be orientation programmes for them when they assume duties as schools principals. This will not only keep them abreast of the enormous tasks expected of them, but it will also improve their public relations in which most of them lack. In addition, regular training is necessary as this will assist in updating them with current developments in the education system.

Thirdly, women principals should empower themselves by upgrading their academic qualification. Studies have shown that the majority of women principals in South Africa rarely further their studies after they have been appointed by the Department of Education (DoE). Therefore, there is a need for female principals to expose themselves to numerous educational opportunities that, from time to time are made available to educators. That will assist in upgrading their knowledge.

Lastly, to ensure positive co-operation and to eradicate defiance among staff members, the principals need to delegate some duties to educators, more especially the most experienced staff members. By so doing, the crisis that normally occurs between principals and other staff members as a result of being sidelined in things taking place in school will be completely minimised if not removed completely. Again, delegating the duties enables those staff members to exhibit their potentials and at the same time, it may bring a sense of oneness in the school.

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Appendix A

Ethical clearance letter from the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Appendix B

Approval letter to conduct research from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education

Appendix C

A letter to the school principals requesting permission to conduct research

Postnet Suite 130

Private Bag x013

Mtubatuba

3935

Attention: The Principal

Madam

Request for permission to conduct a research

My name is Faith Myeni, a Masters student at University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (Edgewood Campus). I am required to conduct research as part of my degree fulfillment. I therefore kindly seek your permission to conduct research in your school. The title of my study is: *Management experiences of women principals in high schools at Obonjeni District in Kwa-Zulu Natal.*

The study aims at exploring how high school principals play their role as managers and leaders and to investigate how they deal with challenges in the course of carrying out their duties. The proposed study will focus on principals, deputy principals and head of departments. The study will use semi-structured and document analysis as data collection methods. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 45 minutes. Each interview will be audio- recorded while field notes will also be taken.

Responses will be treated with strictest degree of confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of real names.

For further information on this project, please feel free to contact my supervisor Mr S. Bayeni at 031 260 7026/ 082 927 2079; E-mail: bayenis@ukzn.ac.za. In addition for any queries please contact me at the following details:

Cell number: 079 467 8590/ 072 6535 033; E-mail Myeni.f@gmail.com.

Yours sincerely

Ms Faith Myeni.

Consent of participation in the research

I have read the above and agree with the terms. I understand that my real name will not be used in any aspect of the write-up of the study and that the information will only be used for the purposes of this research project. I am also aware that I am not obliged to answer all the questions and may feel free to withdraw from the study at any point.

I have given consent to my participation in this research.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

Letter to participants in schools

Postnet Suite 130

Private Bag x013

Mtubatuba

3935

Dear Participant

RE: REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

I am currently studying for Masters in Education at the University of Kwa- Zulu Natal. I am required to conduct a research as part of the coursework for the degree. I therefore kindly seek your participation in my research project. The title of the research project is: **Management experiences of woman principals in high schools at Obonjeni District.**

This study aims at exploring how high school principals play their roles as managers and leaders and to investigate how they deal with challenges in the course of carrying out these functions. The proposed study will focus on principals, deputy principals and head of departments. The study will use semi-structured and document analysis as data collection methods. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 45minutes and each interview will be audio-recorded while field notes will be taken.

Responses will be treated with strictest degree of confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of 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 be voluntary which means that participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, at anytime if they so wish without incurring any penalties.

For further information on this project, please feel free to contact my supervisor Mr S. Bayeni at 031 260 7026/ 082 927 2079; E-mail: bayenis@ ukzn ac za.

In addition, for any queries please contact me at the following details: Faith Myeni; cell: 079 467 8590; Email: Myeni.f@ gmail.com

Yours sincerely

Ms Faith Myeni

Consent to participate in the research

I have read the above and agree with the terms. I understand that my real name will not be used in any aspect of the write-up of the study and that the information will only be used for the purposes of this research project. I am also aware that I am not obliged to answer all the questions and may feel free to withdraw from the study at any point.

