

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU NATAL

**LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES FACING FEMALE SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS IN THE DURBAN (INK) AREA**

By

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of the degree of Master of Business Administration**

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2017

DECLARATION

I, Thembekile Purity Ndlovu, declare that:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am ever grateful to my loving God for health, courage and perseverance through this journey. The following individuals deserve my sincere appreciation and gratitude, without whose support and assistance this study would not have been possible:

- My supervisor, Dr Cecile Proches, thank you for your professional advice, guidance, patience, understanding and encouragement. Your expertise in the field of research is amazing. May God bless you with wisdom.
- My mother, Philisile Mhlongo and my children Mondli, Mlondi and Bongeka for your understanding and support.
- My dear grandson Kwanda, my apologies for trying to make you understand what seemed unfair to you, going to sleep without me. I hope to God that your spiritual growth did not suffer much.
- My best friend Phumzile Magwaza, you always see the best in me.
- My study group members Mthoko, Pedzi, Alex and Moketsi. I thank you for your understanding and your unwavering support throughout the study.
- My study buddies Zinhle, Lucky, Sthembiso, Nomusa and Phindile. I am grateful for your special contribution to my success.
- My former Manager, Mr Jabulani Maluleka, I thank you for your support and words of encouragement.
- My fellow female principals who voluntarily participated in my research study, I am forever grateful.

ABSTRACT

The realisation of the fundamental ideals of the Bill of Rights, Chapter 2 of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), outlined in the South African National Framework for Women Empowerment and Gender Equality, provides a vision of gender equality within all sectors' structures, institutions, procedures, practices and government programmes. The framework sets out the goals of achieving gender equality, guided by a human rights vision that incorporates acceptance of the equal and inalienable rights of all women and men. Since 1994, South Africa has made some improvements in advancing women into leadership positions within different sectors and institutions. In the Department of Education in South Africa, in particular, females have advanced to positions of leadership as principals of schools, although their numbers remain disproportionately low.

This study was conducted in Durban at Inanda, Ntuzuma and KwaMashu (INK) area, where females attempting to advance to leadership positions had to deal not only with the complexities and challenges inherent in schools, but did so in a society entrenched with a patriarchal culture that continuously places constraints on the advancement of females to higher positions of leadership. The aim of the study was to examine the leadership challenges that female principals face in leading and managing schools in the Durban INK area.

Various literature pertinent to leadership was consulted to provide a deeper level of understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of leadership in relation to schools, and what had already been researched on female school leadership challenges was considered. A qualitative research approach was employed, which incorporated purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews conducted with fifteen female school principals in the Durban INK area and were analysed thematically. The findings of the study were critical to establish the contribution and responsibilities of stakeholders in ensuring that female principals were given the same recognition and respect as men. The study concluded by recommending future studies on the effect made by Female Principals Support Programme (FPSP), the effect and contribution of labour unions and SGBs in the employment process of school leaders.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

DP	Deputy Principal
FPSP	Female Principals Support Programme
HOD	Head of Department
INK	Inanda, Ntuzuma, KwaMashu
R	Respondent
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
UKZN	University of KwaZulu Natal

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH STUDY

1.1 Introduction

In 1994, South Africa became a democracy, bringing hope of equal opportunities to all South Africans, including previously disadvantaged individuals and groups. These individuals included female principals who had managed to advance to positions of leadership. The government has since put into place various policies and programmes to realise the fundamental ideals of the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 on 1996), to ensure that females are treated with dignity and given equal opportunities as men.

This research study looked at the challenges that female principals face as school leaders in primary, secondary and combined schools in Durban at Inanda, Ntuzuma and KwaMashu (INK) area, examining female principals' leadership in general, their leadership styles and the unique challenges they face in the democratic South Africa, specifically in the Durban INK area. The area of Inanda, Ntuzuma and KwaMashu were named INK area identified for reconstruction and development after democracy. The research also looked at the findings of previous studies, including whether there have been improvements in the challenges faced by female school principals nationally and globally, and their perspectives on these challenges.

The research study sought to identify the current challenges, difficulties, uncertainties and frustrations that were unique to female school principals, as well as explored how they dealt with these. The research further identified whether society was moving towards closing the gap of gender equality, and giving females the same recognition as men.

This chapter outlined the motivation of the study, focus of the study, the problem statement, aims and objectives of the study, the research methodology used, limitations and the structure of the research study.

1.2 Motivation for the study

The motivation for this study emanated from the researcher's personal experience, as well as her observation of the contemporary difficulties faced by female school

principals and the stress levels that lead them to exit the system. The South African National Framework for Women Empowerment and Gender Equality (The Office of the Status of Women) intended to realise the fundamental ideals of the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) when it outlined its vision for gender equality within all sectors and institutions, and has put South Africa on the map as one of the more liberal and enlightened governments of the world (Lumby, 2014).

South Africa is now 23 years into democracy, yet female school principals were still facing unique challenges and difficulties in their leadership roles. Msila (2013) identified that some female principals had internalised that they were not made to lead, not because of their ability, but because of the way that society viewed them.

Table 1.1: Current female principals versus male principals in the Durban INK area

AREA	No of Female Principals			No Of Male Principals			Total
	Primary	Secondary	Combined	Primary	Secondary	Combined	
Inanda	6	Nil	2	32	21	1	62
Ntuzuma	6	3	Nil	11	8	Nil	28
KwaMashu	19	6	Nil	19	9	Nil	53
	31	9	2	62	38	1	143

Source: Durban South Circuit Office: 2017

Table 1.1 indicated that at Inanda area only 8 out of 62 schools were led by females, the rest of the schools were led by males. At Ntuzuma 9 schools were led by female principals out of 28 schools and at KwaMashu 25, schools were led by female principals out of 53 school.

Figure 1.1 indicates female school leadership versus male school leadership in percentages.

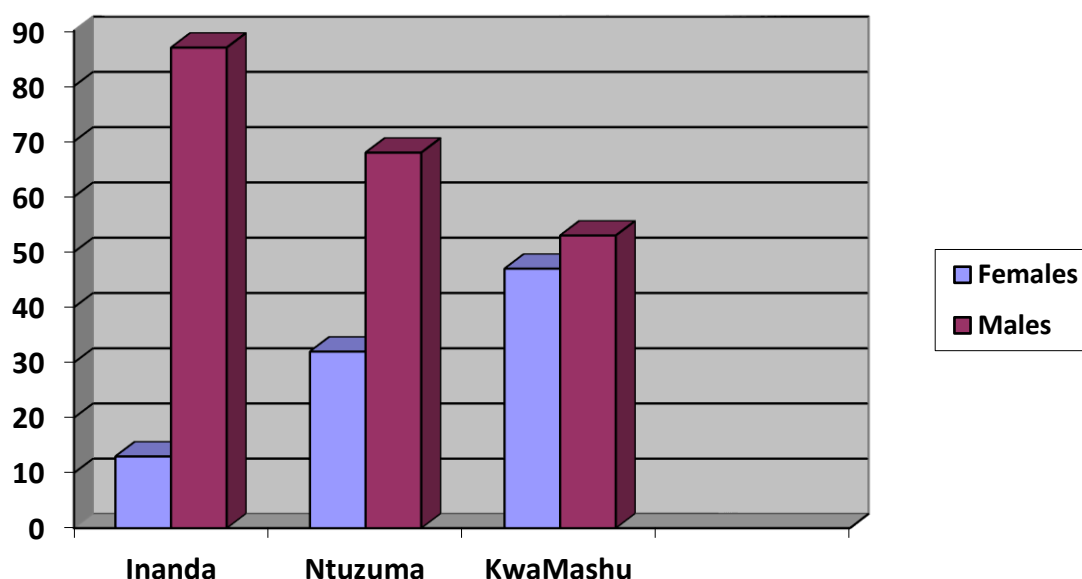


Figure 1.1: Female principals and male principals in the Durban INK area

Source: Durban South Circuit Office: 2017

Figure 1.1 provided the comparisons between the number of female principals and male principals in percentages. At Inanda, only 10% of schools were led by females and 90% by male principals. At Ntuzuma, only 30% were led by females and 70% by male principals. At KwaMashu 48% were led by females and 52% led by male principals. The research study was to create awareness amongst the public that after 23 years of democracy what had been done to close the gap between male and female school leadership, as well as to improve attitudes towards female school leaders and provide support to those leaders.

It was hoped that the study might bring awareness to senior officials in the Department of Education about whether interventions such as the Female Principals Support Programmes (FPSP), which was introduced in 2013, made a positive difference in advancing equity (Motshekga, 2013). It may also identify whether the systems and policies in place were adequate to support and cater for female school principals' needs. The study also hoped to improve the attitudes of both male and

female teachers towards female principals, and to make them aware of the negative conduct and behaviours directed to female principals.

Upon reading this study, the community and school governing body members may understand the roles they played and contributed to the challenges and difficulties of female principals, as well as what they could do to make positive changes. In addition, female teachers who aspire to be principals may know what to expect when they advance to leadership positions and what strategies they may apply to deal with the challenges. Labour union leadership may also understand what their female principal members experience on their leadership journey.

The researcher hopes that the results of the study could make female school principals feel that their voices are heard and understand how as females themselves at times contributed and succumbed to male domination, even when opportunities are made available for them (Khaled & Al-Jaradat, 2014). It may give them courage to speak out, stand up for their democratic rights, and defy the capitalist exploitation of being in a leadership position purely for window dressing and conformity (Kanjere, 2010). Female principals may learn how other female principals succeeded and how to provide much-needed support to other newly appointed female principals.

1.3 Focus of the study

This study focused on the leadership challenges faced by female school principals in the Durban INK area despite 23 years of democracy in South Africa, examined their personal experiences and how they dealt with those challenges to succeed. The study also looked at the possible causes of these challenges emanating from different dimensions of school leadership within and outside the institution. The internal dimensions included the school administration, human resources management, governance, curriculum resources management, financial resources management and infrastructure. Externally, the study focused on the contribution of the community members, the departmental officials and parents.

The research study was conducted in the Durban INK area, which is a nodal area identified by the National Government of South Africa as a focus area for

development and change in the democratic dispensation. The area was well known for high rate of unemployment, poverty and illiteracy despite the fact that some prominent political veterans were born and schooled in the area. The study examined primary, secondary and combined school female principals' challenges and their success stories.

1.4 The problem statement

In her speech, the National Minister of Education in South Africa, Mrs Angie Motshekga indicated that females constituted the majority of the teaching population, but when it came to leadership positions, females only constituted 36% in 2013, (Motshekga, 2013). The Durban INK area was among areas where few females were in school leadership positions. Chapter 2 of the Constitution of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) is the Bill of Rights, wherein Chapter 9 guarantees the equal rights of the people of South Africa, prohibiting discrimination on any grounds, including gender, sex and other orientation. Chapter 10 further specifies the rights to human dignity (Act No. 108 of 1996). In 2013, the National Minister of Education, Honourable Mrs Angie Motshekga, launched the FPSP, to open up opportunities and support for females who advance to principalship (Motshekga, 2013).

Despite all the efforts by the South African Government, female principals still faced ongoing prejudices and the education system that favoured males than females (Diko, 2014). These challenges frustrated some female principals to the point that they exited the system before their retirement age. The Durban INK area statistics indicated the decrease of the number of female principals especially in secondary schools (Durban INK statistics, 2017). Among the findings on the cause of exiting the education system by females, it was not that they were less qualified and incompetent, but among others were the effect of the notion that schools were to function better if they were led by males, especially high schools. It was clear, therefore, that the barriers of sexism; social, ethnic and cultural stereotyping; glass ceilings and glass walls still exist in the education sector (Naidoo & Perumal, 2014)

Yet despite the hardships female principals faced in their leadership careers, some indicated that they thrived and succeeded in turning negatives into positives, leading schools that were successful and productive. Given this background, the researcher

examined the challenges of female school principals after 23 years of democracy, focusing on the Durban INK area, in order to allow female principals to voice their views, to create awareness and to find solutions.

1.5 Aim and the research questions

The main aim of the study was to examine the leadership challenges that female school principals face in leading and managing schools in the Durban INK area.

The study aimed to answer the following questions:

- What challenges did female school principals face in leading and managing in the Durban INK area?
- Which facets of school leadership in the Durban INK area were most challenging?
- Which factors contributed to some of the challenges female school principals in the Durban INK area face?
- What best practices had female school principals in the Durban INK area employed to make them succeed in school leadership?
- What strategies could be employed to assist the female school principals to address the challenges faced in leading and managing schools in the Durban INK area?

1.6 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the research study were:

- to determine the challenges that female school principals face in leading and managing schools in the Durban INK area;
- to identify the competencies that are required for female school principals to effectively lead schools in the Durban INK area; and
- to identify strategies to assist the female school principals to address the challenges faced in leading and managing schools in the Durban INK area.

1.7 Research methodology

A large part of the study focused on the literature review in order to gain a better understanding of both the research approach and the problem area. This was a qualitative study approach, where semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 15 female school principals in the INK area of Durban in order to better understand the specifics of the problem area. Purposive sampling was used for the study and the data were analysed using thematic analysis.

1.8 Limitations of the study

This study, which was undertaken to examine the challenges faced by female school principals in the Durban INK area, was limited to female school principals who were still in service, omitting the female principals who had exited the system before reaching their retirement age. Some of those female principals were identified as respondents, but had moved out of the system before the interviews were conducted.

The research study did not focus on the contributions made by labour unions with regard to the difficulties and challenges faced by female principals. The study also did not assess the reasons for the decreasing number of female principals employed in high schools. In the Inanda area, a female, who resigned and exited the education system, led only one school. She was replaced by a male acting principal, which meant that at the time of the research, not one secondary school in the area was led by a female. The limited number of female principals in secondary schools in the Durban INK area thus affected the sample size, forcing the inclusion of more primary schools in the study.

The study was also limited in terms of the actual time it took to conduct some of the interviews, as some of the targeted respondents were very reluctant to take part in the study, even after being assured of confidentiality and safety of their information. When some of the respondents declined to take part, new respondents had to be found, which further delayed the research study.

Some respondents could not be interviewed at their workplaces, as they were not comfortable there and could not freely respond to the questions. The researcher

thus had to conduct some interviews in a venue that was comfortable for the participants. Further, some respondents could not elaborate on their responses, but the researcher mitigated this limitation by probing for more information.

1.9. Structure of the research study

Chapter 1: Introduction of the research study

This chapter focused on the introduction to the research study, providing the motivation for the study, the focus of the study, the problem statement, the objectives of the study, the research methodology, limitations of the study and the structure of the research study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter presented a literature review, looking at the work of previous scholars in relation to the research topic. Leadership styles, leadership theories, school leadership, female school leadership and challenges faced by female principals were discussed, looking at the local as well as international literature to provide support to the research study.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

This chapter focused on the aims and objectives of the study, the participants, the location of the study, the research design and methods, data collection, ethical issues, validity and reliability.

Chapter 4: Presentation of results

This chapter provided the demographics of the participants, the school leadership profiles of respondents, leadership capacity, school capacity, leadership challenges, stakeholder challenges, human behaviour challenges, success stories and best practices.

Chapter 5: Discussion of findings

This chapter focused on the key realities of male and female leadership in the Durban INK area, the leadership capacity of the respondents, the leadership challenges in different divisions, the causes of the challenges, advice for female

principals, and the possibility of changing attitudes amongst female school principals.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter presented the key findings based on the objectives of the research study, the recommendations to senior managers, and recommendations for future research.

1.10 Conclusion

The chapter introduced the research study and discussed the ideals of the Bill of Rights, as set out in Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996), the attempts made by the government to address gender issues and the promotion of equal treatment of men and women. The chapter further highlighted the existence of challenges and difficulties amongst female principals, and provided the motivation for the study. The focus of the study, the problem statement and the main aim of the study were also discussed, as were the objectives of the study, the methods used to conduct the study, and the questions that the study sought to address. The limitations of the study were also highlighted, including how the researcher mitigated them. The next chapter focused on the literature review of the subject at hand.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter identified the challenges faced by female principals as leaders in schools in post-apartheid South Africa, what they went through, and the successes in their careers as school leaders. This was done through a literature review, which focused on leaders and leadership, theories on leadership, school leadership in general, female school leadership, challenges faced by female school principals and how they faced these challenges, as well as other aspects associated with leadership. Because the focus was on female principals who were leaders in schools, that is why the study drew on leadership theory.

Many researchers conducted studies in leadership as well as on the experiences and challenges of women in leadership, but this research specifically examined the challenges faced by female principals in the democratic South African Durban INK area after 23 years of democracy. Moreover, it examined how they succeeded against all odds in school leadership and attained good academic results.

2.2 A leader and leadership

Different scholars defined leadership in many ways, depending on their understanding of the term and their experiences. Many researchers examined how leaders behaved to determine their leadership styles and how their behaviours relate to effectiveness in leadership (Daft, 2011). For example, Sharma & Jain (2013) defined a leader as an individual who is motivated, energetic, confident, knowledgeable, who knows who he/she is, what he/she stands for, what he/she is capable of and what she wants to achieve with the collaboration of a team. Berger (2014), meanwhile, looked at a leader as a beginner; an actor initiating something new, acting in the company of others and in a relationship of interdependence with others.

From these definitions, it was clear that a leader has to carry out acts of leadership to be called a leader. Daft (2011) stated that the nature of leadership was complex and changes over time, while McCleskey (2014), explained that the correct definition of leadership depended on the specific aspects of leadership interests of an individual, therefore it was pointless to look at one single definition. McCleskey

(2014) discovered a number of definitions of leadership, some of which were narrow while others offered a broader view. It was difficult to identify which definition is most relevant, but most give a clear insight into what leadership entails.

According to Daft (2011), leadership is defined as an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend to have real changes and outcomes that reflect their shared purposes. In defining leadership, Peretomode (2012), looked at leadership as the art or process by which a member of an organisation persuades, inspires, influences the attitude, behaviours and actions of others and directs their activities so that they willingly, cooperatively and enthusiastically work towards the accomplishment of the set goals and improved position.

2.3 The evolution of leadership theories and leadership styles

Leadership studies have produced theories and styles to help understand how leadership is viewed and practiced, some of which have survived the changes in leadership practices and concepts over time. This study will look at these theories and styles as categorised into various approaches to leadership. Although many of the theories and styles were researched years ago, some of them are still applicable to leadership studies of today (Daft, 2011). According to Gqaji (2013) the theories have been researched, developed and tested in an attempt to identify the most fundamental models of behaviour that effective leaders manifest.

Some of the better known theories that will be examined, defined and discussed in this study are:

- Trait Theories: What personal characteristics make a good leader?
- Behavioural Theories: What behaviours reflect in a good leader?
- Contingency Theories: How do circumstances influence leadership style?
- Great Man Theories: What distinguishes leaders from non-leaders?
- Path-Goal Theories: How do you motivate your subordinates to reach intended goals?
- Situational Theories: What behaviour should a leader adopt given the situation?

There are also different leadership styles that manifest in the behaviour of leaders in relation to a team or followers.

2.3.1 Autocratic and democratic styles of leadership

According to Daft (2011), one leader might be autocratic while another is democratic, as evidenced in Figure 2.1.

