

# **Exploring experiences of female Heads of Department in four primary schools in Pinetown South Durban**

**by**

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## **SUPERVISORS'STATEMENT**

This dissertation has been submitted with/without my approval

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## **DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

I, Silindile Mkhize, declare that this dissertation is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my late mother who left us at the crucial stages of writing up this dissertation. Please know that your kind love has impacted my life so much - you will always be a pillar of my strength. May your soul rest in peace.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am eternally grateful to the Lord for sustaining me during the time that I worked on this dissertation. There were times when I felt like giving up, but then remembered that I do have a friend and a helper who always gives me strength because he cares for me.

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For patient guidance throughout this study. You were wonderful mentor, perceptive advisor and just.

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For sharing your personal experiences and making the study possible.

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For your patience and understanding.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study reports on a qualitative study that sought to explore the experiences of female Heads of Department in Primary Schools. The study was carried out in KwaNdengezi, Pinetown South. It made use of qualitative methodology to obtain data using semi-structured interviews and observations as its methods of data collection. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants of the study, and the study sample consisted of four female heads of department in four primary schools, with whom the interviews and observations were conducted.

The main findings of the study revealed that female heads of department experience and internalize negative stereotypes and believe males do not listen to them and they also experience gender stereotypes and their impact when performing their management duties in schools. Other findings include the experiences related to dynamics of being mothers and teachers at the same time. Further the communication with teachers, teacher discipline and the role that gender stereotyped held by members of the society. There is the issue of unequal power relations between men and women within the schools, which is an underlying factor behind all the gender-based experiences of female heads of department in the schools.

Despite the fact that female heads of department encounter gender-based experiences in their management roles and responsibilities, they are engaged in empowering style of management by means of involving all the colleagues in the decision making processes.

The study concludes by recommending that female heads of departments require support from all the stakeholders of the school, and that the government should hold workshops and seminars to support them. At the school level, they should resist all attempts at being treated in a condescending manner, and become role models to other aspiring females to assume school management positions for effective management and delivery of quality education.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of female heads of department in four primary schools in Pinetown. The main aim of the study was to understand how these experiences affect the effectiveness of female heads of department, and the ways in which female heads of department could get support in effective school management. The study adopted a qualitative research design, and used semi-structured interviews and observation as its methods of data collection. The research design adopted and the methods of data collection proved to be very useful in allowing this study to obtain in-depth data relating to the objectives and aims of the study.

This chapter provides an overview of the study background, a brief history of South African education system and South African education policies related to gender (and women in school management). Further, the chapter foregrounds the rationale and an objective of the study, followed by the key research questions, and concludes by outlining the structure of the dissertation.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Prior to 1994, the education system in South Africa was based on patriarchal values, which generally supported the assumptions that males should exercise full control of school management (Grant, 2005). Most teachers and school managers who began their teaching careers under the apartheid regime were required to practise in settings prescribed by patriarchy (Mattson & Harley, 2002, p.285). This patriarchal view promoted male dominance and discrimination against females, especially when it comes to school management. This was bolstered by African cultures that support males' supremacy (Morrell, 2001) and propagate the roles of females in society as subservient and menial (Morojele, 2010). Thus, females have been associated with domestic chores such as being in the kitchen, being a housewife and taking care of children, while males, regarded as the heads of families, have been suitably poised to take on school management responsibilities (Gray, 1989).

The role of females has been perceived to be inferior to those of their male counterparts in society; such was the dominant discourses of gender, which created unequal power relations between femininities and masculinities (Anderson, 2006; Bhana, 2010; Morojele, 2011). Such constructions of gender have meant that females who assume school management positions have been likely to face some experiences and challenges that their male counterparts may not encounter, as the management positions have been perceived to be inherently masculine. Historically South African females have been socialised to be inactive and to be submissive to males, and this has included being socialised to defer power to males with regard to decision-making, and with regard to men's taking on positions of importance such as being the heads of department and school managers. As stated above, these factors have increased the likelihood that females might still experience the realities of gender

inequality, even when they have to carry out their duties as school managers in this new dispensation in South Africa, where the constitution, laws and education policies allow for females to assume management positions and responsibilities. Female heads of department might still continue to be treated inequitably as compared to the males in the same management positions (Ball & Reay, 2000).

When South Africa became a democratic country in 1994, many policies were formulated to protect females, especially in the workplace. These policies were meant to fight against the discrimination of females in all aspect, and to illuminate all forms of inequalities, including sexism and gender inequalities within schools. These policies aimed to make everyone in the country free, in particular women, and were also part of the programme to rebuild South African education. They were designed to end the oppression of females and promote equality (Chisholm, 2001). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996 was established as a founding pillar to ensure gender equity and the abolition of all forms of human injustice. It clearly states that everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection.

### **1.3. THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM**

The South African education system after 1994 is managed in a democratic manner, where everyone is meant to be given equal treatment. Females have increasingly been given the opportunity to manage schools. The White Paper on Education and Training encouraged an increase in the promotion of females to positions in school management. New legislation and policies have been introduced to foreground the education system and to bring transformation in the education system. These policies include the Constitution of the Republic of South

Africa Act No. 104 of 1996, South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, Gender Equity act of 1996, and Employment Equity act No. 55 of 1996 and Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998. These policies all aimed to promote gender equality, and thus to address the issues related to gender inequalities in education. They have assisted in getting rid of the education system of apartheid, in which females suffered discrimination and unequal treatment, and in which male domination was central to school management.

For instance, the Constitution, as the supreme law of the Republic Act No. 104 of 1996, ensures equality for everyone as well as the protection of the law. It contains the Bill of Rights as a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. This protects the right of everyone in the country and instils the values of democracy, human dignity, equality and freedom. Before 1994, the South African education system was shaped by the apartheid values where there was inequality generally, in terms of government, and specifically within education, in terms of appointments to management positions in school. Therefore the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 included provision to encourage gender equality in school management. It allows for the election of School Governing Bodies (SGBs), for schools to function and be managed by School Management Teams (SMTs). SGBs and SMTs have the responsibility to create a conducive school environment, and this should provide a friendly environment for the support and development of both females and males in management structures of the schools.

The Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1996 intends to achieve equality in the workplace; it promotes equality and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination and through the implementation of positive measures to redress the

disadvantages in employment experienced by black people and women due to the oppressive laws of the past apartheid regime. The South African education system is thus now based on policies that open gates for females to participate in school management. This transformation of education in the country requires a redefinition and conceptualisation of the concept of school management. The implications of the new policies are that the education system should consign to history all the gender stereotypes in relation to school management positions. The education system could support these policies by retaining and promoting diversity in management – where both females and males could be affirmed and supported with the sole purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of schools to deliver quality education.

Greyvenstein (1990) and Grant (2005) argue that despite the above-mentioned policies gender inequalities still exist in the education system. Fester (2000) also argues that while there are gender policies in place to protect the rights of female, the implementation process still needs more attention. Society generally and the education system in particular are still reluctant to accept females suitable for management positions, thus ensuring that females who become heads of department are likely to experience some gender-related challenges that might affect their effectiveness in carrying their management duties and responsibilities. This is what informed the focus of this study, as discussed in the following section.