I have given consent to my participation in this research.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E

Interview schedules for the principals

1. Do you think the staff react/ respond to female and male principals differently? If so, why?
2. Does the staff respond to you differently because you are a female?
3. Do you encounter any challenges when you perform your official duties? If yes, why?
4. Briefly tell me about your experiences when you started applying for the principal position until you were appointed.
5. Please tell me about challenges you encountered when you assume your duties as the principal?
6. Explain on how you dealt with those challenges?
7. Did your prior experiences and belief about being a woman principal influence the way you are dealing with the staff?
8. Tell me about the experiences as a woman principal? Do you think male principals have similar experiences?
9. Briefly tell me about the attitudes of male teachers in SMT towards you in the school.
10. Briefly tell me the attitudes of post level 1 male educators towards you as a woman principal?
11. From your position as the principal, tell me about the attitudes of females in SMT towards you in the school?
12. Please tell me the attitudes of female post level 1 educators towards you in the school.
13. How does SGB respond and interact with you as a woman principal?
14. Will you tell me about the attitudes of the community towards you as a woman principal?
15. What is/are your management style(s)? To what extent is it effective/ ineffective?
16. What would you say is/ are the greatest challenges that you think are gender-related you face as a woman principal in the school?

Appendix F

Interview schedule for the deputy principals and head of departments

1. Do you think the staff react/ respond to the female and male principals differently? If so why?
2. Do you think your principal encounters any challenges when she performs her official duties? If yes, what are the challenges?
3. In your own opinion, are these challenges directly related to her because she is a female?
4. Please, tell me on how your principal deals with those challenges?
5. Briefly tell me the attitudes of male teachers in SMT towards your principal as a woman?
6. Please tell me about the attitudes of post level 1 male educators towards your principal in the school.
7. From your position as the deputy principal/ head of department what is the attitude of females in SMT towards your principal as a woman?
8. Briefly tell me the attitudes of post level 1 female educators towards your principal?
9. How does School Governing Body (SGB) receive and interact with your principal as a woman?
10. Please tell me about the attitudes of the community towards your female principal?
11. Is the attitude influenced by the fact that she is a female?
12. What is your principal's management style? Would you say the style is effective/ ineffective?
13. What would you say is/are greatest challenge(s) your principal face that you think are gender-related?

Appendix G

Document analysis schedule

1. Minutes of the meetings			
Participant <i>(How the principal's treatment is expressed in the documents)</i>	Aspects	How each aspect is expressed in the documents	By whom (stakeholders)
Principal	1. Support		
	2. Disagreement		
	3. Contestations		
	4. Undermined		
	5. Rejection		
	6. Opposition		
	7. Dominant voice in final decision making		

2. School policies

Principal	2.1. Disagreement		
	2.2. Support		
	2.3. Rejection		
	2.4. Commitment		

3. Time book

Who are they? Principal or teachers	Aspects	Comments principal makes on educator's attendance	
	3.1. Punctuality		
	3.2. Reporting		
	3.3. Late coming/ early departure		

4. Leave register

Who are they? Principal/ HOD/ teachers	Aspects	Reasons for absence/ comments principal makes	
	4.1. Absenteeism		
	4.2. Reason for absence		
	4.3. Staff members submit leave forms for each absence. 4.4. All leaves records properly entered in leave register.		
	4.5 Effective mechanism to ensure effective learners attendance. 4.6 School maintains attendance registers for the learners in each class.		

5. Log book

Who are they? Principal/ HOD/ teachers	Aspects	Comments by principal on entries made in the log book	
	5.1. Positive entries (Achievements/ learner's results)		

	5.2. Negative entries (cases, suspension, expulsion)		
6.Control book			
Responsibility(p rincipal/ HOD(teachers)	Aspects	Comments by the principal	
	6.1 planning 6.2. supervision of staff performance 6.3. substantial tests given 6.4. continuous assessment schedules		