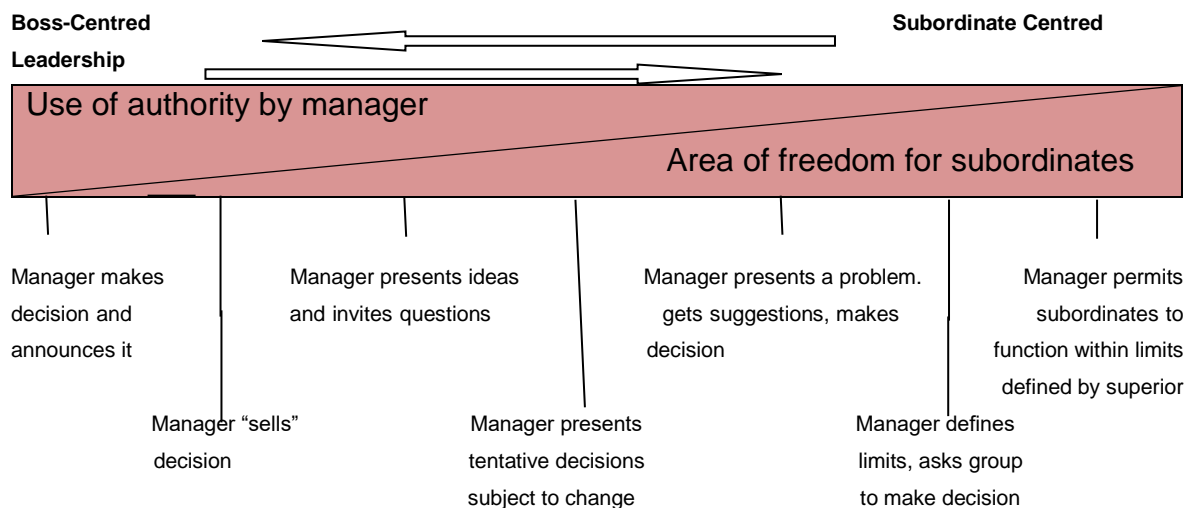


Figure 2.1: Leadership continuum

Source: Daft (2011: 41)

Figure 2.1 illustrates that the organisational circumstances may compel the leader to adjust from one form of behaviour to another. According to Daft (2011) leaders adjust their leadership styles to fit circumstances.

DuBrin (2013) defined an autocratic leadership style as when leaders retain most of the authority and power to themselves by telling individuals what to do. According to Govindsamy (2006) autocratic leadership style is an approach of giving directions and motivating individuals to implement plans in place. The autocratic leader centralises authority and dictates, controls and derives power from his or her position (Daft, 2011).

On the other hand, Baxter, Thessin & Clayton (2014) described democratic leaders as being responsible for uniting diverse groups under shared purposes through forged relationships, flexibility in the midst of interpersonal dissent, and purposeful

emphasis on others rather concentrating on self. In defining democratic leadership style, Daft (2011) looked at it as when the leader delegates authority to subordinates in an organisation, encourages participation, puts trust in subordinates, relies on their knowledge and skills to accomplish tasks, and allows them to lead and influence each other. Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber (2009) referred to this as authentic leadership, saying that it is apparent as a pattern of transparent and ethical behaviour that encourages openness in sharing the information needed to make decisions while accepting followers.

2.3.2 Shared and collaborative leadership styles

According to Avolio *et al.* (2009), the shared leadership style is a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups, for which the objective is to lead each other towards achieving set goals. Among these individuals, there is teamwork, reciprocal influence and development of relationships (Avolio *et al.*, 2009). Wilhelm (2016) explained that shared leadership empowers workers to work side by side with the leader, shoulder responsibilities and accept accountability. Collaborative leadership is horizontal, giving each employee in a team the opportunity to network, build relationships and have the flexibility to accomplish tasks, while leaders work behind the scenes to support their team and get things done.

2.3.3 Distributed leadership style

The distributed leadership style allows a myriad of individuals with different roles to take responsibility for leading various complex tasks and taking on different positions in an organisation. This style of leadership addresses the entirety of human resources in organisations, allowing them to develop potential by providing equal chances to employees (Goskoy, 2015).

2.3.4 Understanding leadership styles

When studying different leadership styles, one discovered that some styles support each other and cannot be totally separated. The consideration leadership style as explained by Daft (2011) is when a leader cares for subordinates, respects their ideas and feelings, and establishes mutual trust. This leadership style corresponds with the employee-centred style of leadership, which focuses on the needs of

employees, providing support and enabling positive interaction among followers, who in turn seek to minimise conflict (Jones & George, 2011). These styles also support the democratic leadership style, as well as the collaborative, shared, and servant leadership styles which all consider the contribution of stakeholders in decision making.

On the other hand, there are styles that have different foci, such as the production-centred leadership style, which is more aligned to autocratic leadership which seeks to get work done and reach the target, without considering how employees feel (Daft, 2011).

2.4 Leadership theories

2.4.1 Trait theories

Trait theories were created with the belief that good leaders possess certain traits or characteristics that make them stand out from bad leaders. According to Kutz (2012) leadership traits are either natural inherent to an individual or godly quality that is bestowed upon an individual to be able to lead effectively even if the individual has never been involved in any leadership experience.

Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman & Humphrey (2011) identified leadership traits related to demographics, such as age, gender and education; task competence, such as intelligence and conscientiousness; and interpersonal attributes, such as agreeableness and extraversion. Chetty (2016) assumed that certain traits produce certain patterns of behaviour that leaders are born with that are consistent in different situations and that no universal list of traits has emerged to guarantee traits that all great leaders have or had that made them successful leaders.

The world has seen people identified as extraordinary leaders, such as Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi and Margaret Thatcher, to mention but a few. These leaders manifested their individual personal attributes and characteristics, which made them successful leaders; they approached leadership differently, yet they possessed some common characteristics. Gqaji (2013) concluded that the list of attributes is by no means exhaustive.

Derue *et al.* (2011) examined the validity of leadership traits such as gender, intelligence and personality when integrated with leadership behaviours as criteria for effective leadership. Their argument was that leadership behaviours offer more variance in leadership effectiveness than leadership traits alone and further explains that an integrative trait-behavioural leadership model where leadership behaviours mediates leadership traits, leadership effectiveness is warranted.

Some scholars identified weaknesses of trait theories. Hoque (2013) argued that trait theories focused on a small set of individual attributes and neglected cognitive abilities, motives, values, social skills, expertise and problem solving skills. While supporters of trait theories looked at what great leaders are made of, they were unable to explain how to lead effectively with those possessed characteristics or traits (Gqaji, 2013). These arguments indicated that there were no guarantees of success if a leader possesses these traits but does not understand how to effectively use them for the success of the organisation. Trait theories focus on the leader for success; they do not consider the followers and their contribution to the success of the leader (Chetty, 2016) Another weakness, as indicated by Gqaji (2013), is that trait theories are old and outdated, however a lot can still be drawn from them to explain emerging contemporary sets of theories, as well as by integrating them with other relevant theories.

2.4.2 Behavioural theories

By developing behavioural theories, researchers tried to identify the unique behaviours that indicate great leaders. According to Chetty (2016), great leaders are made through teaching and observation, and people's actions can lead them to become great leaders. Lorilla (2012), when describing the theory, mentioned that the behaviour of a leader is a good determinant of the leadership influences that predict leadership success. This means that one is not born with these leadership behaviours, but that they can be learnt and anyone can be made a leader by undergoing a guided leadership journey.

According to Derue *et al.* (2011), behavioural theory looks at leaders' behaviours in four categories:

- Task-Oriented Behaviours: The leader is clear about expectations, levels of performance and the rewards for meeting targets.
- Relational-Oriented Behaviours: Friendly and approachable behaviour focusing on the welfare of the group.
- Change-Oriented Behaviours: Focus on facilitating and driving change through communicating the vision and encouraging innovative thinking and risk taking.
- Passive Leadership Behaviour: An inactive leader who is not engaged to any activity except when dealing with coming problems. It is a laissez-faire or free run organisation in the absence of the leader's behaviour.

Derue *et al.* (2011) further explained that the interpersonal attributes of leaders play a role in predicting the degree of engagement in each of these categories. Extraverted leaders seek the input of followers, talk enthusiastically and set direction for the group with ease, while agreeable leaders are friendlier, more approachable and are respectful to followers.

Daft (2011) identified the two types of behaviours that are reflected by leaders; they can be either democratic or autocratic, and they adjust their behaviours to suit the circumstances in order to achieve success in their leadership (Daft, 2011). On the other hand, Derue *et al.* (2011) stated that leadership behaviours fit into four categories, namely: task-oriented behaviours, relational-oriented behaviours, change-oriented behaviours, and passive leadership.

According to Daft (2011) a study of leadership behaviour conducted by Ohio State University, identified two wide-ranging categories of leadership behaviour: consideration and initiating structure. Under consideration, a leader showed care, respect, appreciation and established mutual trust with followers, while in the initiating structure, the leader directed tasks and work activities with an iron hand to get work done and achieve his/her goals (Daft, 2011).

There are new behaviours that are evident in leaders today, but they are yet to nullify or confirm what researchers have identified thus far as leadership behaviours, whether they are good or bad.

2.4.3 Situational theories

Situational theories were developed based on the belief that the circumstances under which a leader finds himself or herself determine the level or kind of action that is needed to be taken. Chetty (2016) mentioned that the focus is on the situation at a given time, which determines the leadership style that is most appropriate types of decisions. The leader might choose to be autocratic in a particular situation and democratic in another and each style might be appropriate and effective at the time.

According to Peretomode (2012), situational theories focus on the behaviours that the leader should adopt, given the followers' behaviours. The leadership style is relatively flexible enough for the leader to move along the continuum, enabling him/her to cope with the situation. The time and duration to change leadership style from one to the other depends on the personality, maturity level, intelligence and sensitivity of the leader to events happening around him/her, as well as their skills and ability to quickly diagnose the direction the organisation has to take (Peretomode, 2012).

Choosing the appropriateness of the leadership style at the right time in a given situation is very important for the leader to succeed and be effective in, to reach the expected outcome. Daft (2011) mentioned that in any given situation the leader might use different leadership styles, such as telling, selling, participating and delegating, depending on the readiness of his/her followers. The level of readiness of followers will determine the appropriate and effective leadership behaviour at a given point in time.

According to Peretomode (2012), the leaders match the style of leadership to the maturity level of subordinates, as shown in Figure 2.2.

Followers' Maturity Level			Appropriate Leadership Style
M1	=	Low Readiness Level	→ Telling
M2	=	Moderate Readiness Level	→ Selling
M3	=	High Readiness Level and	→ Participating
M4	=	Very High readiness Level	→ Delegating

Figure 2.2: Followers' maturity levels

Source: Peretomode (2012:15)

According to Peretomode (2012), the maturity levels of the followers are defined in terms of their desire or readiness and ability to tackle the task facing the group, while the leader's style flexibility will determine the success in each situation. At maturity level 1, the followers are at the 'low readiness level', thus the leader needs to tell them what to do, how to do it and when to do it. The 'very high readiness level' allows the leader to simply delegate tasks and consider them done.

McCleskey (2014) explained that effective leadership requires a rational understanding of the situation and an appropriate response. The situational leadership theories focus on leader's behaviour of either task or people focused. These behaviours are dependent rather than mutually exclusive, and an effective leader engages in a mix of these, depending on the level of maturity of the leader and the situation (McCleskey, 2014).

Situational theories are not without criticism, however. Nicholls (2009), cited in McCleskey (2014), identified three flaws with situational theories that deal with consistency, continuity and conformity. Bass (2007), cited in McCleskey (2014), agreed that they lack internal consistency, have conceptual contradictions and are ambiguous, while other researchers mentioned that no leadership style is universally effective, and rely on abstract leadership styles that cannot be easily identified as followed by the leader to be effective (McCleskey, 2014).

2.4.4 Contingency theories

The contingency theories are based on the belief that there is no best way to lead, but given the leadership skills and the capabilities of the leader in a given situation, the leaders select the appropriate form of action or behaviour to be effective (Peretomode, 2012). Chetty (2016) stated that with contingency theories there is no one leadership style that is best in all situations, but a number of variables, including leadership style, qualities of followers and the aspects of the situation, determine the success of the leadership style to be used.

Peretomode (2012) further explained that contingency theories are based on the premise that leadership styles are rigid and fairly inflexible, making it difficult for the dictator or task-focused leader to quickly change his or her style to become a participative and friendly leader. Seepersad (2012) stated that in any given situation, whether either external or internal, important decisions are made depending on a number of variables, such as the level of importance, information available, what similar decisions were made before and their results, how well motivated subordinates are, and the relationship between leaders and staff.

Daft (2012) explained that the choice of leadership style is contingent upon followers' needs, maturity, training and cohesion, as well as the situational variables such as task, structure context and environment. Before the leader takes a decision or acts, she/he needs to diagnose the situation and behave or act appropriately using his/her knowledge and skills learnt, and a successful outcome is highly likely (Daft, 2011).

Fiedler's contingency theory on leadership emphasises the effectiveness of the leader as being contingent on a leadership style being used in the right situation. Leader-member relationships, task structure and positional power are important factors of contingency for a leader in a given context (Seepersad, 2012). Fiedler's contingency model focuses on the successful use of both leadership styles as either relationship-oriented or task-oriented in the organisational situation. Effective leaders use skills such as interpersonal skills to create a positive group atmosphere or work situation if they are a relationship-oriented leader, and the ability to take

charge, clarify the task and provide directions that everyone willingly follows without problems if they are a task-oriented leader (Daft, 2011).

According to Peretomode (2012), Fiedler's contingency theory argues that a leader's effectiveness is dependent on the interaction between their style and the characteristics of the situation, defined as leader-member-relation, task-structure and leader-position power. The characteristics of the situation are classified as:

- Very favourable situation.
- Intermediate favourableness.
- Unfavourable situation (Peretomode, 2012).

There is a thin line between the situational theories and contingency theories, as the two indicate that there is no best leadership style that suits all situations. The differences between the two, as clarified by Peretomode (2012), is that in situational theories the focus is more on the behaviour that the leader should adopt given the behaviour and maturity level of the followers, and the leader's style must be flexible enough to cope with different situations. On the other hand, the contingency theories take a broader perspective of the situational factors to include the skills and the capabilities of the leader and other variables in a given situation, and the leadership style is fairly rigid and relatively inflexible (Peretomode, 2012).

2.4.5 Great man theories

According to Daft (2012), the great man theories are amongst the oldest theories of leadership, and were made popular in the 1940s. These theories argue that leaders are born with certain heroic traits, natural abilities and influence, which separates them from non-leaders. The claim of the great man theories is that great leaders are born heroic, mythic, and destined to rise to leadership when the time comes; they are full of charisma, confidence, social skills and intelligence, which makes them destined to leadership (Kendra, 2016).

This theory assumes that the capacity of leadership is inherent and mainly a male quality, focusing largely on military, political and social leadership (Daft, 2011). There is no doubt that there are qualities and traits found in leaders, but they need

to be developed and sharpened to deal with any sort of situation when required. The great man theory has been found to be weak and has been criticised by various researchers. It contrasts with contingency theories, which assume that leaders can be given the knowledge and skills to be effective and successful (Daft, 2011), as well as behavioural theory, which argues that leaders can be made through training and observation (Sharma & Jain, 2013).

The major weakness of this theory is that besides being outdated, it is inapplicable in this day and age as it only considered men to be natural leaders, hence the name, 'Great Man' (Kendra, 2016). Today the world has seen many capable and great female leaders in politics, such as Margaret Thatcher, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma and Hillary Clinton.

2.4.6 Path goal theories

The path goal theories assume that the path that leads the way to the goal must be set to achieve success in leadership. According to Haller (2013) some researchers have concluded that a successful leader is the one who provides the path to the value goal, by showing his/her followers the potential rewards for completing the assignment at hand or fulfilling the job requirements.

Daft (2011) described path goal theory as being one of the contingency approaches, where a leader increases their followers' motivation by clarifying the behaviours necessary to accomplish the task and the rewards thereafter that followers value and desire. A day-to-day reality path which will deal with all hurdles and roadblocks to reach the goal is set by the leader.

Haller (2013) identified path goal theory factors that explain and correlate followers' motivation and satisfaction as being a leader's communication style, support, directive and participation. The major weakness of the path goal theory is the leader's ability to keep promises, and to keep team members excited to willingly accomplish tasks and stay motivated. If the organisation faces hard times, the possibility is that subordinates can be de-motivated, provide a mediocre performance, or leave with their skills for somewhere they are appreciated.

2.4.7 Current theories and future direction

Most theories coded were researched a number of years ago, thus new theories need to emerge given the status of current leadership practices and how they have evolved to suit today's organisations and followers.

Avolio *et al.* (2009) examined the current focus in the field of leadership, i.e. on leaders, followers, peers, supervisors' work-settings, cultures, and local and global diversity. The focus is thus not on the leader's individual characteristics or actions leading to effectiveness and success in an organisation, but rather on the various models of shared, relational, strategic, global and complex social networks.

Today's leaders raise their followers' aspirations and activate their higher order values, innovative thinking and creativity to come up with new ideas, so that they identify with their leaders' vision and thinking, and feel good about their work and what they can accomplish beyond expectations. Avolio *et al.* (2009) mentioned that transformational leaders of today have charisma, positively influencing the attitudes, behaviours and performances of their followers. The positive outcomes include job satisfaction, identification, perceived fairness, trust in the leader, efficacy, potency and cohesion. An example of such unique and extraordinary leadership was Mr Nelson Mandela, whose leadership not only positively affected South Africa, but the world.

2.5 School leadership

Schools are centres of learning and teaching. They are complex and dynamic institutions with many challenges and changes that need synergetic sense making effective school leadership (Jappinen, 2014). The context and the environment in which schools exist are changing over time, hence the need to change how leadership should be approached.

Scholars have different views about how school leadership must be approached and practiced, and researchers have come up with different ideas of what works for school leadership and what does not. This applies locally in South Africa and in international schooling systems. Duignan (2015) researched authenticity in educational leadership, concluding that authentic leadership involves treating

subordinates with respect and demonstrating a consistency of expressions and actions. Jappinen (2014) argued that the complexity approach in school leadership is based on the fact that educational organisations have to adapt to the ambiguity arising from their political, social and economic surroundings in a way that has never been experienced before, which is continuously growing.

According to Berger (2014) school leadership is an action, beginning with something new and responding to events that make up the everyday experiences of teachers and children speaking and acting together in diverse educational contexts, while Jappinen (2014) described educational leadership as a collaborative, distributed, co-performance, critical and collective and sense-making process.

The role of the principal as a leader at a school is complex, and includes establishing a community in which teachers work collaboratively to improve the achievements of all learners (Baxter *et al.*, 2014). According to Baxter *et al.* (2014) this communitarian leadership practice unites diverse groups under shared purposes, with purposeful emphasis on others in a team rather than self as a leader. Barton (2013) emphasised the importance of knowledge and skills in school leadership and the critical element of reciprocity between experience and knowledge. He believed that an instructional leader who is competent promotes the success of every student in a school in the way in which he/she applies knowledge and skills.