#### **1.4 RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The interest of conducting this study grew out of my personal and professional experience. The minority social status accorded to females in society promotes constructions of females as incapable of effectively carrying out management responsibilities which are traditionally



males' responsibilities (Coleman, 2001). Female educators are discouraged from undertaking management responsibilities, and those who assume leadership positions are not supported by their peers or by the organisational structure of schools, which is founded on patriarchal ideologies that support male dominance (Chisholm, 2001).

I grew up in a community where it is believed that women's role is to be a housewife and nurturing. This ensures that women are discouraged from participating in the public life, including the assumption of school management roles. When I started working as a teacher, I worked in the school where the school management was dominated by male educators. The SMT consisted of five members: the female principal, male deputy principal, and three heads of department, one female and two males. In this school gender equity had not been addressed, and decisions were mostly taken by male managers. As a post level 1 educator I realised that during the staff meetings, the female principal was not acting her role as a principal to conduct the meetings and to make resolutions where necessary. As a result, educators were not recognizing her as a capable manager; similarly, female heads of department were not recognised as good leaders at all. Thus they were undermined in various ways, which supported the stereotype that females are not good managers. Decision making was done by the male deputy principal, and educators did not take any instructions from the female leaders.

Therefore I developed an interest in studying the experiences of female heads of department in primary schools which I believe could shed light on how women in management positions could be supported in carrying out their duties effectively. My interest in what would help female managers to retain their self-esteem, make them feel important and respected, and also get them motivated in their work as managers, was the main aspirations which motivated me

to undertake this study. Phendla (2004) advises that it is important to understand where black females are coming from, rather than just undermining them. Thus understanding the female Heads of department' gender related experiences would be one such way of trying to understand where they are coming from; this understanding could be used to find ways of supporting them for the effective management of the schools.

The study therefore set out to explore experiences of female heads of department in four schools in Pinetown. Usually in primary schools both men and women become heads of department, but women heads of department are not recognised as capable leaders either by other male Heads of department or by other educators (Chisholm, 2001). The focus of the study was to find out what female heads of department experience in their leadership duties in schools, and what we could learn from these experiences in order to support them in their roles as effective school managers.

The study was guided by the following three research questions:

1. What are the experiences of female heads of department in primary schools?
2. How do these experiences affect female heads of department' effectiveness as managers?
3. How could female heads of department be supported to enhance their effectiveness as managers?

This study employed a qualitative research design and used semi-structured interviews and observation as its methods of data collection. Four schools were purposively selected, and four female heads of department within each of the schools were randomly selected as the study participants. The study was based on such ethical considerations as willingness to

participate, freedom to withdraw from the study and so forth (see chapter three for more details).

## **1.5. STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION**

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter one outlines the introduction and background to the study, discusses policies informing the study, and sets out the rationale and personal motivation for undertaking the study. It also provides the objectives of the study and foregrounds the key research questions that guided the study. Chapter two provides the literature review on the position of female managers in primary schools and discusses feminist theories and their implications for females in school management positions. Chapter three focuses on the research design and methodology adopted by the study and the method of data collection. It describes the context of the study, the study sample and sampling procedures, ethical considerations, data analysis and the limitations of the study. Chapter four provides an analysis, interpretation and the discussion of the findings of the study. Chapter five provides a summary of the study's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides a review of the literature on the position and experiences of females in management, particularly within the context of primary schools. A literature review is a useful evaluation of selected documents related to a research study; its purpose is to provide the theoretical background and previous findings of research that are of relevance to the current study (Lie, 2008). In this study, the review of literature attempts to show what female managers (in this case, Heads of department) experience in their management positions in schools. As Chisholm (2001) has noted, the literature that exists around females in educational management is broad and diverse. Thus, this chapter draws from both the global and local literature to discuss dynamics of female managers' experiences related to assuming management positions and the execution of school management roles.

The focus of this study is on the experiences of female heads of department in the primary schools. Therefore since the study is conducted by a female researcher on females' experiences, this raised the centrality of feminist theories in this study. This chapter is organised to address gender-based experiences and school management; relationships between gender and management approaches; femininities and approaches to school management; masculinities and approaches to school management; gender-based experiences facing female managers; factors affecting gender-based experiences of female managers; and ways of supporting female school managers.

## **2.2. UNDERSTANDING GENDER EXPERIENCES AND SCHOOL MANAGEMENT**

### **2.2.1. Gender-Based Experiences**

Gender-based experiences are the experiences of people that are due to their gender. Due to unequal power relations between males and females in society, these experiences tend to undermine females and make them feel inferior. Gender-based experiences always promote the patriarchal view of male dominance in society and rise from the notion of gender (in other words, from the values and attributes of femininities and masculinities) (Anderson, 2005). Gender-based experiences are fuelled by societal perceptions or sets of beliefs or practices which promote a patriarchal system in society where females are expected to be submissive and males to be dominant in all aspects (Griffin, 1997). Patriarchy ordained men as the heads of families, and thus society tends to associate men with management (headship) positions, even in context outside the family, such as schools, for instance. As a result of this patriarchal system the impression that females are not either suitable or capable for management position is created. This notion stands at odds with the view of critical sociologists, for example Connell (1995) and Morrell (2001), who view gender as a social construction.

It is a result of social construction that females and males are socialised and categorised into separate, yet hierarchical social positions. For instance, females are characterised and socialised to be nurturers, submissive and gentle while males are characterised and socialised to be dominant, aggressive, objective and rough (Gray, 1989; Morojele, 2011; Kimmel, 2006). Hence school management responsibilities which involve authority and decision-

making are stereotypically associated with males; thereby exposing females who take assume such positions to gender-based challenges.

The concept of feminization is used to further enhance the understanding of gender-based experiences. Feminisation is a concept used in feminist theory to refer to those gender inequalities experienced by females whereby females are not treated equally as males in their management duties (Ball & Reay, 2000). According to Harman (2003) feminism is an intellectual commitment and a political movement that seeks justice for females and seeks to end sexism in all forms. In this study, feminism provides a perspective on the issue of females' subordination because of their gender, and on how live experiences of female heads of department in schools can be changed. Their experiences are thus acknowledged, with the intention of understanding what they are going through on their work place.

Feminism addresses the issue of gender inequalities and how this can be changed (Acker, 1994). Feminism offers a number of different theoretical positions that help explain females' experiences in education and education management in particular (Reynolds, 2002). However, the focus of the study is not about gender inequalities generally; rather feminist theory is drawn on to explore some factors that contribute to female managers' experiences in school.

Typically, females are perceived as not good managers because of their feminine characters. Pillay (2005) argues that people associate management positions as suitable for males. It is believed that female managers are more caring when they perform their management duties (Madlala, 2007). Makura (2008) claims that management is conceptualised as masculine; for females to be perceived as capable managers they need to undertake management duties in

the context of male hegemony. However, feminism places a high value on females and recognises the need for social change in order to provide safe and secure spaces within the schools for females to manage effectively (Acker, 1994).