According to Westover (2013) the need to build school leadership capacity that will shift instructional practices, as well as a system approach to refining instructional design and delivery, is paramount. He emphasised that schools needed leadership that could provide students with real world, changing learning experiences that fully prepare them for the future, as we are living in the global world of education, which demands relooking at how school leadership is approached to suit the needs of the current and future world.

Steyn (2009) when examining the South African context and the international trend in education, stated that school leadership in the new dispensation in South Africa requires democratic and participative leadership that builds relationships and ensures the effective delivery of education. He emphasised that success in school

leadership can be attained through shared decision making processes, with increased responsibilities of school management teams and school governing bodies. The current international trend in education reform is the devolution of decision making powers, especially from self to collaborative shared leadership.

Doe, Ndinguri & Phipps (2015) argued that research has shown that emotions are largely responsible for leadership decisions made during complex and challenging times in schools. Emotional intelligence can thus equip the school leader to perceive emotions, to use emotions correctly to influence thought processes, to understand emotions, and to manage emotions. These emotional intelligence skills can be taught to school leaders and learnt in order to lead a successful school.

Asif (2015) stated that in order to meet the needs of the global world, school leaders should be equipped with the necessary skills to adapt to changes in education. He further contended that school leaders need to think out of the traditional dimension to improve the current standards in education, as well-organised, imaginative, innovative and creative leaders are needed.

The shared compelling vision with strategic focus that change belief about what has been known to work in teaching and learning, simplifying complex changes in practice and properly manage all aspects that contribute to teaching and learning is a recipe for success school leadership (Westover, 2013). School leaders must not just be survivors, but must thrive in times of rapid challenges and changes in the educational sector.

2.6 Female school leadership and challenges

School leadership over the years has been and still is, dominated by men. This view was confirmed by the Honourable Minister of Basic Education in South Africa, Mrs Angie Motshekga (www.education.gov.za) when she delivered a speech noting that gender inequality persists in the education sector, particularly in high schools, men continue to dominate leadership positions, despite the overwhelming majority of women in the sector.

When one examines history and the educational theories that were developed years ago, it is evident that males were regarded as having far stronger leadership qualities and traits than females to ensure that teaching and learning took place in schools (Daft, 2011). Yet history itself has proven some of these theories to be false, since the world has experienced extraordinary females with good leadership qualities, not only in the education sector, but also in politics and the social and economic sectors (Gqaji, 2013).

In recent years, women have been advancing into positions of school leadership around the globe, including South Africa. Although their advancement is not at a rate that one might expect, those who aspire to advance into school leadership and have acted on this have successfully made it (Gqaji, 2013). Their advancement, however, is not without challenges.

Historically, females have experienced being omitted, devalued and misrepresented, yet face hostility, invisibility and a lack of understanding regarding their experiences in life (Marie, Williams & Sherman, 2009). The challenges they face vary from lifestyle issues of juggling with domestic responsibilities, to organisational barriers of racism and sexism; social, ethnic and cultural stereotyping; glass ceilings and walls in the education sector; and global pressures (Msila, 2013).

South Africa has legislation and policies that provide guidance on gender equity in all sectors, thus legally women recognised as having equal rights and equal access to employment and promotion (Naidoo & Perumal, 2014). Yet Moorosi (2010) highlighted the ongoing existence of gender inequalities and gender disparity in education, especially for women if they aspire to leadership positions. Moorosi added that accessing a principalship is the most problematic stage of a career for women in South Africa, as the masculine norm of leadership, which does not favour women, makes it extremely difficult to close the gender gap.

Diko (2014) argued that the number of males versus females in school leadership in South Africa favours males than females, adding that, that is an indication of resistance to change in the society. This is a clear indication that females are

disregarded in relation to their constitutionally bestowed rights of equality, instead of enjoying protection and support as they advance into leadership positions.

Female school leaders still contend with gendered racism, isolation, exclusion from informal networks and systematic discrimination. Further, on entry to educational leadership, females have to deal with internal and external pressures as well as navigate through scrutiny (Marie *et al.*, 2009). The tradition and culture of mistrust towards female leadership have led to females having to prove that they are capable of leading, sometimes under the trying conditions of a patriarchal society (Msila, 2013). According to Diko (2014) there are strong cultural expectations about women who enter into school leadership because of a gender stereotyping syndrome in society.

Hange, Noreness & Veday (2014) mentioned that the cultures and structures in each school place significant constraints on school leaders and school development, some of which were embedded in historical beliefs about women belonging in the kitchen while men are capable leaders. Legislation in South Africa provides the grounds for females to receive equal treatment to men, but despite the voices of feminist activists who continuously criticise gender discrimination, denouncing patriarchy, stereotyping, unequal pay and the oppression of women, little progress has been observed (Naidoo & Perumal, 2014).

This negativity towards female school leaders is a problem in many countries. Khaled (2014) commented that Palestinian female school leaders face legal, political, social, familial and administrative challenges, while African American female school leaders face the challenges of balancing their work and household responsibilities, receiving little respect from colleagues, and enduring a lack of confidence in their abilities to lead at work and in their communities.

Women are mostly viewed as teachers not as school leaders, and if they do become school leaders they stand alone against many spectators and critics, being marginalised and scrutinised (Jean-Marie & Martinez, 2007). Searby, Bellenger & Tripses (2015) contended that female principals find themselves having to piece

together help for themselves, and rarely find people to help them, such as mentors and coaches. Principalship is thus a lonely territory.

In most countries females had to break through the glass ceiling before they rose to higher positions within and outside organisations. Once females got into leadership positions in schools, they faced challenges such as institutional racism, sexism, labyrinth, males failing to submit to their authority, pull-her-down syndrome, gossip, resistance from staff varying from defiance to subtle non-compliance, the school management team distancing itself from decisions made during management meetings, and mistrust from parents (Msila, 2013; Naidoo & Perumal, 2014).

Other researchers found that some women were a barrier to themselves. Lumby, Cristina, De Wet, Skervin, Walsh & Williamson (2010) studied how female principals approach stereotyping and discovered that some women lacked self-esteem, which resulted in imposed traditional male dominance, a lack of self-confidence and a fear of failure.

2.7 Facing the school leadership challenges

Female principals needed to thrive and survive challenges to prove that they were capable of leading and succeeding. A number of them had proven that females can break barriers, shunning the pre-conceived expectations of failure and climbing to greater heights of successful and shining school leaders (Searby *et al.*, 2015).

When Naidoo & Perumal (2014) undertook their study on female school leaders in rural schools, they discovered that successful female principals were more interactive, relational and predisposed to power sharing, had a learning focus, were authentic and were moral. To support this, Khalad & Al-Jaradat (2014), in their study on Jordanian principals, identified that successful female school leaders focused more on social relations than on hierarchy, were more patient, thought positively, listened, were enthusiastic, were inclusive and cared more about what was around them. These were an indication that female school leaders played a crucial role in educational management, their methods and approach when dealing with challenges.

A number of female school principals had to work hard to balance their family lives and work lives. They found themselves having to face dual responsibilities and the system provided no suitable mechanisms that enabled women to combine career and family life (Moor, Cohen & Beerli, 2015). Getting into a leadership position posed even more of a challenge for them. According to Gaus & Ac (2014), married female principals in Indonesia who commit to being wives, mothers and leaders have to take good care of their physical and mental health in order to have high internal locus control that will help them cope with work and avoid job stress.

To overcome the internal and external pressures of the institution, a number of female school principals had embraced certain models of leadership and had grown with their leadership experiences, using different styles and approaches to leadership. They learnt to be charismatic and to work effectively across the organisation and geographic boundaries, inspiring followers to subordinate their own interests for the good of the organisation (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). Female principals also used their motherhood to overcome social problems (Naidoo, 2014). Females had been successful in schools because they cared for and nurtured children and learners who came from child-headed families, those who were orphans, and those who were sickly (Lumby & Azaloe, 2014). Females always got emotionally involved to complement what could not be provided at home, allowing learners to enjoy schooling as much as every other student (Naidoo, 2014).

Some of the leadership successes that were identified amongst female principals came from setting good examples for their subordinates, such as arriving early to work, being on time, completing tasks, and clearly stating what was non-negotiable (Naidoo & Perumal, 2014). Naidoo and Perumal (2014) pointed out that curriculum delivery was key to ensuring the values and behaviours required to perform the task of teaching within the school context. Their leadership was more characterised by strong moral and spiritual Christian ethics.

Kanjere (2009) pointed out that as much as the society and the environment did not fully support female leadership, women had the responsibility to change the mindsets of the people around them. He added that women should defy the capitalist exploitation of them being in senior positions for window dressing and

conformity by enforcing recognition even in the most senior positions, because they are capable and effective. Searby *et al.* (2015) further encouraged successful women leaders to take the initiative and responsibility of offering themselves as mentors to other women who enter into leadership positions, to end the predicament of females not supporting each other and even sabotaging other women.

2.8 Conclusion

Given this analysis of the various definitions of leaders and leadership, there was no indication that leadership was about being female or male, but rather about individuals in relation to their followers. The literature reviewed confirmed that the capabilities, skills and knowledge of individuals who take on leadership positions can determine whether the person is an effective leader or not.

Traditional theories and assumptions have been analysed, and there were various views of leadership by different scholars. Some of these theories were very old and outdated, and some were incorporated into other theories. For example, the contingency theories and situational theories both took the situation into account, but the contingency theories looked at different variables combined with the leadership style used in the right situation (Seepersad, 2012). Schools are complex institutions with contexts and environments that change continuously, thus school leaders needed to be on top of their game if they wanted to succeed. To be effective, they needed to use different leadership styles that depend on the need of the followers.

The culture that undermines the ability of female school principals prevailed over decades, both locally and internationally. The literature has proven that the challenges female school principals face last throughout their careers, as the belief over the years been, 'Think Leader, Think Men'. When females show assertiveness, authority and dominant behaviour, they are considered unfeminine and made to feel guilt and shame, including in South Africa even after years of democracy. As Kanjere (2009) stated, females need to take a stand, defy this exploitation, make demands and eventually they will get there.

The next chapter will look at the methodology used to collect the data, discuss why the methods used were appropriate, and explain how the data were collected and kept. It will also indicate the reliability and validity of the data collected.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the literature review of the research study. This chapter focused on how the research study was conducted, looking at the research methodology and design employed for the study. The choice of the research method and approach depended on the research problem, as well as the aims and objectives of the research study.

This chapter discussed the aims and objectives of the study, the participants, the location, the research design used to provide the roadmap for the research which was dependent on the research problem. In addition, it looked at the data collection methods and strategies used, the analysis of the data, validity and reliability.

3.2 The aim and objectives of the study

The main aim of this study was to examine the challenges that female school principals face in leading and managing schools in the Durban INK area. The purpose was to contribute towards improving the attitudes towards female school principals and to create a more positive view of the ability of female principals to lead and manage successful schools.

The objectives of the research study were to:

- determine the challenges that female school principals face in leading and managing schools in the Durban INK area;
- identify the competencies that are required for female school principals to effectively lead schools in the Durban INK area; and
- identify strategies to assist the female school principals to address the challenges faced when leading and managing schools in the Durban INK area.

3.3 Research design and methods

The primary objective of a research study is to generate contemporary knowledge that will give a clearer understanding of the topic at hand. The researcher has to design a plan or a road map for the measurement, collection and analysis of data to answer the research questions of the study, as well as the appropriate research methods to collect the required information (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). The research design provides the overall strategy that integrates the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way to address the research problem.

The research method chosen must be appropriate for the objective of the research, therefore it is imperative to understand the differences between the methods prior to selecting one (Mouton, 2009). The research methods most used are qualitative, quantitative and mixed methodologies. With these methods the researcher can use different approaches to obtain information.

The positivism approach uses scientific knowledge to gain positive knowledge based on natural phenomena and their properties, while interpretivism uses the human knowledge of reality and actions as the source of information for research (Edirisingha, 2012). Lincoln & Guba (1985) also discussed the naturalistic qualitative approach, which uses natural settings to keep realities intact to maintain trustworthiness.

The ethnographic method, meanwhile, involves a series of observations and recordings of behaviours of informants over an extended period of time (Jex, 2002). It also involves having friendly conversations with people who possess detailed knowledge of the organisation or topic under study, coming from across a variety of tenure levels (Johnson, 1990). Lastly, the exploratory research approach investigates a social phenomenon with minimal prior expectations, to develop explanations for the phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.3.1 Qualitative research method

Qualitative research provides in-depth information that seeks to determine how and why things happen and why people behave the way they do. Ghauri and Gronhaug (cited in Maseko, 2011) described qualitative research as being interpretivist and

constructivist, where the researcher uses his/her skills and knowledge to analyse the data. Interpretivism is subjective, with the belief that reality is multiple and relative (Edirisingha, 2012). Edirisingha added that interpretivists tend to use interviews and observation methods to provide qualitative research results. On the other hand, positivists are objective, using quantitative research methods like experiments and surveys to collect facts and statistics, with the belief that reality is external. According to Creswell (2008) qualitative research attempts to explore and understand the meaning of human behaviour. It is designed primarily for exploratory purposes, is descriptive, and usually tends to obtain in-depth insights into a relatively small number of respondents (George, 2008).

The qualitative method provides flexibility and an unstructured approach that gives emphasis to feelings, attitude and experiences. Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davies & Bezuidenhout (2014) stated that qualitative research refers to whole world experiences, with researchers seeking an in-depth view into the human experience associated with a particular phenomenon. Hynes (2012) also explained that qualitative research can be justified because it provides an opportunity for the researcher to get in touch with the concerns, needs, and feelings of the community.

Henning (2013) commented that qualitative research is very powerful in its ability to uncover details that give the researcher a deeper understanding of the problem and the participants. According to Creswell (2008) the researcher has personal contact with the participants through in-depth interviews and prolonged observations. It also affords the researcher an opportunity to adjust the research design according to what the researcher deems important as the process unfolds. Methods of collecting qualitative data that are commonly used are interviews, focus groups, questionnaires and observations. Data collected from qualitative research are suggestive and inconclusive however, as they take identified samples' experiences and views into account when reaching recommendations, which might be different if another sample was used.

The qualitative research method was chosen in this study in order to address the aim and objectives of the research, i.e. to gain a deeper and more detailed understanding of the challenges facing female principals when leading schools, and

how they deal with such challenges. The research design chosen was predicated on the research problem, and in the aim and objectives of the study. The method used to collect data was one-on-one in-depth interviews with selected female principals. The interviews were recorded using an audio recorder for the purposes of transcription and analysis. Sekaran & Bougie (2013) stated that qualitative research involves the analysis of data that are not readily quantifiable and descriptive in nature. Qualitative research questions begin with how, what, when, where and why to elicit the intangible factors associated with the research problem; they are not centred on variables or measures (Creswell, 2008).

The respondents to this qualitative research were directly involved in the subject, and the interviews were conducted in a manner that was open and non-judgmental. The respondents were free to express their views, perceptions, knowledge, beliefs and attitudes towards the subject of the research study. Gumus, Borkowsk, Deckard & Martel (2011) clarified that qualitative research is used to comprehend the underlying reasons and motivations, as well as to uncover common trends, opinions and thoughts. Qualitative research brings out the social, cultural and complex nature of human beings, thus providing a holistic picture of what 'real life' is like to other people.

Using a qualitative research method has some challenges, for example, respondents can provide false or inaccurate information in trying to paint a good picture on the subject, thinking that that is what the researcher wants to hear. They can also take the research lightly by not understanding the value of the study. In order to prevent such behaviour the researcher first built rapport with the respondents. Before interviews started with each respondent, the researcher explained the importance of the research study, emphasised how the information will be used and guaranteed confidentiality.

3.3.2 Quantitative research method

A quantitative research method provides an understanding of a phenomenon by collecting data in the form of numbers, using structured and validated data collection instruments (Littlefield, 2013). Instruments, such as questionnaires and surveys offer a more rigid style of eliciting and categorising responses to questions, using

highly structured tools such as questionnaires, surveys, and structured observations.

Collected data were then analysed using mathematically based methods. Since quantitative data is based on precise measurements, it provided no room for researcher bias. Results were presented using statistical analysis to present correlations, mean data and other statistically important findings (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

Quantitative research deals with quantity and numbers rather than quality and descriptions. According to Littlefield (2013), the researcher obtained a limited amount of data on a large number of respondents, as the emphasis was on collecting sufficient measurable information and statistics to have statistical significance and make predictions. The objective data were valued and a process of analysis that is based on complex structured methods to confirm or disapprove the hypothesis is used.

The analytical objectives are to quantify variations, predict causal relationships and describe the characteristics of a population, without taking into account the individual experiences and the relationship of the participants to the phenomenon being researched. Participants cannot elaborate on the subject, their responses do not influence or determine how and which questions researchers ask next, there are no opportunities for probing questions, and the researcher cannot prompt further questions (Henning, 2013). The structure of the final written report may include an introduction, literature and theory, methods, results and discussion (Creswell, 2009).

A quantitative research method is useful when the value of numbers in the research study are considered as ultimate to standard and it is not helpful to understand in depth the detailed reasons for a particular behaviour. Sofaer (1999) indicated that the quantitative method does not capture expressive information, thus statements made by participants are difficult to reconcile with an interpretative approach because they are counted and displayed in a table form. Assigning numbers to responses and abstract constructs may affect the authenticity of the results most

times. Given the above explanation, the study consequently drew on a qualitative research approach to stimulate the development of a better understanding of the subject researched.

3.3.3 Mixed research method

The mixed research method involves the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods within a single study to discover what could be missed in a single approach, and to expand the breadth and depth of the study. Creswell (2014) stated that the mixed method encompasses the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, in response to research questions or hypotheses.

Supporters of this method argue that it provides a more complete understanding of the subject being researched (Henning, 2013). According to Kumar (2014) the rationale that underpins the mixed methods approach is the belief that researchers cannot get accurate enough answers to research questions by using a single method, that is, using more than one method provides a better picture and meaning of the research problem. Combining the two methods provides the researcher with statistical data as well as the in-depth explanation of the nature of things in response to the research problem.

3.4 Data collection

Data in a research study incorporates the kind of information that researchers identify as relevant and they accumulate to give answers to the research questions (Mukoma, 2003). Data collection is the process whereby the information is collected within the provided parameters of the study, using the appropriate protocols for recording. Babbie (as cited in Mukoma, 2003) stated that different techniques are used to collect data on the phenomenon under study.

3.4.1 Methods of collecting qualitative data

There are a number of ways to collect qualitative data, which can either be primary or secondary data. Creswell (2008) noted that few writers concur on an exact method for data collection, analysis and reporting on qualitative research, i.e. qualitative data collection can be done through interviews, which can be structured, semi-structured and unstructured; questionnaires; observations, which

can be direct and indirect; visual materials; and documents such as reports and newspapers. Creswell (2008) recommended four parameters for data collection, namely, who the participants are, where the research will take place, what will be researched, and how. Le Compte & Preissle (cited in Mukoma, 2003) believed that in qualitative research, sources and the type of data are only constrained by the energy and creativity of the researcher.

3.4.2 Interviews

With all their variety, interviews are a valuable qualitative method, as they provide a one-of-a-kind opportunity to listen and record the real of matters from the respondents' points of view and experiences, and provide rich information (Ehigie & Ehigie, 2005). Interviews are a form of conversation, where information can be obtained through the use of open-ended questions (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). In an in-depth interview, the interviewer wanted to learn as much as possible from the interviewee, thus they were considered to be learners receiving all the knowledge from the interviewee (Milena, 2008). In-depth interviews are useful to get thorough information about individual's behaviours and thoughts or to explore new issues (Boyce & Neale, 2006). In-depth interviews also provides a relaxed environment in which information can be collected.

For the purposes of this study, qualitative data were collected through the use of a face-to-face, semi-structured interview process. This method included features of both structured and unstructured interviews, and used a combination of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. For this research, the interviewer created a set of pre-planned questions (Appendix 2) to ensure consistency, however as the interviews progressed, the interviewees had the opportunity to provide more information if they wished to do so, as explained by Henning (2013).

A semi-structured interview provides room to further explore related interesting data not covered in the questions, but which a particular respondent discloses (Mcneill & Chapman, 2005). The flexibility of this technique allows the interviewer to probe, to clarify, and to create new questions based on what s/he has already heard (Westbrook, 1994). Doody & Noonan (2013) also stated that one of the advantages of interviews is that the researcher can probe the participants' responses and seek

further clarification, while the participants can also seek clarification on a question. The aim of the interviews was for the researcher to understand the respondents' views on their experiences, situations and perspectives, conveyed in their own words in a relaxed environment.

The interviews were conducted in English and the researcher was able to note areas that needed more clarity or were omitted, and probe for further explanation or elaboration. Some statements were recognised as opening new lines of investigation (Westbrook, 1994). The research looked into establishing an understanding of the contemporary leadership challenges of female principals, which meant focusing on the system, the human aspect of behaviour and characteristics by investigating individual experiences, opinions, perceptions and job satisfaction.

A total of 15 interviews were conducted with female school principals from the Durban INK area. Two of these principals were about to retire, who had just a few months left before they were to exit the education system, and one acted as the principal for more than five years before becoming the principal. All 15 interviews were conducted face-to-face and were digitally recorded.

Table 3.1: Demographics of the respondents

RESPONDENT CODE	YEARS IN LEADERSHIP POSITION	TOTAL STAFF MEMBERS	SCHOOL ENROLMENT	INK AREA
R1	15	22	556	KwaMashu
R2	18	14	353	Ntuzuma
R3	15	10	286	Ntuzuma
R4	5	32	993	KwaMashu
R5	9	16	521	KwaMashu
R6	19	21	528	KwaMashu
R7	6	42	1150	Inanda
R8	28	8	225	Inanda
R9	9	11	229	Inanda
R10	3	22	896	Ntuzuma
R11	10	42	1370	Ntuzuma
R12	14	40	1347	Inanda
R13	5	36	1364	Inanda
R14	12	43	1310	Inanda
R15	15	22	650	Ntuzuma

Source: Durban South Circuit Office: 2017

Table 3.1 above showed the demographics of each of the respondents and the diverse school capacities.

Respondents were approached face-to-face and telephonically to set up interviews. This was crucial, as the interviews were once-off and the researcher needed to build trust with the respondents in a short space of time. It was therefore particularly important that the interviewer gave participants time before the interviews to raise any issues, thus creating a feeling of being present or known. The researcher first outlined the nature of the project and the contribution the individual could make to

the research. It was explained that all interviews would be recorded and the material gathered would be considered confidential within the researcher and the university. Respondents were issued a consent letters (Appendix 1) explaining their rights and the voluntary options available pertaining to the interview process. The interviewees had to sign the consent form (Appendix 1) to indicate that they understood the nature of the research project, the content and that they were willing to participate before the interview. The majority of the interviews conducted were at the interviewees' workplaces, however the practicalities of the situation sometimes necessitated that they were conducted in a public place.

The interviews conducted were between January 2016 and June 2017 due to the difficulty of getting interviewees. The interview questions (Appendix 2) were asked in each interview, which enabled the answers to be evaluated on similar levels, transcribed, compared and analysed. The interview sessions lasted from 30 minutes to an hour, thoroughly exploring the topic at hand.

The researcher had no prior experience in conducting interviews, and therefore spent a lot of time researching and reading material on how to effectively interview respondents. When conducting the interviews the researcher listened carefully to the respondents, and probed the respondents' answers to the open-ended questions when more detail or clarity was required. Not all of the respondents spoke openly, as the topic was a sensitive issue.

According to Milena (2008) one of the advantages of semi-structured interviews is that interaction and a conversation occurs between the interviewer, who is the researcher and the interviewee, who was the principal in this study. Qualitative open-ended interview questions afforded the respondents the opportunity to describe their own experiences in their own words, and gave the researcher the flexibility to ask what, how, when, where, and why. Open-ended interview questions and closed questions were constructed by the researcher.

According to Hannabuss (1996), interviews are intelligible, flexible, accessible, and very illuminative of significant and frequently unseen features of human beliefs and behaviours, while Doody & Noonan (2013) explained that one of the advantages of

interviews is that participants can seek clarification of a question. These were two of the reasons that a qualitative approach in the form of semi-structured interviews was more suitable for data collection in this research study.

3.5 Participants and location of the study

The participants in the research study were female school principals who had been serving as leaders in schools for not less than five years in the Durban INK area.

The female principals in these three areas were facing diverse contemporary challenges. The deputy principals were suitable for the study as they take the responsibilities of the principals during their absence and endure the same challenges. Both the principals' and deputy principal's knowledge, perspectives, experiences, and perceptions of female school leadership were required to help address the aim and objectives of the research study.

Inanda is mostly rural, while Ntuzuma and KwaMashu are townships. The majority of the interviews were conducted in school offices and education centres but some respondents were met at convenient places where they were comfortable.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis involves the gathering of information, which is then transcribed and read thoroughly to make sense of the information collected, before being compared, evaluated and narrowed down to the most relevant information by using codes for the study. A code is a label used to identify units of text, which are later grouped into themes (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). A coding unit has also been described as a concept (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). Coding enables the researcher to initially organise the data into meaningful groups (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Westbrook (1994) highlighted that the data analysis process includes organising data, breaking it into manageable units, searching for patterns, discovering important lessons, and making decisions on what to share with others. In quantitative analysis, the researcher has to present all the results or information that were gathered as they are keys in a statistical analysis, whereas a qualitative study

has to narrow down the results into themes and subthemes that will give a clear picture of the results (Creswell, 2014).

The researcher also needed to concentrate on the intricate and fine details, so as not to lose sight of the big picture of the research project. This led to a deeper level of understanding, which was represented and interpreted with its broader meaning. Braun and Clarke (2006) explained that analysis involves continually moving backwards and forwards between the whole data set, the coded data that are being analysed, and the data that the researcher produces, while Sekaran & Bougie (2013) stated that proper familiarisation with the data will enable the researcher to recognise patterns and connections and help with the organisation of the data.

Data analysis entails the coding or indexing of data focusing on a wide range of categories, and identifying and describing themes or patterns from the participants' perspectives (Chenail, 2012). These themes and patterns are then explained and understood as they emerge from the setting. Data analysis is a continuous process that involves reflecting on the data, asking analytical questions and writing memoranda as the study progresses.

The researcher followed the process of qualitative data analysis in this study. Chenail ((2012) stated that qualitative data analysis, as a form of knowledge management, is a matter of managing analytical processes to transform data into information, information into knowledge and knowledge into wisdom. It demands a wide range of skills and knowledge, including the ability to write well when presenting the results of the quality data analysis. Data collected through the audio recordings were transcribed, segregated into separate themes, and coded by the researcher. The researcher, as an analyst, created or recognised an abstract relationship between the qualities of data to pronounce quality through the use of coding and categorising.

The transcripts must be coded into broad themes based on the research objectives and interview questions, then each broad theme is subjected to a more detailed analysis, leading to the formation of more specific categories within each theme (Cassel *et al.*, 2006). The researcher spent considerable time working through

transcripts, noting undivided units of qualitative significance and identifying qualitative differences that made significant sense to the study. Chenail (2012) emphasised that each qualitatively distinctive code must draw upon and include the distinct qualities of that which is being coded in order to create a meaningful coding. This means that the researcher was able to write down an analysis during the coding process, as well as mainstream all the different themes that emerged and put the analysis in chronological order.

The researcher used thematic analysis, thus a coherent structure of the themes emerged out of the data analysis. Thematic analysis looks at all the respondents' information to identify the major themes and common issues, and summarises all the respondents' views (Patton & Cochran, 2002). According to Ryan & Bernard (2003), the significance of any theme is linked to how frequently the theme appears; how all-encompassing the theme is across different categories of ideas; and the extent to which the number, force, and variety of a theme's expression is controlled by specific context.

The data interpretation and analysis were assessed through a comparison of the findings from the responses that were acquired. When refining themes, it was apparent that not all themes fitted neatly into one precise category or another; some themes were found to be irrelevant, some were part of another, and some were broken down further into separate themes, therefore when interpreting and writing up the findings, there was often a need to cut across the different categories.

3.7 Credibility

Anney (2014) defines credibility as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings. Consistency that ensures thoroughness of the research process can give assurance of the research credibility. According to Goldman (2007) credibility can be achieved by allowing other researchers to audit the data collected and recorded, review the analysis decision of the researcher to verify that the interpretation made is well grounded.

The researcher had to maintain clear distinction between personal opinion and the respondents' view. When respondents freely share their views and perceptions, it

may give the researcher an opportunity to check the possibility of subjectivity. To ensure research credibility the researcher should be confident that the research accurately reflected the views and ideas of the respondents.

3.8 Validity and reliability

Reliability and validity of data can be ensured through the researcher's understanding of the industry and the subject under study (Jennings, 2010). The researcher had a good understanding of leadership in schools as well as first-hand experience.

This was a qualitative study, therefore it relied on the experiences, perceptions, understanding and emotions of the respondents, which had an impact on the responses. In qualitative research, validity means employing proper procedures to ensure the accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2014). It is of utmost importance that the researcher checks the accuracy of the information from the participants in order to ensure accuracy of the findings so as to present a good study. Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014) states that the preference of qualitative researchers is the concept of trustworthiness to measure reliability and validity of the study. According to Cho and Trent (2006) validity in qualitative research is an interactive process between the researcher, the participants, and the collected data, which is aimed at achieving a relatively higher level of accuracy by means of analysing the facts, feelings, experiences, values and beliefs collected in the research study, which are interpreted accordingly. To ensure validity, all 15 respondents had the same interview questions and all responses were compared at the same level.

Qualitative reliability requires consistency of the researcher's findings throughout different methodologies. Gibbs (cited in Creswell, 2009) stated that qualitative validity means that the researcher, in terms of respective procedures, checks the accuracy of the research findings, while qualitative reliability indicates the consistency of the researcher's approach across other projects and different researchers.

The researcher in this study ensured that the approaches used were consistent and reliable, and that all procedures were accurately documented. In accordance with

Creswell's (2009) recommendations, the interview questions were provided in simple language that was understood by all participants, and all the questions were specific to the intended study. To ensure reliability, the collected data and all notes and transcripts were checked thoroughly. The researcher used only the audio recordings and did not write down the responses from the participants, to avoid missing some information and to ensure the accuracy of the transcripts. The interview questions were explained to all the participants to ensure that they all had the same understanding of the questions.

Triangulation makes an important contribution to achieving the objective of qualitative research, which is to interpret the study area in its entirety. Triangulation increases the validity of the findings by looking for evidence by comparing each of the respondents' findings (Patton & Cochran, 2002). This process enabled the researcher to study the different responses and all the relevant views that were collected. Creswell (2014) argued that if themes are established based on the converging perspectives of participants, then this process can be claimed as adding to the validity of the study.

Some factors can reduce the validity of research, for example if data are only gathered from one method of data collection, in this case, interviews. Qualitative research relies on people's emotions, perceptions, circumstances, experiences and so forth. For that reason, one cannot necessarily expect exactly the same answers from interviewees, as they are influenced by their individual perceptions and emotions, which in turn are influenced by certain circumstances at particular times (Maseko, 2011). It is thus impossible to get the same results repeatedly because of the uniqueness of the situation, which is also dependent on the experiences, perceptions, circumstances and emotions of people.

3.9 Ethical issues

Ethical issues are critical in conducting research, particularly if the research involves people. Researchers must thus follow certain ethical principles before undertaking research, and participants' rights must be respected by the researcher. Participants must volunteer to take part in the study and must be free to withdraw at any time.

The researcher in this study considered all the ethical measures that needed to be taken before the study began.

Ethical clearance approval (see Appendix 5) was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal before the data collection commenced. A gatekeeper's letter (see Appendix 3) was requested from the Department of Basic Education requesting permission to undertake research on female principals of schools in the Durban INK area. Each respondent was issued an informed consent letter (see Appendix 1) and it was read with the respondents and signed prior to the interviews. The informed consent letter guaranteed the respondents that their confidentiality would be protected (Jiang & Cova, 2012), and it outlined the study objectives and the benefits to the respondents of participating in the study.

Creswell (2009) stated that respondents have to be assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of the information they provide, thus the respondents were informed that the information from the interviews would not be revealed to the other respondents. The researcher also did not use their names in the data analysis and presentation. The codes R1 to R15 were used in the analysis, results and discussion chapter instead of the respondents' names, in order to protect their identities. Each of the respondents' permission was requested to use a digital recorder.

To ensure that confidentiality was maintained, the University of KwaZulu Natal securely stores all data collected at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership for a period of five years. After that time the Ethical Clearance Committee ensures the disposal of the data so that it does not fall into the hands of other people or researchers who might misuse it.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the research methodology of the study, beginning with the aims and objectives of the study to assess the appropriate methods of research. The design of the research to provide the roadmap was explained, followed by a discussion of the qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches. This study used a qualitative method as it was the most suitable.

Face-to-face interviews as a technique of collecting qualitative data were also explained, which was followed by a discussion on ethical principles. Data analysis was comprehensively presented, and the chapter was concluded with an examination of the reliability and validity of the study.

The following chapter will focus on the presentation of the results from the interviews.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

The main aim of this study was to examine the challenges that female school principals face in leading and managing schools in the Durban INK area, with the purpose of contributing towards improving the attitudes towards female school principals and to create a more positive view of the ability of female principals to lead and manage successful schools. The previous chapter provided a detailed explanation of the methodology that was used to conduct the research, while this chapter focuses on the key findings of the research study. Semi-structured interviews were used as a research technique to collect data from the respondents. In this chapter, the data collected from the interviews were analysed and presented, focusing on the main themes that emerged from the data analysis.

4.2. Demographics of the respondents

Fifteen female principals were interviewed from the Durban INK area. Schools at Inanda were a mix of informal settlement and a rural area, those at Ntuzuma were in a township and informal settlements, and those in KwaMashu were in a township. The years of experience of the female principals in their leadership positions in these schools varied from a few years to close to more than twenty years. The choice of schools also varied between primary, secondary and combined schools.

Table 4.1 indicated the areas and the types of schools of respondents.

Table 4.1: Respondents per area and types of schools

INANDA		NTUZUMA		KWAMASHU	
RESPONDENT	TYPE	RESPONDENT	TYPE	RESPONDENT	TYPE
R7	Combined	R2	Primary	R1	Secondary
R8	Primary	R3	Primary	R4	Primary
R9	Secondary	R10	Primary	R5	Primary
R12	Primary	R11	Primary	R6	Primary
R13	Primary	R15	Primary		
R14	Combined				

Source: Durban South Circuit Office: 2017

Table 4.1 illustrated the sampled female principals in the Durban INK area. Two were principals in secondary schools, two were from combined schools that catered for both primary and secondary learning, and eleven were from primary schools.

4.3 School leadership profiles of respondents

Out of the 15 female principals who were interviewed using purposive sampling, one had been acting as principals for a number of years. There were eleven female principals from primary schools, two from combined schools and two from secondary schools. More sampled female principals came from primary schools because only three combined schools were in the Durban INK area, and very few secondary schools were under the leadership of female principals. School leadership profiles of the 15 respondents referred to in Table 3.1 included years of work experience as principals of schools. The total number of staff members in each school and the number of learners enrolled in the school indicated the vastness of leadership each principal had to provide.

The following section discussed the themes and sub-themes that emerged after analysing the responses received during the interviews. The themes and sub-themes are summarised in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-Themes
4.3.1 Self-efficacy	4.3.1.1 Attitude towards self 4.3.1.2 Personal drive 4.3.1.3 Self-confidence
4.3.2 Leadership capacity	4.3.2.1 Experience in leadership role 4.3.2.2 School capacity
4.3.3 Leadership challenges	4.3.3.1 School administration 4.3.3.2 Human resources 4.3.3.3 Institutional/Governance 4.3.3.4 Curriculum resources 4.3.3.5 Infrastructure/Physical resources 4.3.3.6 Reflection on the challenges by female principals

4.3.4 Stakeholder challenges	4.3.4.1 School governing body 4.3.4.2 School management team 4.3.4.3 Staff members/Colleagues 4.3.4.4 Parents and community 4.3.4.5 Departmental officials
4.3.5 Human behaviour challenges	4.3.5.1 Gender stereotypes and prejudice 4.3.5.2 Discrimination 4.3.5.3 Parental Involvement
4.3.6 Challenges and success stories	4.3.6.1 Challenges directed to female principals in the Durban INK area 4.3.6.2 Dealing with challenges as a female principal: Success stories
4.3.7 Best practices	4.3.7.1 Effective leadership 4.3.7.2 Ways of facing challenges 4.3.7.3 Changing perceptions

4.3.1 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a feeling of self-worth, high self-esteem and self-confidence, and relates to an individual as being effective, efficient and useful.

4.3.1.1 Attitude towards self

The respondents displayed positive attitudes towards themselves; there were no instances where they did not feel worthy of the respect and dignity deserving of a school principal. One respondent who was questioned by the community members who asked her why she wanted to be the principal in a school that “needed” a male principal, revealed her positive attitude:

“I believe in myself. As a woman I told myself I am going to work hard. I am not going to change from being a woman, but I will work hard and change for the better..... I tell myself I am the best and I can manage better than anyone”. (R12)

One of the respondents when she started at school as the teacher from college she found that there were staff members who were promised the principal position if anything happened to the existing principal, i.e. they had positioned themselves for a senior post. When she arrived she was viewed as someone who would disrupt the

plan in place, but because of her positive attitude, she applied for the principal post and was appointed.

4.3.1.2 Personal drive

Personal drive is an inner force that propels an individual to keep going despite obstacles (Folkestad, 2008). Some of the respondents stated that they were eager to succeed despite all odds.

“I think I always focus on what I know best. There are those people you cannot change but I can change myself by doing what I know best”. (R4)

One respondent clearly stated that female principals needed to be strong and not lose focus.

“Take challenges in our strides knowing that they are there to shape us to be strong leaders. We must not be deterred by challenges that come our way and look at ourselves as victims. We must look at ourselves as victors instead”. (R5)

4.3.1.3 Self-confidence

The respondents expressed that with all the challenges that they had come across as female principals, they had in many cases stood their ground and proven themselves worth the leadership roles they held.