### **2.2.2. School Management**

Previously many South African schools were operating under the system of apartheid, which was characterised by racial and gender inequality and injustice (Task Team Report, 1996). Control and management of the schools was authoritarian as the decisions were taken without consultation (Education Manual on Instrumental Leadership, 2000). After 1994, education policy was intended to make schools to operate in a democratic system where equality, human dignity, freedom and justice were promoted (South African Schools Act, 1996) (SASA). Therefore South African schools adopted a shift toward a school management process that consisted of methods and activities based on democratic principles. The responsibility of school management was changed in such a way as to reside with the School Management Team (SMT), which deals with all the aspect of management within the school by ensuring that all stakeholders involved are working in a conducive environment, promote diversity and protect every human right (SASA, 1996). The heads of department are members of the SMT. Their roles are summarised in the Department of Education Manual on Instrumental Leadership, (2000, p. 26) as follows:

- Assist with planning and management of the school.
- Participate in appraisal process so as to improve teaching, learning and management.
- Control work of educators and learners.
- Cooperate with colleagues.
- Meet parents and discuss with hem the conduct and process of their children.

- Participate in departmental committees

The above mentioned roles of heads of department indicate that carefully planned and executed management plan is necessary for schools to be effective (Dunford, Fawcett & Bunnett, 2000). Hence management in this study refers to the roles and duties performed by the heads of department. According to West-Burnham (1997) management concerns the effective implementation of the vision of the school. Bush and Middlewood (2005) see management as maintaining efficiently and effectively the current organisational arrangement, which means the Heads of department manage quality learning and teaching and as well as administrative processes of the school.

## **2.3 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN GENDER AND MANAGEMENT APPROACHES**

### **2.3.1 Femininities and Management Styles**

A style of management may be defined as a manner of working, an approach, a chosen method and a way to demonstrate work to be done (Oplatka & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2006). An effective manager needs to know what skills and dispositions are needed and how to bring human and other resources to the table in order to get the job defined clearly and done well. Reynolds and Young (1995) assert that there are a number of females in management roles in schools who develop management styles which are reflective of their background and experiences. Concurrently, Trinidad and Normore (2005) argue that female management styles are the cause of what females experience at work, and further argue that female managers mostly tend to adopt feminine management styles. For instance, Blackmore (1999) states that females in educational management prefer different management styles from men,



and that these are less hierarchical, more democratic, flexible, sensitive, open and more humane. Research conducted by Morris (1998) in Trinidad and Tobago's Education Institution also found that management styles adopted by female managers favoured a collaborative management approach.

However, some researchers have revealed that both men and females in management positions tend to follow management styles which are perceived to be masculine rather than feminine (Chisholm, 2001; Msane, 2007). Watson and Newby (2005) further claim that females in management are playing out their gender identity in oppositional and different ways to those realised in subordinate femininities. Collard (2003) shows that there is a growing awareness of gender as a key dimension of management, and this is in line with Tracy (1997) claim that men are more directive and bureaucratic managers and females are more collaborative and rational. There is a need for change in mind-set about gender stereotypes in management to a situation where both males and females see themselves as managing in ways that are nurturing, caring and collaborative (Coleman, 2002) in order to keep attune with the democratic principles as enshrined in most education policies in South Africa.

According to Eagly and Johannesen-Schimid (2000) and Sadker, Sakder and Klwin (cited in Oplatka & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2006) management styles of women were more effective than those of males in the operation of the successful schools, perhaps because they resemble the characteristics of transformational management. On the other hand, Oplatka and Hertz-Lazarowitz (2006) state that other writers maintained that neither a neither masculine nor feminine style of management is sufficient for effective management. Indeed, Eagly, Wood and Diekman (2000) argue that management styles for females and males are separated into

general categories of males and females in ways that do not positively affect the requirements for the effective management of the schools.

Female managers tend to choose verbal and non-verbal communication behaviour that is distinctively different from that preferred by their male counterparts (Becker & Levitt, 1999; Reynolds & Young, 1995). In addition Grogan (1996) conducted a research study of superintendents of American public schools in the North West region of the United States of America, which found that democratic and participatory management could not always be practised within existing hierarchal, bureaucratic structures which reinforce traditional, competitive and manipulative approaches to management.

### **2.3.2 Feminism and Approaches to School Management**

This subsection addresses feminist theories and their implications for school management. Feminism intends to seek justice for females and end gender inequality. Feminists believe that women are not treated the same as men, and that there is a need to promote justice and the liberation of women (Harman, 2003). This would have an impact in enabling effective school management.

#### **2.3.2.1 Liberal Feminism**

According to Reynolds (2002) liberal feminists believe that females' subordination is due to their socialisation. Liberal feminists believe that access to equality in education and school management position should be provided equally for both sexes. According to Wiener (as cited in Msane, 2007) any laws that inhibit equal rights of men and females to participate in

school management must be banned. Liberal feminists assume that equality for females can be achieved by democratic reforms, without the need for revolutionary changes in economic, political or cultural life (Abbot & Wallace, 1997). This theory is useful in this study because it encourages female heads of department to see themselves as capable, effective and good managers in schools. As Warren and O'Connor (1999) have stated, liberal feminism emphasises equality in all areas of life. From this perspective a feminist is a person who believes that females are entitled to full legal and social equality with men – and who objects to unfair and unnecessary gender-based experiences that female managers have to endure in schools, which their male counterparts do not experience. The liberal feminist favours changes in laws, customs and values to achieve the goal of equality.

The liberal feminist perspective has been very influential in setting an agenda for research on gender and for providing explanations of various forms of inequalities between males and females in the workplace (Alvesson & Due Billing, 1997). Calas and Smircich (1996) argue that liberal feminists strive for equal opportunities and present affirmative action as an important strategy to improve the position of females. However, it is worth noting that these equal opportunities are hindered because the grounds that underlie the division of labour are not gender neutral.

#### **2.3.2.2 Radical Feminism**

Reynolds (2002) argues that radical feminism see the oppression of females as the most fundamental form of male domination. Patriarchal power rests on the social meaning given to biological sexual differences between males and females (Weedon, 1997). Hence female managers' experiences are due to male domination and females have to perform their

management duties in the way that impresses men (or at least according to the dictates of a male dominated schooling context). Reynolds (2002) has noted how this puts female managers under pressure to practise their management in ways that are acceptable to men rather than developing their own unique styles that draw from female experiences. Radical feminism proclaims that females' oppression is due to their biological weakness, a view which is refuted by critical social constructionists, for instance, (Bhana, 2009; Morojele, 2010; Morrell, 2001), who see gender abilities as socially constructed human qualities. Reynolds (2002) argues that radical feminism emphasises males' control and domination of females throughout history and views the control of females as the most fundamental form of oppression, mainly based on the social experiences that females encounter as part of the socialisation processes.