“As a female principal you have to be friendly to a certain limit, at the same time firm with love. Sometimes you have to step your foot down”. (R10)

“You have to face it as it is. Here we need to be very bold and look at them in the eyes whether male or whoever”. (R10)

Some respondents indicated that female leaders at times tend to be the best leaders due to their feminine qualities, which are where they are strong. They indicated that females had compassion which they should not suppress because it was needed. Some expressed that at times female principals suppressed these feminine qualities, fearing that they could be labeled as lacking confidence, while others

commented that men felt betrayed if women acted against the deeply held values of women being subordinate to men.

One respondent, who was a principal in a primary school in an informal settlement started when she was younger and the community was not convinced that she could lead the school. She shared her story as follows:

“When I came to the community in 2003, they did not understand why I came as the acting principal because I was young and a female. They asked her ‘Why are you here because you are not going to be firm, you do not understand this community. This is the community where they believed in male leadership’. When the post was eventually advertised, a male was deployed to be the principal. I went for interviews and did my level best. Because the panel was neutral and did not know the history of the school, I got the post. People must understand my authority that I am not going to change from being a woman, but I will change for the better. I will take the school from level one to level 10. I am very authoritative.....Tell yourself you are the best and you can manage better than anyone”. (R12)

Another respondent encouraged female principals to be confident in who they are.

“You must set yourself above others, because if you show other people that you are now reserved because you are a female principal you will not be able to succeed with your work”. (R2)

4.3.2 Leadership capacity

4.3.2.1 Experience in a school leadership role

The respondents' experience in leadership roles varied. It was found that experience was not only looked at in terms of years of service as a leader, but also as the amount and the variety of work a leader accomplished compared to others. Some respondents had many years of experience leading a very small school, while others had a few years' experience leading a huge school and facing a variety of challenges. When calculated in years, the respondents' experience ranged between

3 and 28 years, as indicated in Table 3.1. All the respondents started their principalships in the schools they were serving in at the time of their interviews.

4.3.2.2 School capacity

The findings indicate that the schools vary in the number of learners they enroll, which dictates the post-provisioning norm of the school, i.e. the number of teachers and size of the management team were based on the number of learners the schools accommodated. The learner numbers also informed the amount of financial support the schools received from the government. The research findings indicated that some schools were more resourced than others, regardless of whether they are primary, secondary or combined schools.

4.3.3 Leadership challenges

The role of the principal as a leader is complex (Baxter *et al.*, 2014). The fact is that school principals, whether female or male, are accounting officers who are responsible for various divisions in their schools, all of which pose different challenges for female school principals.

The ratings of challenges used ranged from one (1) to five (5) were:

- 1 = Not Challenging
- 2 = Less Challenging
- 3 = Moderately Challenging
- 4 = Very Challenging
- 5 = Most Challenging

Table 4.3 illustrated how the challenges were rated by the individual respondents for each division.

Table 4.3: Rating of challenges per respondent

	Administration	Human Resource	Governance	Curriculum	Finance	Infrastructure
R1	1	3	2	3	2	2
R2	1	2	3	2	5	3
R3	1	3	3	2	2	3
R4	3	3	3	2	3	5
R5	1	3	1	3	2	4
R6	3	2	4	3	4	3
R7	1	4	4	5	1	4
R8	4	3	3	5	2	3
R9	2	4	3	5	5	4
R10	3	3	2	3	3	4
R11	3	2	3	3	4	4
R12	2	3	4	3	3	1
R13	4	2	3	3	2	4
R14	2	4	2	3	2	1
R15	2	3	3	1	2	3

Table 4.3 indicated red blocks rated as 5 which represented the most challenging departments, the white blocks rated as 3 and 4 represented the very challenging departments and the green blocks rated as 1 and 2 represented the less challenging departments. The findings indicated that respondents were experiencing lots of challenges in managing human resources, governance, curriculum, finances and infrastructure. Three respondents had the biggest challenges they faced when managing curriculum, two struggled with financial management and one with managing infrastructure.

4.3.3.1 School administration

The research found that school administration is not much of a challenge, as per most of the female school principals. Out of fifteen principals, five indicated that it was not challenging, and four stated that it was less challenging as they had efficient administration personnel who were permanent employees. Four female principals found administration moderately challenging and two principals indicated that it was very challenging.

“There is too much paperwork”. (R13)

“Administration clerk does not exist in my school all administration work is done by the principal herself”. (R8)

The respondents indicated that the administration challenges they face are not gender dependent.

4.3.3.2 Human resources management

The findings revealed that most respondents find human resources management moderately challenging.

“The cause can be the attitude of educators in the workplace. Another problem comes if there are promotional posts, posing a problem at the end of the process. When the newly appointed person comes from outside the school, join the staff and the person within the school is not promoted, people have negative attitude and do not cooperate”. (R14)

“I am still facing a challenge on late coming of teachers. It is uncontrollable. My learners do not have a problem, but the problem is just with educators”. (R15)

One respondent highlighted the importance of handling sensitive matters carefully to avoid a negative attitude among staff members.

“Attitude of male teachers show no confidence in female principals. Professionalism is lacking”. (R9)

“There are characters you cannot change, but let their attitude change towards what you want to achieve. Accept people the way they are, but manage attitudes for the best interest of the school and child”. (R14)

Another respondent brought in another angle that poses a challenge in leading human resources.

“As a secondary school it is difficult to get qualified teachers. Moreover, the principal has no say in that appointment of the teachers. There are teachers who say that they are qualified, but the output says it differently, which is evidence”. (R1)

4.3.3.3 Institutional and governance

The South Africans Schools Act No 84 of 1996 gave governance powers to the School Governing Body (SGB) members, who represented the parents, teachers and support staff. They had to formulate school policies and support the teachers and the principal by providing them with the necessary resources to deliver their services, and also had to report to parents on school performance and progress. Further, when they recruited teachers they conducted interviews and made recommendations to the Department of Education, who was the employer.

Some of the respondents indicated that the most challenging areas of school governance were the incapacity of the members of the school governing body and power struggles.

“You have to teach and capacitate them. You have to take decisions for them. When you call the meeting they normally come but they do not come to have input”. (R12)

“In governance parents want to have more powers, to tell you how to manage the school. They want to bring their own friends on tender matters”. (R7)

“In governance, parents want to control everything. There is greediness in financial matters”. (R13)

“On school governance issues, you have to teach them. It is also based on the location of the school and the nature of parents we have”. (R12)

4.3.3.4 Curriculum resources and delivery

The findings indicated that all school principals had the responsibility to manage curriculum resources and curriculum delivery at school. Curriculum resources assisted in the success of teaching and learning processes, which were the core business and the reason for schools’ existence. The findings also showed that without these resources or when these resources are not adequate, curriculum delivery and coverage suffered.

Some of the respondents find curriculum monitoring very challenging.

“Curriculum monitoring is a challenge, since as the female principals I do not have administration clerk and I cannot monitor all the time. Sometimes you might find the teacher sleeping in class”. (R8)

“In a combined school with Grade R to 12, it takes time to manage the curriculum”. (R7)

“There is not enough staff in the management position to help to manage curriculum delivery. The principal is overloaded and has to sacrifice”. (R9)

One of the respondents cited the challenge caused by the frequent changes in the curriculum and the difficulty faced by parents when trying to assist learners with homework. As a school, they had identified a way for homework to be done in class before learners leave school.

4.3.3.5 Financial resources

The findings indicated that a number of female principals identified school finances as an important resource for a school. Some schools were categorised by the government as ‘No Fee’ paying schools, i.e. quintile 1 to 3 schools, which meant that parents were not supposed to pay school fees but provide voluntary

contributions if they could afford them, thus these schools depended on the government for funding. Other schools were categorised as 'Fee' paying schools, i.e. quintile 4 to 5 schools, which allowed the school governing bodies to charge parents a fee. The government looked at the socio-economic status and poverty level of the community as a guide to categorise schools.

Most of the sampled schools were 'No Fee' paying schools, i.e. they depended on the government to give them enough funds to operate. Very few of the respondents' township schools were fee paying. The amount allocated to each school depended on the number of learners enrolled. Some of the respondents cited a problem with the method used to allocate funds to schools, where the number of learners at school on the tenth day determined the amount of money allocated to the school.

"When they allocate the money they consider the 10th day statistics and it is not enough for all learners. Other learners are not catered for". (R11)

"Finances are most challenging. You cannot manage without money that is the most important thing. The school does not have enough money to cover all expenses". (R2)

Some of the respondents who led fee paying schools stated that they were facing difficulties getting money from the parents.

"Finances are a challenge, I would say mostly because most of my parents are not working, so the school fees are not paid. Finances are at a very, very low level. For many years they were paying R50 per annum. Now the fees are R100 because they themselves decided to raise the money, but only a few pay". (R6)

"In this township most parents are not working and others passed away, so homes are run by grandparents. R100 school fees was raised in 2013 and cannot be increased. The financial books indicate that half of learners did not pay a cent". (R2)

The respondents expressed strongly that the funding from the government was insufficient, as it is allocated to schools according to the number of learners, not

according to the needs of each individual school. The findings indicated that the lack of sufficient funds in schools affected all other school departments thus inadequate financial resources were found to be one of the hindrances to successful running of schools.

4.3.3.6 Infrastructure management

Most of the respondents strongly stated that the environment needs to be conducive for effective teaching and learning to take place. All physical resources, including classrooms, were identified as a priority need for a number of the respondents, as good infrastructure ensures the safety of the children and a conducive environment for teaching and learning. Some schools were still struggling with a shortage of classrooms and others had inadequate structures and facilities.

“When I started I found things not in good order. I had to start way back before moving forward. Doors are falling, toilets are not in good order, and the way textbooks have been handled needed me to put systems and procedures”. (R10)

“Infrastructure management is very challenging because of the shortage of floor space, broken windows and not knowing whether they are broken by parents or children”. (R13)

Some of the findings revealed that other infrastructure challenges were caused by age of the school and others depended on good maintenance.

“Infrastructure management is very challenging since the school is very old. It was built in the early sixties and everything now is dilapidating. Furthermore, the community we are based in, do not treasure the school. Sometimes the school is affected by burglary or vandalized by the community around the school. There are also children who play around anyhow and that affected the school”. (R5)

“In nowadays we are still using the pit toilets which smell bad. The department is no longer upgrading the school”. (R11)

Some respondents cited the frustration caused by the lack of response from the government when they ask for assistance.

“The department is no longer upgrading the school. When you write to them asking for classrooms, they tell you that they are not adding classes to existing schools but building new schools. Our classrooms are overcrowded”. (R11)

“The school needs major repairs. Letters have been written to the department and it is still not attended to”. (R9)

“My challenges are that learners are packed and I do not have enough floor space. So I am still knocking on different doors of sponsorship because our department takes very long to build schools”. (R15)

4.3.3.7 Reflections on the challenges as female principals

Given all the issues that were identified and cited as being most challenging by the respondents, they were asked whether they believed these challenges were related to the fact that they were female principals, or if male principals would have the same kinds of challenges. A variety of responses were received.

“I do not think it would be the same because they sometimes take advantage because you are a female and they want to pull you down”. (R15)

“Sometimes educators do not want to be told or led by a female principal and in some cases female principals become easily offended or withdrawn”. (R13)

One of the respondents stated that she thought that a male principal would not feel as challenged as she was because:

“...the caliber of male principals, not that I am reducing myself”. (R12)

Another respondent indicated that some challenges were from female to female:

“For a male principal it could be different because females disrespect each other and want to pull you down”. (R6)

One respondent felt that when challenged by a male, she always had to prove to herself that she was fit to be a manager:

“Especially with us blacks, we have that thing that males are somehow superior and they come with an attitude when they approach you. You have to rise above that first before tackling a problem you face”. (R14)

4.3.4 Stakeholder challenges

4.3.4.1. School Governing Body (SGB)

The majority of the respondents pointed out that the School Governing Body (SGB), which was made up of parents, teachers, non-teaching staff, the principal and learners in the case of secondary schools, was a very important organ in the institution. In terms of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, SGB members were given powers to govern all school matters except professional matters. It was clear that most respondents had very good relationships with their school governing bodies. The research study revealed that for some of the respondents, major challenges emanated from the time when SGB members were elected, with some respondents arguing that parent members of the SGB were elected but had no capacity to govern the school, since the legislation did not state what level of education was needed to become a member.

One of the respondents had this to say:

“...when elections come parents will elect somebody who is more noisy”. (R5)

A respondent whose school is situated in an informal settlement commented:

“Most of our parents are not well educated. They do not know the importance of school... They know nothing about formulating policies of the school.... They say that as the principals you are the one who is educated and you know what is correct for children. They do not put any effort to support you on whatever you are doing”.
(R11)

One of the problems highlighted by the respondents was that some members of the SGB do not attend meetings, do not send apologies, and do not finish their term of office, which is three years. Some principals had to deal with governance matters on their own due to the disappearance of members.

Some of the respondents indicated that they have a responsibility to capacitate and develop school governing body members on their roles and responsibilities as school governors.

“... you have to teach them first... You are an accounting officer but also the member of the SGB so you have to teach them on what is expected of them. Give them lessons on their duties and responsibilities...” (R12)

“The level of commitment is not understood and there is no delivery”. (R5)

“The challenge is to develop them... you will find that they will support you, work with you... and share a vision with you. If you leave them behind, they will come, sit and not contribute anything. You will find your meetings are not as productive as you would like...” (R14)

Some of the respondents highlighted their frustrations when they face members of the SGB who have ulterior motives, for example:

“They know that positions they hold do not pay, but along the line they feel that they should be given something to the extent that they sometimes slack in their work.”
(R10)

“... regarding financial management, we fought most of the time with my former SGB Chairperson who wanted to keep the school cheque book in his own house, whereas I am the accounting officer. I must take care of all the financial documents.”

(R15)

Other respondents cited that some SGB members still believed in male leadership: *“They are stereotypes... thinking that a male is above female. They do not want to take instructions from a female. They believe that females belong to the kitchen.”*

(R7)

In some cases it was clear that some of the female principals made a good effort to develop their SGB members, to the extent that they see the fruits of their efforts, finding them supportive and contributing positively to the school.

“Each time we are faced with a challenge, we sit down, discuss it and come up with the solution.” (R2)

“They are now participating so well and are responsible, unlike last year when I had one member who was adamant and wanted to rule everybody. Right now she is a supportive volunteer responsible for opening and closing school gates.” (R6)

The findings indicate that some of the challenges caused by ignorance were dealt with through capacity building by the principal and department officials. Since other members of the SGB could come with expectations and the findings reveal that they were either empowered to change pre-conceived thinking or decided to quit once they knew the reality of the matters.

4.3.4.2 School Management Team (SMT)

The school management team is made up of the school principal, the deputy principal (DP) and the heads of departments (HODs) within the school. The principal is the head of the team and has the authority and power to lead. She has to work with all members of the team to ensure the smooth running of the school in all departments, especially the quality delivery of the school curriculum using all the

resources provided. The number of learners enrolled determines how many members of the SMT the school is qualified to have.

The research found that principals in some of the schools faced a variety of challenges with regards to SMT leadership, relating to work load and/or behavioural issues. One of the respondents stated that she was the only member of her school's SMT, i.e. she dealt with her responsibilities as the principal, monitors the curriculum and leads all the departments by herself, due to the size of the school.

Other respondents stated that they had the SMT, but that they were unable to cope with the enormous volume of work, while some respondents had one HOD but no deputy principal, which put a lot of management work on two people.

One respondent commented that:

“One HOD is a full time class teacher in Grade 4. ...The SMT is struggling to manage the curriculum properly... Sometimes work is not completed on time.” (R2)

Other respondents had sufficient learners to allow them to have seven SMT members, including the principal. This seemed sufficient to handle the volume of management work, but the respondents cited challenges with compliance and commitment.

“We are seven members, three are contributing, working hand-in-hand with me whilst the other three I have to follow and fight with them. They are not cooperating.” (R11)

“When they are challenged they begin to move and swerve. They do not want to take a stand and be firm sometimes. They want the principal to be responsible for taking decisions because of fear of teachers.” (R12)

“I had one who would come to the meeting, sit down and say nothing until the meeting is over.” (R6)

“When there are legislations and policies that need to be applied... when you channel these through the SMT who are managers in their phases, the communication will break down.” (R5)

Some respondents had minor to no challenges with their SMT members.

“I do not have much of a problem... We have a WhatsApp group where we share and discuss everything anytime.” (R14)

“In terms of work they are super, but their problem is late coming. I cannot reprimand the teachers whilst managers are who must lead by example are coming late.” (R15)

For some respondents, other challenges were triggered by something that had occurred at school caused by the regulations of the Department of Educations.

“My observation is that the ones that are not cooperating are the ones that were brought to the school through deployment from their original schools. They did not want to come here, it is only that they are forced by the policies of the department.” (R11)

Some of the participants stated that a problem could arise when a promotion post was advertised, creating tensions among staff members, especially those that applied for the post but could not get the position.

The findings indicate that challenges within the SMT need to be attended to immediately or managed properly, because they can affect the morale of the whole staff, thus damaging the smooth running of the school and service delivery.

4.3.4.3. Staff members

Staff members were the biggest human resource at school, through which the principal was able to deliver services and ensure school functionality. The core business at a school is teaching and learning, which must be facilitated by teachers. Other staff members are the support staff, who may include the administration staff,

field staff and others. All these individuals have to be managed and led by the principal, assisted by her management team.

The research findings revealed that staff members have the power to elevate the level of a school through their commitment and dedication to work, but conversely they can also damage a school if they have negative attitude, not cooperative and do not support the principal. Most of the respondents indicated that their staff members were cooperative and working well; minor challenges such as absenteeism or late arrivals which could be controlled were experienced.

“90% of them are working very well, so respecting, they know their places and respect seniors. Only one or two are troublesome.” (R11)

On the contrary, one respondent said, however, that a lack of morale and work ethic among her staff means that work was either not done or it was not done well. Her staff did not meet deadlines which could be a sign of non-compliance, not because they did not know what to do, but because there were problems that need to be addressed.

“Defiance... saying: ‘Mam you cannot tell us that. Who are you’? Sometimes that is where the issue of male and female principal comes.” (R12)

“Sometimes there are cliques that you need to manage... If as a manager you do not observe closely on what they are doing, you will have a problem at a later stage.” (R14)

4.3.4.4. Parents and community

All schools served a particular community or communities, with parents from the community bringing their children to school with the belief that they will receive quality education. As centres of the communities, some schools offered additional services, thus communities needed to support the principals and teachers so that they could do their work with ease. Parents also had to support their children in order to succeed at school. Few respondents pointed out that they worked well with the

communities they served but when there were problems, they found ways to sort them out and things went back to normal.

“I started in this school as an educator in 1992 but never experienced bad things with them. One time I took another person as a cook but they wanted somebody from the community. They approached me and we talked and settled the matter well.” (R6)

“I have a very good and supportive community... I attend the community meetings and war-rooms. I work with them and communicate with them.” (R14)

The respondents advised that schools as centres of the communities, must make their resources available to be used by the community. At times communities made requests to rent a hall or a classroom for a community gathering or church services, however sometimes communities abused that privilege.