According to Hartmann (1997, p.65) radical feminists view masculine power and privilege as the main cause of all forms of inequality. It argues that females' gender experience is a result of socialisation in which females are systematically dominated and oppressed. Radical feminism on the political level acknowledges and recognises uniqueness and separation of females (Soerensen, 1992). Mitchell (1996) states that radical feminism is responsible for the liberation of females and aims to challenge contemporary sexual relations and politics. Radical feminism pays attention to females' oppression in a social order dominated by men, such as in school management. This notion of shared oppression is intimately connected to a strong emphasis on the sisterhood of females, which could be harnessed to overcome some gender-based challenges that female school managers face.

## **2.4. GENDER-BASED EXPERIENCES FACING FEMALE SCHOOL MANAGERS**

International and local research on female managers' experiences revealed that females experience both success and challenges in management (Grogan, 1996; Blackmore, 1999). According to Hasibuan-Sedyono (1998), female managers experience success by working harder and getting support from their colleagues. In spite of the support they get from their colleagues, Blackmore (1999) in her study of females in Australia showed that females felt isolated in management by the 'boys' club'. This 'club' produced men with an opportunity to meet informally and provide support to one another. Soobrayan (1998) in her study of females' experiences in South African parliament revealed that females can feel isolated in management if men tend to use language in meetings which is related to sport and discuss social issues which are not related to the agenda of the meeting. Chisholm (2001) also points out that females feel isolated if they are not consulted; they need to be well informed about the issues at hand.

In South Africa there is a lack of female support in management, this proves to be a major barrier for female managers in performing their management roles (Greyvenstein, 1990). As Little (2000) states, female teachers who engage in management often feel isolated from their colleagues. Despite this, according to Hill and Ragland (1995) when more female managers prepare themselves for school management and acquire more experience in management positions, they become a work force that cannot be overlooked when recruiting school managers. This means that the more female managers take charge of school management in South Africa, the more their abilities as capable female managers would be recognised and of course, the more likely that the necessary support mechanism from department of education to enhance their effectiveness would be put in place.

Gold (1996) suggests that females in management seem to need encouragement in some form before they begin to consider a move to management. Chisholm (2001) claims that perceptions of female management includes cultural, social and traditional beliefs and that the lead to non-acceptance of their authority and lack of recognition. Furthermore, female managers have to play double role of being mothers and also managers at work as a result of the traditional beliefs regarding the roles of females in society. Normore (2008) states that female managers in schools experience neglect from students' parents. According to Madlala (2007) parents and some educators in schools have been resisting female management.

Drake and Owen (1998) challenge the stereotypes of what female managers are supposed to be, and contend that they should be given value to their own skills and given expression to their own concept of management.

## **2.5. FACTORS AFFECTING FEMALE SCHOOL MANAGERS**

The theory of gender stereotypes is employed to broaden the understanding of female managers' experiences. Despite the obstacles, females are highly motivated to participate in management positions and share power and gender stereotypes in society affect their expectations of their own performance (Chisholm, 2001). The stereotypes extend to the belief that females can be more confident to the field of primary education, being seen as being emotional, passive, dependent, nurturing and submissive, and these bolster the perception that females are incapable of being good managers (Wilson, 1997). Kelly (1996) affirms that females are thought to be caring, tolerant, emotional and gentle.

Chisholm (2001) argues that gender stereotypes affect female managers' experiences and these have a bearing on how female managers are supported in performing their duties, and that females in management are most likely to be submissive due to socialisation, dominant constructions of management as a male oriented field and gender stereotypes that tend to relegate female to subservience. Gender role stereotypes and socialisation have an influence on the way females perceive themselves and their capabilities in the work place (Coleman, 1997). According to Madlala (2007), the problems that female managers faced are partially rooted in the pattern of gender socialisation and beliefs system. In an attempt to cope with masculinised management responsibilities, females tend to adopt masculine traits associated with men to make them recognised as capable managers (Normore, 2008). When these stereotypes surface in a school environment they make it very difficult for females managers to exercise their management duties effectively; the stereotypes affirm that men are good managers. Similarly, Sharp (2000) shows that society's perception of gender in management constructs men as natural or born managers, thus connoting that females, as opposed to males, are likely to struggle in order to become effective managers.

Another factor is that the traditional literature on education and management has been and remains male dominated, and largely ignores and excludes females (Wilson, 1997). Malherbe (2000) argues that the differences between males and females were and are still widely assumed to be natural and hence not willing to change. The assumption is that females are born with roles provided by nature, and should be reared to fulfil those roles from childhood.

Many researchers have attempted to identify and categorise some of the barriers to the progress of females' careers in educational management (Coleman, 2001). These barriers

may explain why, even when females do achieve management positions within the school context, they are often classified into the same caring and nurturing roles. Hence the problems that the majority of female managers face in seeking promotion to management in schools are largely because their place is mistakenly still perceived to be in their homes (Tsoka, 1999). According to Schoeman (1998) patriarchal stereotypes frustrate a well-balanced interpretation of reality, to such an extent that even the oppressed become restricted in their thinking. There is a perception that female managers are not effective or good managers and they tend to lack self-esteem. De Witt (2002) argues that female managers lose confidence that then manifests in a series of mistakes. This eventually makes female managers accept their submissive position in society and presume themselves to be inferior and submissive (Acker & Feuerverger, 1996). As a result, as Baron (2000) emphasised, females tend to internalise these messages and thus undermine themselves, as a result of societal attitudes that in general construe females as inferior and therefore having to be submissive, in particular to males' authority.

Acker and Feuerverger (1996) further argue that often, as a result of socialisation and historical dominance of men over females, the feelings of lack of self-confidence, lack of competitiveness and the fear of failure become internalised. Females may lack confidence and lack faith in their abilities (Cubillo, 1999). But despite what other researchers write about gender stereotypes in relation to the lack of self-esteem for female managers, Schoeman (1998) notes that it has been recorded that female managers often do feel competent to be appointed in management position. What they require are appropriate support mechanisms within the schools in order to enhance their roles as effective managers.



## **2.6. SUPPORTING FEMALE SCHOOL MANAGERS**

Policies are regarded as a key driving force in providing support for females in management positions. The relevant legislation includes the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, the National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996 and the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998, while institutions include the Gender Equity Task Team. These policies set out the principles and the framework for non-discrimination, based on human rights protection, social justice and democracy (Jansen & Sayed, 2001).

When such policies are in place, females need to be well informed of them and immediate implementation needs to take place. According to Fester (2000), while the gender policies are in place, the implementation process is lacking and this still poses a challenge for females in management. The Department of Education Manual on Instrumental Leadership (2000, p.36) states the following as requisite areas/aspects of support for female managers:

- The support from all stakeholders of the school is required to uplift effectiveness of female managers.
- The establishment of support systems at all levels is needed to assist female managers to discuss their experiences with an intention to find solutions of how to deal with their experiences.
- There should be more workshops to equip female managers with new information on the education system and management skills required for effective management of schools.
- Female heads of department to be informed of all new programmes that are established to develop teaching and learning in schools and to help empower them.

These policies, as indicated in the Department of Education Manual on Instrumental Leadership (2000), aimed to promote fairness, diversity and human right protection. This included the guidelines for supporting females who assume school management positions. These policies encourage aspiring females to assume school management positions, and to adopt styles of management which support the values of gender equity. Policies are there but people need to understand and familiarize themselves with these policies. People who are the custodians of these policies need to make the policies accessible to everyone.

## **2.7. CONCLUSION**

This chapter has provided the findings of various researchers on females' experiences in management. Such research reveals that females experience both success and challenges in their management roles and duties (Graton, 1996). Some of the challenges that female managers face include non-acceptance of their authority, not being recognised, and insufficient support from the relevant education department. Female school managers also have to play double role of being mothers and also managers at work due to the traditional stereotypes and societal attitudes regarding the roles and responsibilities of females in society. Females tend to often feel isolated, due to lack of female role models in the education system. The review has found that female managers adopt a variety of management styles in order to cope with the gender-based challenges they face. This includes trying to mimic authoritarian and male-orientated styles of management, in place of females' preferred collaborative and democratic management styles (Madlala, 2007).

This literature indicates that, indeed, female school managers do experience gender-based challenges just because they are females, and that this adversely affect their effectiveness as

managers, thereby running the risk of supporting the dominant stereotypes regarding females' abilities to become effective managers. This present study wishes to contribute to the literature by revealing more specific dynamics of gender-based challenges that female heads of department face, and the support requirements that female managers require in order to enhance the effective management roles that females could play in the South African education system, and in schools in particular.

The next chapter addresses the research methodology of the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE STUDY METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The study sought to explore the gender-based experiences of female heads of department in four primary schools in Pinetown, Durban. The aim was to establish the effects of the heads of department' experiences on their effective management of the schools, the strategies they employed to manage and the support that the heads of department require in order to enhance the effective management of the schools when performing their duties. This chapter discusses the research methodology of the study, which in particular includes the research design, sample and sampling procedures, methods of data collection, ethical considerations, validity and trustworthiness and the procedures used to analyse the data. First, the chapter begins with the description of the context of the study and the research participants.

#### **3.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY AND PARTICIPANTS**

The study took place within Pinetown South area. It was conducted in KwaNdengezi Township, ePitoli section. In this area there are three high schools and four primary schools. The research study was conducted within four primary schools; in each school one female head of department was purposefully selected as a participant in this study. These schools are situated in a township that it is surrounded by rural inhabitants, who reside in informal settlements, locally known as squatter camps. The rural nature of this context makes for a situation where traditional chieftaincy is still being practised, and thus most teachers

(including the female heads of department) who work and learners who attend in these schools are from the surrounding rural areas where male chiefs have authority and decision making powers. These communities still hold in high esteem the traditional values of patriarchy, in which men are regarded as the head of families. As indicated in the previous chapter, patriarchal norms are deeply implicated in inequitable gender relations in schools and society, which tend to militate against effective management by female managers in the schools.

The staff members of the schools in this study include both male and female teachers. As the focus of the study was on gender-based experiences of female heads of department, the participants of this study were four female heads of department. Three participants were married and one widowed. The four heads of department who participated in the study were aged between forty and fifty five. Two of the participants had two children; one participant had three children and the other one participant had five children. All the four participants had a teaching experience of more than ten years, with the least experienced having twelve years teaching experience and the most experienced having thirty years teaching experience. Three participants had more than five years in the current position as heads of department, and one participant had three years. Two participants held a Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree, a four year preparatory qualification, while the other two held a Bachelor of Education Honours (BEd Hons) degree.

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

In research, the choice of the method employed is determined by the topic chosen and by the kind of data to be collected (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p.95). This study intends to explore the female heads of department experiences in the context of four primary schools. A

qualitative research design was adopted as an approach which was thought to be useful in investigating the central phenomenon (Cresswell, 2008) of this study. This approach is premised on the assumption that the study intends to unearth the live experiences of females and this has resonances with feminist research, which aims to highlight the experiences of women as a basis for policy change and social action. A broader aim is to promote the quality of women's experience in society and institutions, such as primary schools. As discussed in chapter two, feminist perspectives play a critical role and are appropriate in research methodologies that have a link to issues of gender (Jayaretne & Steward, 1991; Kittay, 1997). Maree (2007) states that the aim of qualitative research is to see the world through the eyes of the participants; the perspective of the research participants is seen as a valuable source of information.

Qualitative research involves the collection and analysis of narrative data; the researcher in this approach is interested in the lived experiences of individuals (Maree, 2007). Angen (2000) argues that qualitative research methodologies seek to learn about the social world in ways which do not rigidly structure the direction of an enquiry. Therefore a qualitative methodology was employed because it allowed the researcher to make use of several strategies to understand the gender-related experiences of female heads of department. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) the qualitative approach provides explanation and understanding of what is unique to participants, rather than what is general. The task of a qualitative researcher is to provide the framework within which the participants can respond in terms of their own meanings.

A good qualitative strategy is inductive in the sense that a researcher attempts to understand the situation without imposing pre-existing expectations on the setting. Berg (2001) points

out that the ultimate aim is to obtain an insight and understanding into the participants' life world. According to Maree (2007), qualitative researchers believe that the world is made up of people who have their own assumptions, intentions, attitudes, beliefs and values. Therefore, exploring the experiences of female heads of department as they reported them was a valid way of knowing their reality regarding the gender-based challenges they face as females in schools management. Such was the rationale behind adopting a qualitative research design to obtain the gender-based experiences of female heads of department as school managers. The qualitative approach allowed for the utilisation of the data collection methods (for instance interviews and observation) that provide intensive interactions between the researcher and the participants (see section 3.5 below for details about the methods of data collection used in this study).

### **3.4 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES**

A sample is a small section of the total set of objects, events, or persons, and normally such a sample constitutes the subject of the study (Cohen et. al., 2007). In this study, the sample consisted of four female heads of department, one from each of the four primary schools. Sampling is defined as the process of choosing the group of people to participate in the research study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). A purposive sampling strategy was employed in this study. Purposive sampling refers to the deliberate selection of a particular group of people to participate as respondents in the study (Cohen et. al., 2007). According to (Maree, 2007) most qualitative research is based on non-probability and purposive sampling, which means that if the research is conducted under certain situations such as limited time availability, or results are needed urgently, or there is not enough money available, or it is difficult to get the population, a non-probability sampling method is the most appropriate

(Maree, 2007) The choice of four primary schools was based on the fact that in these schools there were female Heads of department, and this was in line with the focus of this study. However, within the context of each school, random sampling was used to select one HOD who was willing to take part in the study. Female heads of department were selected as participants because they were the right population to give responses and it was trusted that they had appropriate information needed for the study (see section 3.6 below on ethical considerations and for further details regarding other criteria used to select the research participants in this study).

### **3.5 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

Bertram (2004) defines a data collection method as the method used by the researcher to show evidence of the research findings of the project. The researcher used interviews and observation as data collection method because the researcher wanted to obtain in-depth and true information. While all research methods have their strengths and restrictions, it is determined that individual interviews and observation are best suitable for this study, because they enable greater validity of the study (Maree, 2007, p.77).