“When they are accommodated at school they destroy the property, they even write on the chalkboards, move desks and do anything that will disrupt teaching the next day.” (R2)

“They view the school as a business where they can source income. They come with so many demands...” (R5)

One respondent cited the attitude of parents as one of her challenges.

“Some are on my side as the daughter of the soil. Some do not have respect at all, the moment they saw that I was a female principal.” (R7)

Parental involvement in the education of their children is important. Most respondents noted that they get support from parents, who have grown in understanding the importance of their involvement in the schooling of their children.

“They are hand-on in terms of curriculum. They help learners with homework. They call me all the time regarding the progress of their learners.” (R15)

Other respondents had a different experience altogether as one respondent mentioned that when she called parents to a meeting, they did not come.

“Even if you are having a problem with the child, you invite the parent to come to discuss the problem of the child, they do not come. So they are not much involved.” (R11)

“Parents are not prepared to supervise their children’s work in the rural area.” (R9)

The findings thus showed that the conduct and behaviour of parents and the school community members differed from one area to the other, therefore different principals had different experiences.

4.3.4.5 Departmental officials

The school principal does not lead and manage the school at her own discretion; there are laws and regulations that need to be followed and reports that need to be made to the Department of Education. In order to succeed fully in leadership there should be support coming from department officials across the circuit, district, provincial and national levels.

Other departments also have to offer their services as a means of supporting schools, for example the Department of Health has to offer health services to learners, and the Department of Social Welfare has to attend to social cases affecting individual children.

The majority of respondents revealed that they were not happy with the support they received from department officials.

“Well, they are not supporting. I would write letters... they would not give me a responsible answer, to say they will attend to the matter. But they will send somebody who will do a quick-fix job and the following day we experience the same problem.” (R6)

“From my experience I have to go out of my way to make sure that things do happen. They are not as supportive as they are supposed to be... Sometimes you write letters and those letters are not traceable.” (R14)

“Once in a blue moon you can see a department official come to school. I have to go to the circuit office and district office to submit things. They do not come and hear your problem.” (R11)

One of the most important forms of support for schools is on curriculum matters. Subject advisors need to visit schools and give support on specific subjects; when this does not happen it poses challenges that result in poor teacher and learner performances.

“We have curriculum changes and we need to be visited all the time... But we find that lacking from our subject advisors. We seldom see them.” (R5)

“Sometimes they become barriers towards teaching and learning because they do not pitch up at the right time... They do not make follow ups after a workshop and they blame the SMT for not doing their work.” (R10)

For the school to function well, the principal has to receive enough teaching staff from the beginning of the year. Some of the respondents complained that this does not happen, however; the year might start without teachers for specific subjects and learners could go for months without a teacher in class.

“Sometimes they do not act promptly to fill in the vacant posts. They take their time whereas time is not on our side. Learners are left behind in Mathematics and we face problems as the Circuit Manager takes his time to fill the post.” (R15)

“They tend to sometimes undermine women. They say that there are challenges in a school because the school is headed by a woman. It would have been better if it was a male.” (R12)

Few of the respondents faced no or few challenges when they had to source support from department officials; they received support, feel respected and work hand-in-hand with them.

“They do visit. My circuit manager visits me once in a quarter. Psychological services, nurses, social justice do come and visit when I have a challenge.” (R3)

Departmental officials have a role to play to assist principals but respondents expressed understanding that the bottom line was that they had the responsibility to ensure that their schools function well.

4.3.5 Human behaviour challenges

4.3.5.1 Gender stereotyping and prejudice

In their leadership experiences, some of the female school principals had to deal with the behaviours of individuals or groups of people who undermined them. The findings showed that some of those behaviours were subtle, while some were obvious. They came from various people in different groups and across various levels, and the female principals dealt with these behaviours in different ways.

“...with the circuit management officials I do feel that I am being looked at as a female. Even when one tries to voice out or come with good ideas you are looked at as a female, instead of listening to the point being raised.” (R10)

“A painful issue because nowadays higher positions are given to males. Principal and deputy principal and posts are given to males as if females have no brains. One can refer to the ratio in our circuit which is too small for females.” (R13)

“When I came to school ... people had positioned themselves that if something happens they will assume duties as principals. I think I was prejudiced because at some stage I was viewed as a person who came to disrupt the system and take their positions. Human relations suffered.” (R5)

One of the respondents shared her story, saying that she came to a new school as an acting principal, but when the post was advertised the department deployed a male to act as the principal. She was young and the community felt she could not take the school to the next level, therefore they said they needed a male.

Some of the respondents shared how they dealt with these behaviours.

“I have the tendency of calling a person there and there. If I see you have an attitude I call you, we sit down and address it.” (R6)

“I focus on what I can do best not on what I cannot change.” (R4)

A number of respondents expressed confidence in themselves, saying that they did not pay attention to or entertain such negative behaviors, but rather concentrated on what they could do best and accomplish as school leaders.

Very few respondents had not come across stereotypes or experienced prejudice. Some had no male teachers and others had few male teachers who never gave them any negative attitude. They had also not experienced such behaviours from other stakeholders.

4.3.5.2 Discrimination

The Constitution of South Africa (1996) states that people should not be discriminated against in any form, however the findings show that discrimination still exists, especially towards female school principals.

“Yes, I think I have realised this in our circuit...”(R15)

The respondent felt that when service providers supplied free items for schools, disadvantaged schools were invited at the last minute and told to come with parents and children. Often parents were at work and could not be found instantly. Advantaged schools were told days before the event, given a chance to prepare themselves and parents well.

One respondent felt discriminated against when she first arrived at the school.

“When I first came to the school I was an HOD. Because I was coming from another province it was like I was one of the foreigners. This has been a norm for quite a while in such a way that I would even question whether they will really ever consider me as one of their colleagues.” (R10)

With regards to discrimination, one of the respondents had this to say:

“I do not take it personal. I do not get emotional about it. I always prove that I know what I am doing.” (R4)

Other respondents explained that they had to put policies in place that dealt with all issues including discrimination, which helped them to prevent any inappropriate behaviour.

4.3.5.3 Parental involvement

Parents have to be involved in their children’s education and support teachers in what they do. The research found that female principals did face challenges when they expected positive responses from parents.

“Parents do not want to come to school. You need parents when there are cases but they do not come. You only see them during registration and thereafter you do not see them.” (R1)

“In the rural area they do not care of what is happening at school. They come when they want to fight teachers. When you want to involve them in the learning of their children, they do not come.” (R7)

Some of the respondents indicated that some of the parents in the informal settlements were illiterate and it was quite a challenge for them to assist their children with their schoolwork, while some parents felt that teachers were offloading their responsibilities onto them. When they were invited to parents meetings for

capacity building few parents attended and others left early. They did not take their children's education seriously.

One respondent shared her frustration:

"I have tried everything. I write letters. I SMS them, I make some refreshments, even prepare learners to perform some activities for them, they do not come. Even refreshments are not helping." (R11)

This study found that some children resided with guardians who were not their real parents. Many of these guardians did not take responsibility for the children's education, some were too lazy to come to school and simply said:

"This is not my child". (R2)

For some respondents, the effort they put in with parents to inculcate the importance of involvement paid off:

"Previously they did not know what was happening at school. They did not even understand the report of the learner. In our parents meeting, I took it upon myself to explain everything step-by-step. Now they understand. They come to school when I need them." (R15)

"What we do, we invite parents at the beginning of the year just to introduce teachers. We also have open day sessions where parents come, sit down and look at the work of their children and comment." (R6)

Some of the respondents expressed that they have had very good responses from parents who were involved in the schooling of their children. They called parents to share their vision, have grade meetings, and involved them in a number of activities. Some had told parents to come any time they had challenges with their children, which meant keeping lines of communication open.

It was also clear that the experiences of the respondents differed from area to area. Respondents from the townships got better responses from parents than those in the rural and informal settlements. Illiteracy levels and socio-economic status did contribute to the behaviours of most parents in rural areas.

4.3.6 Dealing with challenges and success stories

4.3.6.1 Challenges directed to female principals in the Durban INK area

The research findings revealed that most respondents faced challenges that were directed at them because they were female principals. Some respondents felt that some of the challenges came from other females, but for most interviewees, the challenges emanate from other factors. The respondents expressed that there were still people who could not accept females as school leaders in their communities. Females felt not respected as men were and indicated that there were still individuals who think that good things only happen when a man was in charge. In their work environment, the respondents faced gender stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, defiance, ignorance, bullies and a variety of other challenges.

“Maybe it is in our culture as Africans that you have to respect a man not a female.” (R11)

“People look at female principals as people to fail. There are still people who say: ‘What can you expect from a female’.” (R14)

“When you are a female, people tend to undermine your intelligence.” (R12)

Other respondents expressed that they did not get the respect they deserved as leaders because they were female, i.e. more respect was given to male principals.

I have experienced that in many cases whereby parents come with attitude... Some of them call me ‘that girl’. (R5)

“Women are seen as subordinates and are not uplifted. Men are always given opportunities whereas women are the best leaders.” (R7)

The respondents pointed out that most of the leadership positions in schools were given to males. That was evident when they went to principals' meetings where the number of female principals were few.

"When female principals retire or resign, a male principal takes over, even in the lower primary schools where learners are so young and they need females." (R2)

The same sentiments were voiced by other respondents, who felt that since males dominated, females' voices were never heard. Some of the respondents expressed that some challenges came from within the school, as there were still those who did not want to take orders from females, including other females.

"It is a 'pull her down' syndrome... a stigma that still exists." (R3)

"Sometimes female principals pull each other down. We do not support each other. Because of fear, we end up doubting ourselves even if we are good. But with male principals, I do not see that happening." (R15)

4.3.6.2 Dealing with challenges as female principals: Success stories

The respondents were asked to share stories of challenges they faced because they were female principals, and how they successfully dealt with those challenges professionally without losing respect or dignity.

Respondent 10

Respondent 10 explained that she was a HOD and there was an acting principal when the principal position was advertised. She applied for the position and was successful. The acting principal was very bitter but the respondent felt confident taking over the reins. When she took over, she started to apply the policies of the department. It was not easy, but she stuck to her principles of doing things the right way. The previous acting principal soon left the school and the other staff members looked at the respondent as if she were a different person, not as the woman they had known for years. Through perseverance, persistence and being consistent, they gradually complied and the school began functioning well.

Respondent 12

Respondent 12 was an acting principal when the school began to be built in an informal settlement. She started the school from nothing until one building was constructed, then the community wanted the school to be further established. When the post was about to be advertised, the Department of Education deployed a male to act as the principal while she was there, as the community wanted a male principal to take the school forward.

“This woman cannot take the school forward. We want to establish the school, so we cannot take this woman. If we do we will be doing something wrong. Let us give this man a chance.” (R12)

The respondent applied for the post when it was advertised, knowing that the community did not want her as the principal. She told herself that she would prove them wrong, and would do her level best in the interviews.

“Apparently the panel members were neutral.” (R12)

Fortunately for her, the department officials did not know the politics that were circulating regarding the preferences of members of the community, and those who represented the parents were neutral. She did her best in the interviews, she knew the history of the school, and she was successful.

Respondent 13

In some of the challenges faced by female principals, unions played a supportive positive role or a negative challenging one. Respondent 13 shared the ordeal she went through when she applied to be the deputy principal of her school.

“In my first interview I was told that I have forged my qualifications and I was scored low. The union that represented me called me just after the interviews and said to me: ‘Mam you did very well in the interviews, but the only thing you did wrong was to give qualifications that are not yours. You credited yourself with higher qualifications that is why you were not successful. Otherwise you were superb’.” (R13)

To deal with that she quickly went to the department regional offices and requested printouts of all her qualifications, which she then forwarded to the school and the interviews were re-scheduled. The panel then devised another reason to put a male rather than a female in the post, leading to the union taking the case to the Department of Labour. The person who was conducting the case openly told the panel:

“You are not going to succeed because you are bridging the Constitution of South Africa.” (R13)

Eventually she was awarded the post.

Respondent 4

Respondent 4 shared that after completing the interview process of the Head of Department position, the members of a union came to her office and confronted her about recommending a Sotho speaking candidate over a Zulu speaking candidate:

“They told me they will lodge a dispute because one of the candidates we interviewed and recommended was from Butterworth in QwaQwa and she spoke Sesotho”. (R4)

To deal with this the respondent went to her superiors in the department and explained what had happened. Eventually the matter was resolved as the union members came back and asked her not to change the scores of the interview.

Respondent 15

Some of the respondents shared stories of being confronted by members of the SGB, demanding powers that did not belong to them.

“My SGB chairperson came to school with two guns, one on his left and one on his right side. He entered the office and put both guns on the table... He demanded the cheque book saying, he is the chairperson of the school and everything that concerns money is his problem. I was devastated and I nearly left the school. He took the cheque book.” (R15)

To deal with this she called her Circuit Manager, who immediately came to the school to support her. They sat down with the SGB chairperson and clarified his role as the chairperson and that of the principal. It took some time for the SGB chairperson to understand, but the principal took him to the department workshops and he eventually returned the cheque book.

Respondent 6

Respondent 6 had a male principal of another school who was a parent at her school, who organised other members of the SGB to come and scrutinise how the principal used the school's finances.

"They would come to school without notice, sit down and say: Mam can you show us how finances are used." (R6)

In response, the interviewee confidently gave them all the financial books and asked the parent who was a principal to explain what was in them. She informed them that in October she always presented a report to the parents with the governing body on the school's financials, and said that they would have to do the report that October. That was the last day she had them coming unannounced to check the books.

"One time I even gave him a calculator and at the end I told them: I am not taking these books to auditors because you just audited them, and you will report to parents." (R6)

The research findings also showed that some of the challenges came when posts were advertised, as staff members had preferences about who they wanted to be appointed and sometimes they hoped that they would get the positions. To their disappointment sometimes it did not go the way they expected, and then they started to challenge the decisions of the school governing body and the principal.

Respondent 11

Respondent 11 shared that when the teachers within the school did not get the posts they expected, which went to teachers from outside the school, they reacted badly.

“So one of them influenced the parents to come and lock the gates at school. When I came I found the gates locked. When I asked parents what was the problem they said that I am hiring educators from outside, yet there are educators at school who are qualified to teach and they know them.” (R11)

Responding to that challenge, the respondent said that she quickly called the Circuit Manager and thereafter explained to the parents that there are regulations that are followed to employ a teacher, including circulars that are strictly followed for the positions that are advertised. The parents understood and the Circuit Manager spoke further to the parents, calming them down, and the gates were opened.

One of the respondents explained that she used to turn a blind eye to the challenges she was facing from one of the members of her management team, but eventually she realised that turning a blind eye to what was happening did not bring about a solution.

“I had to be upfront and call one of my SMT member to the office to iron matters out... There was resistance, but I called one other SMT member to be the witness. We discussed the matter and I outlined what is expected from us from the department. I think in that way I achieved much because after that there was clarity on roles and functions.” (R5)

Some of the respondents revealed that they had to put their foot down when the staff members wanted to do as they liked at school, undermining their authority.

Respondent 3

Respondent 3 described one of her encounters when there was a shortage of water at school, and the staff members wanted to leave early saying that they could not teach in unhealthy conditions. Fortunately for the principal, the learners had drinking water and the meals were prepared and ready. A water tank was also supplied by

the municipality to deal with the toilets, but the teachers wanted to leave. To deal with the situation she called the teachers together to find out what their problem was, to see if they had a valid reason for wanting to leave, and to ask what their recovery plan was for the hours that were going to be lost. They did not have answers, so she told them to go back to class and teach as normal.

From all the respondents interviewed, it was clear that in one way or another they had encountered challenges that required them to prove that they were capable of taking charge and leading their schools to greater heights. Experience had taught most of them that following the laws, regulations and policies was the best thing to do in order to face challenges with confidence.

4.3.7 Best practices

4.3.7.1 Effective leadership

All the respondents were asked to describe their best practices of effective leadership, share what advice they would give to fellow female principals on how to deal with challenges, and explain how society could improve its attitude towards female school principals.

Regarding effective leadership, one respondent had this to say:

“Be knowledgeable and transparent, be firm but fair, do not discriminate. Deal with the matter not with the person when there is misunderstanding. Communicate well with the stakeholders.” (R3)

Another respondent emphasised the importance of respecting seniors, attending workshops and bringing information back to schools, involving stakeholders when big decisions are made, and attending community gatherings, while a third respondent mentioned the importance of doing the right thing at the right time with confidence. Some respondents indicated that because women are mostly soft-hearted and sympathetic, this could be viewed as a weakness that others can take advantage of. One respondent advised that women should lead by example and be consistent in what they do.

“What you do to teacher ‘A’, do the same to teacher ‘B’ and stick to policies.” (R5)

“Feel confident in all your managerial skills. Do not compromise or deviate from policies.” (R13)

MacCleskey (2014) explained that effective leadership requires a rational understanding of a situation and an appropriate response, which is also what some of the respondents highlighted as being important in school leadership.

“Be a situational and instructional leader. There are no two incidents that will come in the same way. Therefore, it depends on a situation a given time... Be versatile, think ahead and being proactive, it will keep you going.” (R10)

Some respondents indicated that female principals themselves need to share good practices and avail themselves to provide support for each other.

4.3.7.2 Ways of facing challenges

In many cases, across many cultures and races, female leaders face challenges purely because they are females. The findings of this study revealed that females often have to deal with individuals and group of people, in the workplace and in the community, who required them to prove themselves and their ability to lead.

Some of the respondents advised that female principals had to understand the diversity that exists within the school, take each challenge as it comes, and avoid personalising them. Application of the laws and regulations had assisted most of the respondents because no law or regulation was only made for males. Some of the respondents stressed the importance of knowing their strengths and weaknesses, never being shy of consulting their peers, and not losing focus.

“Be assertive and stand up for your rights. Do not be rude but apply the policies. Keep evidence of all things.” (R13)

“Always ask for God’s wisdom. Never be emotional when challenged but be sober and stick to your principles.” (R10)

Barton (2013) emphasised the importance of knowledge and skills in school leadership and the critical element of reciprocity between experience and knowledge. According to one of the respondents:

“Knowledge is the best weapon. Read more and know exactly how to deal with each challenge.” (R11)

The respondents indicated that they believed in themselves and their ability to lead their schools, stressing that they were not in any way less than their male counterparts when it came to leadership. They also called for female principals to support each other, stand by each other and know that they were as strong as the next female principal.

4.3.7.3 Changing perceptions

The findings proved that there was still a long way to go to change the perceptions in society that female leaders were not as capable as male leaders:

“... the change of perception must start from the top, in our government.” (R11)

One respondent indicated that the department tend to appoint more male principals than females, which sent a message to the community that they could expect better leadership from male principals.

“If they could look at us as ‘leaders’, not as ‘females’...” (R10)

With confidence, one respondent said that slowly but surely perceptions will change, and that people will understand and acknowledge that the most effective schools are led by female principals. Some of the respondents complained that at times female principals themselves were not confident enough to face challenges, however, as sometimes they took matters personally and react in an emotional way. This gave way to opportunists to take advantage and reduce female leadership to nothing. The respondents emphasised the importance of giving your level best, being informed and industrious, pulling together to rise, demand recognition from society and never to be satisfied with the status quo.

4.4 Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was on the presentation of the results of the research study undertaken. The results were analysed using thematic analysis, and the findings were presented in themes and sub-themes. Chapter 5 will provide a discussion on the research findings of the study, and interpret and compare them with previous studies.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the key findings of the research study, while this chapter will discuss the findings of the study, and interpret and compare the findings with those of previous research studies. The main aim of the study was to examine challenges that female school principals face in leading and managing schools in the Durban INK area. The study also revealed the competencies and strategies that they used to assist them to address these challenges.

5.2 Key realities: Male vs. female school principals

The Constitution of South Africa of 1996, as well as legislation such as the Bill of Rights of 1996 and the Employment Equity Act of 1998, guarantee equal rights and access to employment and promotion for all South Africans, including women. According to Moorosi (2010), different policy provisions were made with the intention of addressing the gender imbalances in education management and to achieve gender equity. Further to that, the policies were created to address barriers to female leadership in the post-apartheid period.

Previous research has shown that inequalities exist not only in job positions, but also in the form of deep-seated inequalities that are accompanied by stereotypical myths and prejudicial attitudes about women's competencies as school principals (Mestry & Schmidt, 2012). The findings of this research study confirmed these findings.

Nationally and internationally, the teaching profession was dominated by females, yet fewer and fewer females were occupying management positions in the Durban INK area. Figure 1.1 showed inequalities that existed, where at Inanda only 10% of schools were led by female principals, 30% in Ntuzuma and 48% at KwaMashu. Table 1.1 showed figures that were very low at Inanda and Ntuzuma, an indication that school leadership was still dominated by males in those areas. Those figures in Table 1.1 excluded special schools that cater for learners with disabilities.

5.3 Theme 1: Self-efficacy

The findings revealed that all of the respondents were proud to be female, and had positive attitudes about themselves as well as their leadership responsibilities. Gqaji (2013) attested to that when he explained that the world has experienced extraordinary females with good leadership qualities, not only in education but also in other sectors. There were no instances when the respondents felt unworthy of the respect and dignity deserving of a school principal. They expressed knowledge of leadership and management issues, as well as information about contemporary issues in education. Some of them saw themselves as one of the best principals, and they were sure they were in the right places.

The study also identified that most of the respondents were committed to their work, were able to command respect, and could influence subordinates to accomplish the objectives of the organisation. This indicated good qualities of leadership, as mentioned by Sharma and Jain (2013), who noted that good leadership involves influencing others to achieve common goals and objectives.

Their inner drive was evident to most of the respondents, some of whom indicated that they did not take negative things that were directed at them personally, but regarded them as one of the leadership hurdles they needed to jump over successfully, which were there to make them stronger. The findings confirmed what Gqaji (2013) stated, saying that females who aspire to advance into leadership positions and act on it have been successful. Females in the Durban INK area proved to concentrate on what was positive and what they could do best; being a female principal among males did not make any difference to them.

Contrary to what Gqaji (2013) confirmed, Marie *et al.*, (2009) argued that females had to deal with internal and external pressures. Msila (2013) on the otherhand stated that due to the culture of mistrust, female principals end up trying to prove themselves continuously that they could lead. Despite all trying conditions in the Durban INK area, respondents expressed self-confidence when they were challenged as female principals. One of the respondents explained how she always stood her ground on matters of policy and laws. Most of the respondents showed that they had standards and principles they stood by and could not be shaken.

According to their thinking, success in school leadership was not about being a female or a male; as Kruse (2013) stated that leadership has nothing to do with seniority or position, it has nothing to do with titles and personal attributes, but it has to do with a social influence that maximizes the efforts of others towards goal achievement.

The respondents showed that they do not simulate male leadership styles or follow a male model of leadership, which according to Moor, Cohen & Beeri (2015) were the main obstacles for women's advancement in leadership. The respondents indicated to have qualities of caring for the well-being of their staff members and learners, while not compromising service standards. Research by Naidoo and Perumal (2014) discovered that such women in rural areas who assumed duties of school leadership subscribed mostly to relational leadership, which was the case with some of the respondents. Most respondents agreed that being compassionate, caring and showing motherly affection were strengths of female leaders, but should never compromise the authority and the expected standards of service.

5.4 Theme 2: Leadership capacity of respondents

Most respondents indicated that they were capable leaders in their schools. Most of them expressed themselves as possessing multiple leadership skills, such as resilience, empathy and decisiveness in terms of their ability to lead big schools with a variety of demands, as well as small schools with unique challenges. Their capabilities supported what Naidoo (2014) found that females always got emotionally involved with their learners and teachers, complementing what could not be provided at home.

The demographics of the respondents indicated that two of them led combined schools, which started from Grade R up to Grade 12. Each had more than 1,000 learners and a staff of more than 40 teachers. These female principals were in charge of all four phases, which were foundation, intermediate, senior and further education and training (FET). The findings indicated that they successfully took care of and supported a variety of learners of different age groups. These findings supported Naidoo (2014) stated that female principals use their motherhood to overcome social problems. Their schools were performing very well across all the

phases, which meant that they were effective leaders, yet their years of experience as principals ranged between 6 and 12. Their effectiveness paralleled the findings of Davis and Maldonado (2015), who researched African American women education leaders and found that they portrayed effective leadership skills across organisational and geographic boundaries.

Two other respondents led secondary schools, which catered for the senior and FET phases. One school was in a deep rural area and accommodating more than 200 learners. That school had challenges such as a lack of water and adequate ablution facilities. The other secondary school was in the township with more than 500 learners, and had basic but inadequate resources. The findings indicated that these respondents were successful in leadership as their schools ran smoothly, with good results despite the challenges they faced. Their success fitted Asif's (2015) argument that school leaders should be equipped with the necessary skills to enable them to deal with challenges in schools and improve current standards in education.

The remainder of the respondents were principals from primary schools, most of them situated in rural areas and a few in the townships. Their schools' enrolment ranges from 225 to 1,370 students. They cater for the foundation phase and the senior phase, and the principals' years of service as leaders in their schools ranged between 3 and 28 years.

5.5 Leadership challenges in different departments

The study results indicated that the respondents faced challenges across different levels, from different departments and groups of people in their institutions. That was not unique to Durban INK area principals as Khaled (2014) mentioned that Palestinian and African American female school leaders had challenges ranging from legal, political social to lack of respect from colleagues. Naidoo & Perumal (2014) also confirmed that female principals faced challenges such as institutional racism, failure to submit to the authorities, defiance and non-compliance. Respondents' ratings of the challenges in each department revealed that some were stronger in certain areas of leadership, and others were more challenged in other departments.

The study results showed that a number of respondents were challenged by the school administration mostly because of the shortage of human resources to perform administration duties. These findings refuted the distributed leadership style that Goskoy (2015) explained as allowing leaders to give employees in an organisation responsibilities and roles to lead various complex tasks in their positions, allowing them to develop their potential. The findings proved that small schools were not provided with the necessary administration staff, and the management staff was very limited. The female principal of one school had to multi-task by doing her leadership duties as well as the work that had to be done by an administrator. One respondent complained that too much paperwork needed to be done and submitted on time to the department whereas they had no administration clerk to perform such duties.

Wilhelm (2016) mentioned that shared leadership empowered workers to work side by side with their leaders towards achieving a common goal. The findings contradicted with Wilhelm's (2016) idea of shared leadership as respondents indicated that some of them suffered the shortage of human resources, such as teachers and management staff. Those conditions prevented female principals to delegate duties accordingly. Daft (2011) argued further saying that the leader has to delegate his or her authority to subordinates and rely on their knowledge and skills to accomplish the tasks, which was a challenge to principals with few staff members and management team. Steyn (2009) also attested to that when he mentioned that school leadership could be attained through shared decision-making process with increased responsibilities of school management teams and school governing bodies. Some of these schools had Heads of Departments (HOD) who were full time teachers, which posed a challenge to manage teachers and ensure curriculum coverage. These principals were thus unable to share the load of leadership in a balanced way. The findings revealed that principals in these schools had to do the work of the HOD as well as their own work to ensure that teaching and learning take place effectively and learners achieve their best. The study findings concurred with Baxter *et al.* (2014) who mentioned that the roles of the principal as a leader are complex and multiple.

The findings indicated that some of female principals had to deal with some negative attitudes among members of staff and the school governing bodies, who wanted to have things done their own way. These findings concurred with Naidoo & Perumal (2014) as barriers that still existed in the education sector. In all the encounters of such challenges the findings proved that most female principals were able to manage the situation, applying what Daft (2011) mentioned as using a suitable leadership style in a situation. One of the respondents accepted that there were characters principals could not change, but needed to be properly managed so that they did not disrupt the school's functionality and progress. This concurs with the findings of Khaled & Al-Jaradat (2014) who noted that women had leadership qualities that may not exist in male principals, but there is no difference in leadership effectiveness in schools.

The results of the study showed that for effective school governance, female principals need to work hard to capacitate their school governing bodies, which aligns with Daft's (2011) findings that effective leaders share power by getting everyone involved and committed. The findings further indicated that the respondents identified the necessity of human capital with intellectual capacity to move the institutions forward (Daft, 2011). Some of the respondents faced power struggles because of ignorance amongst some of the members of the governing body, however the respondents' professional approaches to such challenges ensured mutual support and collaboration among members, forming a community of hardworking people.

The core business of schools is teaching and learning, and principals have the responsibility of ensuring that both take place. Westover (2013) mentioned that the success of school principals was to have a strategic focus, properly managing all aspects that contribute to teaching and learning. That required principals to ensure that adequate curriculum resources were given to teachers and that they delivered accordingly. The study findings indicated that some of the school principals found curriculum resource management and delivery very challenging, particularly with regard to the availability of adequate curriculum resources and the amount of work to manage. According to Chetty (2016), the situation that the principal found themselves in determined the direction and the level of action the school took in

order to face the challenges. Peretomode (2012) also agreed that the maturity level, intelligence and sensitivity of the leader, as well as the skills and the ability to quickly diagnose the situation could provide the direction the school takes.

Financial resources were identified as key to providing adequate resources at schools, yet some of the respondents complained about the inadequate allocation of finances to their schools. As indicated by National Norms for School Funding (SASA No. 84 of 1996), the government used the number of learners enrolled at schools to determine the amount of money to be allocated to each school, however, the respondents complained that each school's needs and the socio-economic status of the community served by the school were not considered. Some of the schools were called No Fee paying schools and the department allocated a little more money to provide for each learner, but the findings indicated that as inadequate (<https://www.education.gov.za>). Schools in the townships that were called Fee Paying schools also struggled as most parents were unemployed and some learners were raised by pensioners or live in child-headed homes.

Some respondents complained about the capacity of most parents to assist their children with homework. This is in line with what Wilhelm (2016) stated about school leaders being not only survivors, but being able to thrive in times of rapid change and many challenges. The respondents had risen above the challenges and succeeded in producing quality outputs, tying in with Daft's (2011) findings that the best leaders accept the inevitability of change and crisis, and recognise them as potential sources of energy and self-renewal. The study findings also corresponded with the findings of a study by Naidoo & Perumal (2014) on female principals at disadvantaged schools, where they found that female principals took a strong curriculum leadership stance, making it clear that curriculum delivery was the core business.

Since curriculum resources provision were the core to education, the results of the study indicated that most of the available financial resources were allocated to purchase stationery and textbooks, in other words, other schools needs such as building maintenance, equipment and security suffered.

5.6 Causes of female principals' challenges

The findings of this study indicated that the challenges experienced by female school principals came from different places, including the SGB members, the school management teams, staff members, the community and departmental officials. These findings correlated with what Khaled & Al-Jaradat (2014) identified as sources of challenges, ranging from organisational challenges to empowerment challenges, cultural challenges, self-challenges, physical challenges and technical challenges.

5.6.1 School Governing Body (SGB) and parents

The challenges that some respondents faced from the SGB were because of the lack of knowledge and false expectations. Some respondents pointed out that when SGB elections took place, parents were inclined to choose the most vocal parents, not considering the necessary commitment to responsibilities as stipulated in SASA (1996). These members could attend meetings but made no contributions, and when things were tough they disappeared and never came back. Some respondents added that they found themselves fighting governance battles alone, and had to hold by-elections twice a year (SASA No. 84 of 1996).

Diko (2014) mentioned that resistance to change in the society still existed. That was confirmed by the findings of the study revealing that some SGB members wanted to take over school leadership from the female principal. One respondent sharing that she had to give away the school chequebook to the SGB chairperson at gunpoint. The findings established that there still existed trying conditions beyond their control, which attested to what Kanjere (2010) found, that the environment does not support women. The findings by Marie *et al.* (2009) also confirmed this study's findings that women in leadership faced hostility and indifference.

5.6.2 Community

Diko (2014) mentioned that there were strong cultural expectations about females who become school leaders because of gender stereotyping syndrome within societies, which correlated with the findings of the study where parents disregarded advices of the principal because she was a female. According to Msila (2013) strong

cultural expectations about women who enter into school leadership affected female principals negatively. This study found similarities research as one respondent found herself in the community at first did not accept her as the head of the school but instead they wanted a male. The respondent further stated that the community believed a female principal would not understand the community and could never be strong.

These findings correlate with what Msila (2013) found, which was that women were thought to be more motherly, not always serious, and unable to stand hardship and challenges. This indicated that stereotypes concerning females as poor leaders persisted, as Mestry & Schmidt (2012), who commented that discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping continued to perpetuate the myth of women submissiveness, clouding their performance and potential. According to Kanjere (2010) tribal and traditional leaders in communities often still believed that only men must lead. This was consistent with what Diko (2014) found, namely that despite government legislation and policies that inform and provide guidance on gender equity, females still faced social resistance and were disregarded in relation to their constitutionally bestowed right of equality. As confirmation of these findings, Msila (2013), citing Grant (2005) said that women in some communities in South Africa still had little or no credibility as leaders. These findings also extended internationally, as per research by Hyun (2015), who found that in America gender equity was still far off.

5.6.3 School Management Teams (SMT) and staff

The findings indicated that some challenges with the SMT and staff had to do with their attitudes, behaviours and commitment. Naidoo & Perumal (2014) attested to that when they found resistance from staff that varied from defiance to subtle non-compliance. Several respondents also had a challenge with the shortage of SMT members needed to assist the principal with her leadership and management responsibilities, yet some of them were full time class teachers. Findings indicated that some of those challenges were caused by compulsory transfer of SMT members to various schools by the Department of Education and the respondents had no choice but to comply.

Additional findings were that some respondents have a number of SMT members, but not all of them were committed to their responsibilities and others tried to sabotage the principal. The study findings further indicated that some SMT members came to SMT meetings not to contribute anything and not to implement decisions taken from the meeting. These findings confirmed what Naidoo & Perumal (2014) found, which is that SMT members distanced themselves from decisions made at SMT meetings and identifying these actions as a 'pull her down syndrome'. This also concurred with the findings of Msila (2013), who mentioned that there is still institutional racism and sexism, which discourages women from moving into school leadership. In some schools, women were seen as threats to men if they showed leadership aspirations, as Diko (2014) mentioned that the society was still resistant to change. The findings correlated with what Lumby *et al.* (2010) found, that imposed traditional male dominance led to fear of failure, poor self-esteem and lack of confidence for female principals, as a result, they feared to discipline teachers.

When it came to staff members, the findings proved that some respondents faced challenges of acceptance; one respondent shared that at times she asked herself whether the staff members would ever accept her as their principal. One respondent mentioned that her staff members were defiant and not taking instructions from her, while another claimed that males at school did not want to take her orders. These findings were the evidence that females were still undermined and hard hit by the prejudices of people who believed that good leadership is essentially masculine (Davis & Maldonado, 2015). These findings were supported by Hickman (2015), who mentioned that assertiveness, authority and dominant behavior were considered unfeminine by men. Kanjere (2010) attested to that, saying that knowledge of women and their personal experiences were rated 'zero' by the public. The results also showed that there was a poor work ethic and morale amongst staff members if they did not like the female principal. One respondent shared that staff members did not meet deadlines and when work was checked, it was incomplete or poorly done.

5.6.4 Departmental officials

When the respondents were faced with challenges, they expected to get support from department officials, especially when it came to gender-related issues, yet a number of respondents faced challenges in this regard. One respondent commented that some officials undermined female principals and made her in particular; feel that there were challenges at her school because it was led by a female. To support these findings Diko (2014) mentioned that South African educational leadership favoured males over females, adding that there was resistance to change and a lack of recognition and support for women leaders from superiors. Lumby *et al.* (2010) concurred with these findings, saying that despite the compelling reasons for the equal representation of women in leadership, progress was slow.

One respondent noted the domination of males in both school leadership as well as circuit leadership, and suggested that the status quo needed to be vocally challenged by female principals, despite the fact that some people thought that assertiveness was arrogance. In line with these findings, Duevel (2015) attested that when women who were strong, they were disliked and given bad names, but when men were strong they were considered to be effective. These findings were consistent with those of Naidoo & Perumal (2014), who discovered that despite feminist activists continuously criticising gender discrimination, patriarchy, stereotyping and the oppression of females, little progress had been made. Msila (2013) attested that there were unseen yet unbreakable glass walls and ceilings keeping women from rising to higher positions, which were felt in most countries.

Contrary to that, Diko (2014) mentioned that the South African parliament is one of the more progressive in the world in terms of recognising women for top leadership positions, but that did not filter through to the education sector in many provinces. One respondent said that the most recent principalship positions were given to males, thus the number of female principals in the circuits were getting less voice. The same findings were mentioned by Khaled & Al-Jaradat (2014), who claimed that less than 3% of school leaders in America were women, less than 6% were women in the United Kingdom, and that the numbers were worse in Arab countries.

Other respondents indicated that they got very little support from department officials. When they wrote letters at most, they did not get responses. Most of the time when they encountered challenges as female principals they dealt with the issues on their own. They use special abilities to connect and navigate institutional sexism and discrimination, which continued to be part of their experiences (Marie, Williams & Sherman, 2009).

5.6.5 Peers and self

Searby, Ballinger & Tripses (2015) discovered that female leaders found themselves having to piece together help but rarely found people to help them, which is the same experience for some of the respondents, who found themselves alone when they took on their leadership roles. One respondent pleaded for female principals to work hand-in-hand, to stop looking down on each other, and to stop back-chatting each other. The findings indicated that most respondents needed peer support and to give each other advice when facing difficult times. To support this Baxter *et al.* (2014) spoke of communitarian leadership practices for female principals, i.e. they should unite under a shared purposeful emphasis on 'other' rather than 'self'.

One other respondent acknowledged that as females they were naturally motherly and soft-hearted, yet some people took advantage of these qualities. In this regard, Duevel (2015) mentioned that sometimes women were made to feel like frauds in their roles, but advised women never to be apologetic for who they really are.

5.7 Best practices and advice for female principals

The findings offered some advices, including best practices, that respondents felt would be useful to share that could help female principals when they were facing challenges. Some respondents called for female principals to arm themselves with progressive and contemporary knowledge in education and leadership, which Barton (2013) stated were critical to inform practice in school leadership. One respondent cited that she was successful during her interviews because she was qualified and confident about her knowledge and experience at the school.