#### **3.5.1 Interviews**

Cohen et.al. (2007) define the interview as a conversation between the researcher and the participants. The relationship between the participants and the researcher can develop into a partnership when they reach an agreement on the objectives of the study and the way these objectives can be achieved (Maree, 2007). It was based on this reason that I chose to use interviews in this study as I believe that the participants had something important to



communicate about their gender-based experiences as school managers. Conducting interviews allowed the participants to tell their own story about their experiences, highlighting key issues regarding the gendered dimensions of issues related to their experiences/challenges in managing the schools. Face to face conversations were adopted between the research and the participants. This approach was very useful because it also allowed the participants to speak freely when providing their own personal views about the interview questions, and to ask for clarity if they did not understand the questions and so forth.

The researcher used semi-structured interviews. Leedy and Ormrod (2001, p. 153) consider a semi-structured interview to be participant-centred, as participants are free to talk and the researcher mostly listen. Interviews were conducted with the aim of obtaining more data from the participants, and these were guided by the prepared interview schedule (see Appendix A for details). Participants were asked open-ended questions. According to Cohen et. al. (2007), open-ended questions allow the participants to speak without obvious limits, and the researcher could probe question for further information. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because the researcher wanted the research participants to feel free to develop ideas and to elaborate on points and views they had regarding the questions that the researcher initiated. According to De Vos (2002), the semi-structured interview is the most critical method used to obtain in-depth data about the study. Babbie and Mouton (2001, p.289) further state that “it is an open interview which allows the object of the study to speak for him or herself rather than to provide the respondent with a battery of our own predetermined hypothesis based questions”.

### **3.5.2 Observation**

Observation was employed as another method of data collection in this study. Observation is regarded as non-verbal assessment, where the researcher assesses the behaviour of participants without questioning them (Maree, 2007). Cohen et. al. (2007) further argues that observation in the study allows the researcher to gather data on physical settings and human settings. Observation data in this study gave the researcher an opportunity to gather live data from the actual situations of the participants. Observation was most suitable in the study when female heads of department chaired the staff and phase meetings; it allowed useful evidence of the actual actions the female heads of department took, and their experiences and challenges they encountered in real live situations when performing their duties in management.

### **3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

When conducting research it is important to consider the ethical principles to be followed. The following are the points the researcher considered when dealing with ethical considerations in this study. Firstly, letters were written to the Department of Education and the school principals to request for permission to conduct this research study in their respective schools. The following issues were addressed in the letters requesting permission to conduct the study:

- Personal details of the researcher and the supervisor were stated.
- The nature of the study and participation was described.

- Female heads of department who agreed to participate in study had to sign the consent form acknowledging amongst other things that their participation was voluntary and that they had a right to withdraw at any time when they wish.
- Participants were assured of confidentiality, anonymity (see Appendixes D and E for details regarding the processes for requesting access to the schools and permission from the participants).

The schools and participants were given pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. Interviews were conducted individually in case participants were not confident to give responses in front of others. Interviews were conducted at the places where individuals felt more comfortable, more relaxed and gave responses with confidence. A brief explanation regarding the purpose of the study and ethical issues such as anonymity, confidentiality and voluntary participation in the study was presented and discussed before interviews and observation took place. With the permission of the participants, all interviews were tape recorded for the purpose of transcription. Cohen et. al. (2007) argues that tape recording is the good source of keeping data safe. Lastly, the researcher also conformed to ethical practices by keeping data in strict confidence and making sure that the identities of participants were protected at all times. This research study was granted an Ethical Clearance Certificate by the University of KwaZulu-Natal (see Appendix F for details).

### **3.7 VALIDITY AND TRUSWORTHINESS**

Winter (2000) cited in Cohen et.al. (2007, p.179) states that “in qualitative data validity might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participant approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of

the researcher”. This researcher used semi-structured interviews and triangulated them with observation in order to ensure validity and trustworthiness. Maree (2007, p. 80) states that “engaging multiple methods of data collection, such as observation, interviews and document analysis, will lead to trustworthiness”. Therefore the use of more than one method of collecting data in this study increased validity and trustworthiness of the study. Validity in this study was also ensured by revealing rich description of the participants, by means of verbatim illustrations when reporting the findings of the study (see Chapter 4, for details on how verbatim illustrations have been used in this study). The researcher also took note of what was being observed and counterchecked this with the participants to ensure trustworthiness. This led to trustworthiness between the parties and it also helped to get the in-depth data from the participants. Denscombe (2003) argues that face to face conversation assists the researcher to understand the perspective of participants.

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis in this study involved transcription of the data collected into computer software and the translation into English language of all the isiZulu expressions that the participants used during the interviews (Terre Blanch & Durrheim, 2002). The researcher transcribed the interviews, thereafter the researcher gave participants to proof read and confirm the data transcriptions, including the translations. The researcher spent more than three months transcribing the interviews, searching for similarities and differences that emerged from the responses. After reading and re-reading the raw data, some themes emerged, which the researcher organised and presented by research questions (Cohen et. al, (2007). The data was analysed according to the key research questions of the study, and then presented in a way that answers the key research questions, based on the evidence collected from the interviews

and observation. Categories or dimensions of analysis emerged as a qualitative researcher comes to make sense of and organise patterns that exist in the empirical data (Patitu, 2000); this forms the basis for the findings of this study, as discussed in chapter four.

### **3.9 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS**

The study was limited by the availability of participants for the study. When the interview sessions had to begin all female heads of department were busy with the Annual National Assessment programme which delayed the time for data collection. Therefore it took about two months to be able to conduct interviews after approval was granted. Participants were very much concerned about privacy, and I therefore emphasised the safety and security of their responses and informed them about the use of pseudonyms. To ensure the freedom and confidence of participants, they were asked to choose their own places for research sessions. Some participants chose public places and this created a problem because interview sessions were disrupted by noise, hence transcribing data was a bit difficult, and I could have sought answers the way I like.

A limitation of any research study of this kind is that respondents may give responses that suit them or that are not true. However, as mentioned above, the use of observation as a method of data collection was meant to triangulate the responses that the female heads of department gave during the interviews, and therefore, this increased the validity of the findings of the study. My own conduct as a researcher may influence the respondents' responses, and I tried to manage this by encouraging the respondents to be as honest as possible because their names would not be divulged in any way, in all the processes of this research project. My study was limited to female heads of department in four primary

schools in Pinetown, which means that the validity of the findings of this study is confined to the female Heads of department who participated in the study and the schools in which the study was undertaken. Therefore, I cannot generalise the findings of this study to be applicable beyond these school contexts and female heads of department.

### **3.10 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the context of the study and research participants, the study methodology, sample and sampling and methods of data collection. It then described the ethical considerations, validity and trustworthiness issues in this study, data analysis and some challenges and limitations of the study. The chapter provided the explanations as to why the researcher chose a qualitative approach. It argued that the qualitative approach (with its data collection methods such as interviews and observation) allowed the researcher and the participants to interact, and enabled the participants to speak freely when responding to the research questions. The purposive sampling procedure used and the sample size of the study were discussed, as well as how the validity and trustworthiness of the research findings was ensured. The challenges included the general lack of time and freedom for the participants to speak their views freely within the school context. A major limitation of this study related to the scope of the study (only four female heads of department in four schools), which means that the findings may not be generalised as representative of the experiences of all female heads of department in Pinetown primary schools. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of four female heads of department in the primary schools. The previous chapter discussed the research methodology and design of the study. This chapter presents data and the analysis, and interprets the findings of the study. It begins with a presentation of the biographic data of the four female heads of department. To conduct data analysis, data was transcribed. This is followed by discussions of how the experiences of these heads of department were related to the dynamics of being mothers and teachers at the same time, to the issue of academic versus administrative responsibilities, to communication with teachers and to related issues of teacher discipline, as well as to the gender stereotypes held by members of the society. These factors posed major challenges to the respondents and thus intensified the difficulty that these female heads of department experienced in their school management roles. The chapter also addresses the effects on the school of having female heads of department, and some dynamics related to support that the female heads of department require in order enhancing their effectiveness as school managers.

#### **4.1.1 Personal Profile of Four Female Heads of department**

**\*NOMONDE** is between the ages of 36 and 40. She had 18 years of teaching experience. Her school is situated in a semi-rural area and is a well-resourced school; the school principal is a male. The total number of SMT members in her school is four, including two females and two males. The department she leads has seven educators with four females and three males.

**\*MOREEN** is between the ages of 45 and 60. Her teaching experience is 32 years. Her school is situated in a township area and the school principal is a male. The total number of the SMT members in her school is five with two females and three males. Her department has five educators, females only.

**\*NTOMBIZONKE** is between the ages of 41 and 45. She had been teaching for 19 years. Her school is situated in a township area, it is a very big school which offers technology and computer skills. The school principal is a female. The total number of the SMT members in the school is eight consisting of three females and five males. Her department has 15 educators, ten males and five females.

**\*KHOLEKA** is between the ages of 36 and 40, and had 17 years of teaching experience. Her school is situated in a township area. It has a media centre and computer hall (LAN). The school principal is a male. The total number of the SMT members is seven, with five females and two males. She leads eight educators with the number of five males and three females.



## 4.2 GENDER-BASED EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT

The biographical data of participants revealed that female heads of department have more females than males in their departments except for one participant, who is in a department which has more males than females. Despite the fact that males are fewer than females in most departments, female heads of department claim that there is a strong gender bias in the workplace. When they were asked to comment about their experiences in dealing with teachers in their departments, the following are some of the responses.

Nomonde said:

*Since there are males involved you find that some of them do not take orders from you because of age and gender.*

Kholeka responded as follows:

*The males are worse; they will ignore my instructions and say they cannot be instructed by a woman. I remember one male educator who told me that even at home his wife does not tell him what to do therefore who I am to tell him what to do. I find it really difficult to discipline educators, I wish principal (a man) can do it on his own all the times because they listen to him more than me.*

Their views emphasised that male educators deny the authority of female heads of department and do not recognise their seniority. Males believe that they have more power than females. When one analyses their views one can see that this gender stereotype makes female heads of department internalise the negative stereotype about themselves. They tend

to believe that males listen to other males - as Kholeka's response showed, she was of an opinion that the principal can deal better with male teacher discipline than she can.

#### **4.2.1 Being a Manager and a Mother: Dynamics Related to Dual Responsibilities**

The fact that women are perpetually required to perform domestic and nurturing roles at home, female heads of department in this study were found to be more nurturing while carrying out their management responsibilities. This indicated that the female heads of department found it challenging to switch to the requirements of an authoritarian schooling system due to their nurturing roles as mothers at home. They point out the challenge of dealing with their role as mothers and as well as teacher leaders; the other issue is that these women may be caught between the mothering of their own children and their professional role. And they also claim that learners lack motherly love from home. Hence they have to play dual roles in the workplace. For female managers to experience dual role of being a mother and a teacher it is because they tend to adopt feminine management style and see themselves as mothers at work rather than being managers ( Trinidad & Normore, 2005). My interview with the participants illustrate below:

Moreen said:

*Learners need more attention and love since others have no parents, hence I have to give them motherly love while teaching them.*

Kholeka had the following to say:

*Well as a mother first, I tend to want to do both teaching and being a mother to my learners. Most of them it's either they don't have parents or their parents are working far and only come back home at the end of the month.*

*Now if you think your teaching responsibility is to just stand in front the class and teach might mean fruitless exercise. However if you give yourself time to understand your learners' home background as well, it helps because you find ways of making them listen to you more.*

These experiences clearly show that female heads of department experience that while they are performing their duties of teaching as heads of department learners also view them as mother figures. They mention that they are pressured to perform both duties of teaching and mothering learners as this approach makes learners have more interest in their learning areas. Nurturing qualities are associated with females and their roles as mothers (Drake & Owen, 1998). This is supported by what I observed during my interview session at Mfundwenhle Intermediate School. A male educator sent a crying learner to the female head of department, because he had failed to find out the reason for the learner to cry. He then said to the female head of department: "Mrs, could you please attend this girl, she has been crying and she does not want to tell me the reason; maybe she will open up to you because you are a woman and you can understand the emotions better than men". Kelly (1996) affirms that women are thought to be caring, tolerant, emotional and gentle. This may negatively affect female heads of department in their teaching role because they will find themselves spending more time in trying to attend learners' emotions rather than teaching them.

#### **4.2.2 Gender Stereotypes and Issues Related to Feminine Management Approaches**

This subsection discusses the relationships between gender stereotypes (which generally affirmed men as good managers at the expense of castigating female heads of department). It denotes how the management approaches adopted by the female heads of department were navigated within this context, where women were perpetually placed on strict surveillance

which put them under pressure to prove their abilities as good managers. This was indicated by occasional refusal to take female heads of department's instructions by some male teachers who were influenced by stereotypical conceptions of women as subordinate to men. Such stereotypical conceptions even encouraged other female teachers to look down upon and to display reluctance to cooperate with some female heads of department. During the interview all participants in the study believe that as leaders they must work as a family, negotiate issues and be approachable to their colleagues. From the interview Ntombizonke said:

*What I have realised for the years I've been a head of department is that I learnt that you must be approachable; people under your supervision must be able to approach and respect you. The respect that they give to you must be a two way stream, you need to respect them so that they will respect you, and it will make things very easy for you when it comes to communicating with them.*

Nomonde added:

*...when there are a lot of people working together there is bound to be conflict but we are all adult; we get on very well. Most of us are not from this area; we come from different areas. We are like one family in that way, we get on very well, meaning communication is good between us.*

Moreen concluded:

*I work hand in hand with them; when the educator has a problem with the teaching of the learning area, we negotiate to opt for another suitable and comfortable learning area.*

#### 4.2.3 Experiences Regarding Communications with Teachers and Parents

Female heads of department mentioned that being too approachable sometimes causes problem when applying leadership roles and responsibilities. This is because some of the educators expect to be treated differently as they know that female heads of department are kind and understanding. Respondents were asked about their experiences regarding communication with educators.