The respondents advised female principals to avoid taking matters personally, and to deal with the issue at hand, not the person. This was in line with the findings of

Doe et al. (2015) stated that leaders needed to control their impulses, regulate their moods and keep distress from swamping their ability to think. Some respondents shared that they successfully applied the laws and policies as required, and never compromised or deviated when they are challenged. One of the respondents was blamed for employing post level one teachers from outside the school, but she referred her accusers to the departmental circular which she had followed to the letter.

Another respondent had to face union representatives who wanted her to deviate from the regulations when employing a teacher, and accused her of employing a person from another language group. This was despite the fact that the unions were there to represent members' rights not to be exploited, not to fight principals when they apply policies accordingly.

Other advice was to lead by example, and to be firm but flexible and friendly. One of the respondents highlighted the importance of coming on time to school, saying that the principal could not discipline teachers who came late when managers themselves arrive late. Another respondent decided to sit with her staff members during tea break so that when the bell rang she stood up first; as a result, all staff members followed suit.

One respondent shared that she went to interviews feeling confident in her abilities and skills to lead; she advised female principals to confidently say that they were the best. Doe *et al.* (2015) concurred, saying that the school leader must be able to motivate himself/herself, and persist in the face of frustration. To communicate effectively with all stakeholders, one respondent shared that she had a WhatsApp group with her SGB members and teachers, which allowed her to share almost everything and make suggestions. That success draws parallel with the findings by Naidoo & Perumal (2014), who discovered that female principals in rural schools communicate more using networks and webs, and believed in information sharing.

Some respondents advised principals to be consistent and fair in their dealings with subordinates, saying that actions speak louder than words, and that it was important to be honest and support their teachers. These findings correlated with a study by

Hickman (2015), who found that beyond professional support and growth, many people desired a leader who cared about their personal lives and needs, who was a role model with passion and a strong work ethic, and who was responsible, skilled and organised. Davis & Maldonado (2015) also identified the need for leaders with charisma, who have the ability to inspire followers to subordinate their own interests for the good of the organisation.

McCleskey (2014) advised school leaders to take good care of their physical and mental health for a high internal locus control, which could help them to cope with job stress, while the respondents advised that females have to embrace their natural gifts of nurturing and caring. Lumby & Azaola (2014) concurred that female principals used their motherhood to overcome social problems of teachers and learners in schools. The research findings provided proof that female principals were capable leaders at schools, rebutting the belief that female leaders' feminine natures created problems and difficulties, preventing progress (Khaled & Al-Jaradat, 2014).

5.8 Possibility of changing attitudes towards female principals

Previous findings by Dueval (2015) showed that some women were actively working to change the attitudes of vocal and silent males and females when it comes to women leadership in international education. Attesting to such findings, the results of this study indicated that female principals in the Durban INK area believed that the negative attitude of society towards them could change. Findings indicated that respondents were confident that if they could be noticed for consistently leading successful schools, where teaching and learning took place in a conducive and healthy environment and learner attainment was high, those with doubts about female school leadership could eventually change their attitudes.

In line with Msila (2013) who mentioned that women should take charge of themselves, respondent argued that female principals themselves had the responsibility to prove to the world that they can lead successfully. They felt that they needed to tell their stories so that the world knows what they had accomplished, and at the same time inspire other females who might have given up on becoming future school leaders.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter provided a discussion of the study findings by making reference to the literature in line with the research questions. The discussion revealed the existing challenges faced by female school principals, which have both similarities and differences to earlier studies. These similarities and differences were discussed and interrogated.

The next chapter will present the conclusion and recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the conclusion and recommendations of the study, based on key findings obtained and presented in the previous chapters.

The study undertook to investigate the challenges facing female school principals in the Durban INK area. South Africa is more than 20 years into democracy, and has adopted a Constitution (Act No. 108 of 1996) which put the rights of females equal to those of men, yet females who advance to positions of school leadership still faced negative challenges purely because they were females. Male domination in school leadership positions still existed.

The study was needed to identify the current challenges, difficulties and uncertainties that were unique to female principals, as well as the causes thereof, and to explore how principals addressed these challenges. The results of the study were intended to alert all stakeholders, including senior officials at the Department of Education that prejudice against female leadership in schools still existed. The aim was to contribute towards improving the attitudes towards female school leadership, and to create a more positive view of the ability of female principals to lead and manage successful schools.

The literature review focused on leaders and leadership, leadership theories, leadership styles, current theories and future direction, school leadership and challenges. A qualitative research approach and purposive sampling were used to select participants for the study, with 15 semi-structured interviews being conducted to collect data, which were then thematically analysed. The key findings will be presented based on the objectives of the study and the specific questions that needed to be answered by the research study. Conclusions was drawn based on these findings and recommendations will be presented for further investigations.

6.2 Key findings

6.2.1 Objective 1

- To determine the challenges that female school principals face in leading and managing schools in the Durban INK area.

The findings indicated that female principals in the Durban INK area still faced common as well as unique challenges because they were females, despite legislation and policies being in place that address the rights of women.

The findings of the study revealed that these challenges were most often related to human resource management within and outside the school, financial matters and curriculum management. Minimal challenges in school administration were found. The findings highlighted that human resources management presented more unique challenges for most of the female school principals, which pointed to prejudice, exclusion, sexism, gender stereotyping, discrimination in different forms, glass ceilings and glass walls, lack of support, non-compliance, and bad attitudes and behaviours being major challenges for female principals. Some of these challenges came from within the institutions, including the principals' female and male colleagues, as well as externally from the school governing body members, the labour unions, the community members and the senior officials.

The findings indicated that some female principals faced non-compliance and a lack of support from their school management teams, who needed to work closely with the principal if the school was to function properly. Some participants mentioned that several staff members had spelled out that they preferred male leaders, thus female principals had to prove daily that they were competent and capable of leading.

A factor that contributed to the challenges of female school principals was fear, because they felt they could be targeted. Some of the potential participants excused themselves from being part of the research study, as they feared that they could be victims of labour movements within and outside their schools. Some of the female school principals who were about to retire indicated that they could not wait to exit the system, as it was not friendly to female principals. In fact, one of the respondents

had just resigned from secondary school, few months after the interview, expressing that she had been under pressure and living with frustration that was beyond normal.

Other findings highlighted the critical need for support of female principals and those females who aspire to be principals by departmental officials. It was clearly indicated that new positions of school leadership were mostly given to males. The appointment of female principals was diminishing across various circuits, and the department officials are doing nothing about it. The findings proved that female school principals in the Durban INK area accounted for less than 30% of principals in both primary and secondary schools. Comments from some respondents indicated that to be a prospective candidate for a principalship position one needs to align oneself to a particular powerful labour union and be an active member, but that still could not be a guarantee of a position. For a number of female principals who were well qualified and aspired to school leadership encountered invisible walls and ceilings that hindered their career advancement and progress.

Another challenge found was the victimisation of female principals by labour unions, who chased them out of schools and principals received no protection from department officials. Various comments indicated that few principals received support from their labour unions if all went according to what they wanted. Other respondents cited no protection where sometimes, vicious and unprofessional actions of labour unions affected them, their concerns and difficulties were never taken seriously within and outside the schools.

Other findings were that some school communities had not accepted the ability of females to lead a school. Some school governing body members and parents still struggled to recognise and respect female school principals. Other common challenges came from scarce financial resources and poor infrastructure, which required the support of senior departmental officials and local businesses. These challenges were not unique to female school principals, but had a negative effect on the functioning of their schools. Some female principals mentioned that they felt that in some instances, male principals were favoured over female principals by the senior officials, they felt prejudiced and discriminated against when their opinions

are not taken seriously but when a male principal raised the same point then it was considered.

6.2.2 Objective 2

- To identify the competencies that are required for female school principals to effectively lead schools in the Durban INK area.

The study findings highlighted the success of some female school principals who practice good leadership and had proven themselves competent to take the lead in their schools. The findings confirmed that leadership required competent individuals with specific leadership traits and skills. Findings proved that a knowledge of education policies, related legislation and current issues in education, as well as the ability to apply knowledge at the right time to the right people and for the right reasons, were highly recommended for school leaders. Good interpersonal skills were also found to be critical, as these enabled female principals to relate well with subordinates and other stakeholders, with an understanding that success in leadership depended on working well with and through people. Professionalism in dealing with all issues was identified as one of the keys to successful leadership.

The results showed the importance of honesty and integrity in all dealings, as well as the ability to listen, think and reason things out before making judgements or comments. The findings proved that female principals needed the ability to understand that they do not have all the answers and solutions, but should be able to acknowledge their shortcomings.

Further, there is a need for female school principals to understand themselves, identify their strengths, and accept their weaknesses. The study suggested that female principals should avoid comparing themselves or trying to copy their male counterparts' leadership traits. Female principals who embraced their potential to lead using feminine traits of nurturing and caring, without compromising their standards and principles, succeeded as leaders. They further needed to effectively identify the strengths of subordinates to make up for the weaknesses they possess, understanding that their subordinates' success means their success. Resilience is one of the key competencies of successful leadership; failures and disappointments

exist, but should be taken as lessons learnt to improve thinking and the reasoning ability to inform future decisions.

6.2.3 Objective 3

- To identify strategies to assist female school principals to address the challenges they face in leading and managing schools in the Durban INK area.

The findings revealed that females might at times respond emotionally to some challenges, especially if they felt they were being challenged and undermined. Sometimes they personalised matters that required a professional leadership approach and may not be bold enough to be decisive, being too lenient on matters that should be non-negotiable. Other challenges identified were self-inflicted, due to different reasons such as a lack of self-confidence, inferiority complex and fear. Some females tried to copy men in their leadership styles, but this only made leadership more stressful for them, resulting in some resigning because they could not take the stress caused by the challenges.

The research study showed that a number of female school principals succeeded against all odds in leading their schools, because they used strategies that made them resilient and progressive. One of their strategies was to empower themselves with knowledge through advancing their studies, attending leadership and professional development trainings and workshops, reading and understanding policies, laws and regulations pertaining to education. The findings emphasised the importance of applying policies, laws and regulations without fear of being called names, and to be consistent in all encounters. Female principals who stood their ground for what they know was right, with humility but flexible to adapt to certain changes and growth, often won the confidence of their staff members.

The study findings indicated that female principals who were firm and acted decisively succeeded, but need to apply these strategies fairly and without prejudice. Leading by example and walking the talk, meant practicing what they expected from their subordinates. The need to respect teachers, parents and community members in all dealings was emphasised. The study indicated that

principals need to express themselves clearly with confidence, but to avoid arrogance. Effective communication with all stakeholders and being a good listener was important.

Findings showed that female principals needed to take control of their emotions and avoid reacting to challenges, which meant they need to think before they respond. If they encounter defiance and arrogance, female principals should avoid taking matters personally and guard against compromising their ethics and values.

In a number of success stories shared by female principals, the study found that having knowledge builds confidence, and doing things right consistently can solve huge problems. Most female principals have nurturing and motherly qualities, which should be an advantage that can be used for the support and care of the welfare of subordinates, without compromising standards and principles. As leaders, principals need to understand that they cannot please everyone, but need to listen, understand, empathise and respond clearly, ensuring that they are understood.

6.3 Recommendations

The research study revealed that after years in democracy, the Durban INK area still had a challenge to address negative attitudes towards female school principals. In fact, in some sampled areas, progress had reversed. Despite such a well-renowned Constitution, it had become clear that the Durban INK area had not dealt well with the imbalances of the past when it comes to female school leadership. The findings of previous studies, which were conducted well before democracy, were still the findings of the contemporary studies on school leadership, i.e. there had been minimal progress. This lack of progress has resulted in frustration, with some female principals leaving the system. The introduction of the Female Principals Support Programme (FPSP) in 2013 by the Minister of Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga was a positive gesture of support, which created a platform for female principals to voice their frustrations about school leadership.

The following recommendations to the Durban INK area could assist and support female school principals.

6.3.1 Induction programme

The importance of a formal induction programme for female school principals cannot be over emphasised. Schools are institutions where the principals have to manage and some lead different sections without prior formal training; therefore, there should be formal qualification or induction process for school principals in South Africa. Senior management support through the training and development of principals should be critical for successful service delivery. Female principals should be empowered to be strong strategic leaders and lead schools with confidence (Hu, 2015), thus an induction programme should be designed to suit the needs of female school principals and equip them with the necessary skills to deal with the challenges of school leadership.

6.3.2 Mentorship and coaching

There is an identified need for a formal mentorship programme for female school principals. In each circuit, there were experienced and successful female school principals, who should be identified and trained as mentors for newly appointed as well as struggling principals. The schools should be twinned using a supervised programme that will assist and grow them. These programmes should be designed to suit the identified needs of school principals. These encounters should encourage constructive discussions and applications of different tactics and skills. Furthermore, the mentees should be exposed to some of the qualities that are imperative to be an effective leader.

6.3.3 Modification of the system

The Department of Education should design and promote women-friendly schools. The communities should be educated on gender issues, bringing men into conversations about gender diversity. There also should be a change in recruitment procedures, as well as a review of the composition of interview committees and the powers of the panel in relation to the powers of the employer. It was found that some female principals were bullied and removed from their schools for unfounded accusations, therefore, there should be support from the senior officials.

6.4 Recommendations for future research

The research study only looked at the contemporary challenges facing female school principals and the strategies they use to deal with these challenges. It was a small sample in a small area. Only views of female principals were sampled. Future research should focus on interviewing men to share their views on the challenges of female principals. Only interviews were used which is one method of the qualitative approach. Other tools such as questionnaires could be used. A quantitative approach could also be used which will give a larger sample. The study could also look at the effect and contribution of labour unions as well as the SGBs in the employment process of school managers.

6.5. Conclusion

The main aim of this research study was to examine the leadership challenges that female school principals face in leading and managing schools in the Durban INK area. The purpose was to determine what these challenges are, and to identify the competencies required to deal with them so that the female school principals can effectively lead schools in the Durban INK area. The findings of the study highlighted the progress made since previous research was undertaken, identified contemporary challenges, and assessed which strategies will assist female school principals to address the challenges they face. The findings showed that female principals still face unique challenges of discrimination because they are females. This still occurred despite evidence that females could lead successful schools as good as their male counterparts and at times even better than them.

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LIST OF APPENDICES
Appendix 1: Informed Consent

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

MBA Research Project

Researcher: Thembekile Purity Ndlovu (0711101640)

Supervisor: Cecile Gerwel Proches (0312608318)

Research Office: Ms P Ximba (0312603587)

Dear Respondent,

I, Thembekile Purity Ndlovu, am a Masters in Business Administration student, at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: **"Leadership challenges facing female school principals in the Durban INK area"**. The aim of this study is to obtain the views of female principals on the challenges of leading and managing schools.

Through your participation I hope to understand the challenges female principals face in leading and managing schools, their best practices and success stories. The results of the interviews are intended to contribute towards addressing the challenges female school principals face and to create more positive views of the ability of female principals to successfully lead and manage schools.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this interview. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, UKZN.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in the interview or about participating in this study, you may contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above.

The interview should take about 45 minutes to an hour. I hope you will take the time to participate.

Sincerely

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

This page is to be retained by the respondent

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP**

MBA Research Project

Researcher: Thembekile Purity Ndlovu (0711101640)

Supervisor: Cecile Gerwel Proches (0312608318)

Research Office: Ms P Ximba (0312603587)

CONSENT

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

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

I hereby consent/do not consent to record the interview.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

This page is to be retained by the researcher

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

MBA Research Project

Researcher: Thembekile Purity Ndlovu (0711101640)

Supervisor: Cecile Gerwel Proches (0312608318)

Research Office: Ms P Ximba (0312603587)

Topic: Leadership challenges facing female school principals in the Durban INK area

Interview Questions

1. What is the name of your school?
2. How long have you been the school principal?
3. Have you been the principal at another school before this one?
4. When did you assume duties as the principal in this school?
5. How many learners are there in your school?
6. How many teachers and other staff members are under your leadership?
7. As the principal you are the accounting officer for the whole school functionality.

You are responsible for these divisions:

- School Administration
- Human Resource Management
- Institutional/Governance Management
- Curriculum Resources Management
- Financial Resources Management
- Infrastructure Management

Please rate between 1 to 5, the challenges that you face in each division:

1= Not challenging

2= Less challenging

3= Moderately challenging

4= Very Challenging

5= Most Challenging

8. In your very challenging and most challenging divisions, what do you perceive as the causes of these challenges?
9. Do male principals face similar challenges? Please elaborate.
10. What are your experiences and challenges in working with:
- The School Governing Body members
 - The School Management Team (SMT)
 - The Staff Members
 - The Community
 - The Departmental Officials
11. In your leadership experience, how have you dealt with:
- Gender stereotyping and prejudice
 - Discrimination of any form
 - Parental involvement
 - Sourcing financial help
12. What other leadership challenges have you experienced?
13. Based on the experience you have, what challenges do you think are more often faced by female principals than by male principals?
14. Out of the challenges you just mentioned, please share with me your success story in dealing with at least one of them.
15. In your view, what best practices should female principals employ for effective leadership?
16. In your opinion, what do female principals need to do or to know to address challenges directed to them because they are females?
17. What competencies / skills / abilities do female principals require to effectively lead schools?
18. How can attitudes towards female principals be improved?

Appendix 3: Gate Keepers Letter



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1004

Ref.:2/4/8/768

Ms TP Ndlovu
PO Box 1088
Pinetown
3600

Dear Ms Ndlovu

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES FACING FEMALE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE DURBAN INK AREA"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 18 April 2016 to 30 June 2017.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Pinetown District

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 18 April 2016

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa ...dedicated to service and performance
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004 beyond the call of duty
EMAIL ADDRESS: kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za / Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za
CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: WWW.kzneducation.gov.za

Appendix 4: Editors Letter

JENNIFER RENTON

PO Box 68648

Bryanston

2021

14th November 2017

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to confirm that I am a professional editor and proof reader and that I have edited Thembekile Ndlovu's dissertation, the title being: *Leadership Challenges Facing Female School Principals in the Durban INK Area*.

For any queries, please contact me on jenniferrenton@live.com.

Yours sincerely,

Jennifer Renton

Appendix 5: Ethical Clearance



28 April 2016

Ms Thembekile Purity Ndlovu (214580912)
Graduate School of Business & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear Ms Ndlovu,

Protocol reference number: HSS/DA60/016M

Project title: Leadership challenges facing female school principals in the Durban INK area

Full Approval – Expedited Approval

With regards to your application received on 26 April 2016. The documents submitted have been accepted by the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and FULL APPROVAL for the protocol has been granted.

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

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

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

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

Yours faithfully


Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Cecile Gerwel Proches
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Muhammad Hoque
Cc School Administrator: Ms Zarina Buliraj

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag 35000, Durban 4013

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3597/35504507 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4806 Email: ethics@ukzn.ac.za / www.ethics@ukzn.ac.za / ethics@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



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Appendix 6: Turnitin Report



LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES FACING FEMALE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE DURBAN INK AREA

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