Kholeka said:

*They expect me to treat them like how I treat my children at home, because you'll hear them saying oh as a mother you have to understand all our situations and be accommodative. That is very difficult to do at school, especially because there are learners involved and when you start the more understanding business, you will find that in your department teachers absent themselves and ask for early leaves frequently at the expense of poor learners who will be left unattended. So I follow Department policies as they are so that my motherly skills do not come in and disturb my work.*

These responses indicate that female leaders allow their colleagues to voice out their concerns and discuss issues that involve them; this is called an emergent style of leadership. This means that the participants in the study are leaders who are participatory, flexible, ethical, authentic, and connective and team orientated (Nidiffer, cited in Madsen, 2007, p.246). The findings are that participants tend to have good communication with their staff members. This is what one participant said: (Ntombizonke)

*Still in discipline, when the teacher maybe has done something wrong, as a leader you should not be boastful and chase people. You need to be*

*professional in whatever you are doing. So in disciplining, you need to call the parson and sit him or her down and makes him or her understand what her she has done was wrong or was not up to the standard that is required from the person. By doing that in a polite manner then the educator will accept whatever disciplines that you apply.*

However one participant mentioned that being too accommodative creates problems in leading the department as this might lead heads of department to act against Department of Education policies. This is how Kholeka commented:

*When an educator take early leave per day which makes up to the total of seven hours to a certain point, that particular educator have to fill in the leave form therefore it becomes a problem for an me as an head of department to issue the leave form to an educator because she or he will make me understand the reason for leaving.*

Female heads of department in the interviews mentioned that they find it difficult to discipline educators (both females and males) due to the historical background of females in South Africa (more details as reported above in chapter one). They reveal that there is reluctance of both female and male educators to take instructions from female heads of department. This is intensified by the patriarchal stereotype that males are better leaders than females. They were asked about their experiences on teacher discipline.

Kholeka replied:

*It is very easy for educators to blame females because they are not afraid of us; they tend to blame me for a slight mistake and be quick to say, now you are being too strict and use an iron hand, knowing very well that women are*

*having it hard even at home. Ayi-ke! (Yoh!) The males are worse they will ignore my instructions and say they cannot be instructed by a woman.*

Moreen added by saying:

*Sometimes you find that you have certain individuals that are just not willing to listen to you or do whatever is asked of them, and sometimes you find that you ask someone to do something or to stop doing something, then agreed on that but you find that they are not doing it.*

Nomonde concluded:

*Alright, you will find that as a female head of department there are challenges, especially from male educators, ahh I don't want to say they look down on you, it is just that in our culture a male is believed to be above the woman. So if you are put in a position to be in charge and you have to discipline and control them, you find that there is this resistance although they know that you are in charge and have to impose some authority on them but you will find that resistance. All in all it does not put me off, instead it encourages me to find more ways to make them understand that time has changed, woman are more powerful now.*

While I was at Thandimfumdo primary school I observed an authority of female head of department was undermined, when a male educator who arrived 30 minute late in the phase meeting which was scheduled a week before. When a female head of department who was also chairing the meeting tried to discipline him, he then responded in a rude manner and disrespectfully, as if communicating that female leader have no power of authority over him.

My impression was that the gender stereotype still exists in the mind set of this male educator. This clearly shows that women in leadership are still experiencing difficulties and are being undermined. Even though the South African constitution clearly emphasises that there should be gender equality, it seems as if this policy does not exist to some other people.

Amongst the participants, two female heads of department in this study mentioned that when chairing phase meetings they allow other staff members to be actively involved in decisions making for the phase; they use a democratic management approach. They indicated that they conduct the meetings in a relaxed atmosphere where everybody feels welcome and equal. They also believe that when they make educators important, educators take ownership of all decisions of the meeting which can build the sense of trust and respect in the departments they lead. However one participant reported that some educators always want to change the subject in the meeting and bring in issues which are not on the agenda. This is what she said;

*They want to be offensive at all the time; instead of discussing the issue they will want to tell you what to do. They also want to bring things that happen to other schools to our school; when I try to explain the reasons why I think it cannot apply to our school. They tend to be angry, I remember this other lady who just walked out of the class before the meeting was finished. Teachers also have a tendency of coming late to the meeting. It's more depressing when women do not give me support because I thought there will be on my side as I am a woman as well.*

The above responses indicate that while females are given the opportunity to lead, they are still not accepted and recognised as good leaders. For effective leadership and to ensure that



policies are implemented correctly, it is important to gain support from other staff members. Participants in the study feel that when parents come to visit the school, they expect to see a male figure in the leadership of the school. The parents' expectations are because of the gender stereotypes which follow from the historical background of females in South Africa. At home, males have been regarded as heads of the family and females as nurturers and to be submissive. During the interview Kholeka mentioned that

*Parents in this area still believe a woman cannot lead. You know when they come to school and they are being told to come and speak to me, I will solve the problem, they lose hope. Some will even ask if there are no male educators in the school because it's a men's issue.*

Ntombizonke responded by saying:

*Parents have a tendency of saying that they want to have a male colleague in that disciplinary meeting; because maybe they are undermining that female, she will not be able to control the situation.*

This implies that the females in leadership roles are still going to have difficult experiences in their day to day work if the community members around the schools do not accept them as leaders. Obviously this will lead to an unworkable situation as they are expected to act like men in order to be recognised. Moreen stated that, in society or generally, men are more respected than women. This is just the way society is constructed.

One of the participants revealed that she once had an incident in which a male parent had a problem with his son, who was absenting himself frequently from school. He came to school to report the case and he was talking to her (as the head of department). He thought he would

be attended by a male educator as if one needs muscles to solve the problem. He became very angry when he insisted that the female head of department must punish the boy so that he can stop the nonsense. Then the head of department explained to him that according to department policies they are no longer allowed to use the stick in schools. He said “eyi abafazi yini nje abangayenza ilunge” (what will the women do right!).

This incident proves that females are being undermined in their leadership roles and duties.

As this is what Kholeka said:

*I would say mostly being a woman is a challenging factor in my work because most of the times people tend to turn a blind eye to what I can do. They are more interested in who I am and I am then regarded as weak.*

When I probed as to why she was regarded as weak, she then answered:

*I really feel it is unfair; we have moved away from the era where women were only nurturing children, staying in the kitchen and wearing aprons every day. We are mothers at home and professionals at work who needs to be equally treated with our male colleagues, it is only fair.*

#### **4.2.4 Experiences Related to Extra-Mural Activities and Policy Implementation**

In schools, formal and informal activities take place. From the interview conducted with four female heads of department it has emerged that they all take part in extra and co-curricular activities in schools. When participants asked about their participation in extra-mural activities, the responses were as follows:

Nomonde:

*Ehh! The extra and co-curricular activities are a very important aspect in the school, because you cannot expect children to learn all the time. I make sure that in my phase I organise educational tours when learners get a chance to go out of the place and see other places such as the beach, radio stations. We play sport with other schools to play different sports codes. I am involved in volley ball and net ball, but I do assist in netball too.*

Ntombizonke:

*Extra and Co-Curricular: as you know that it is not enough to teach the learner only the book. Even extra and co-curricular activities are one way of teaching the learner because you have to teach them in totality, mental, physically and otherwise, so dealing with extra and co-curricular has been easy for me because I have been promoting it to my teachers. I'm into sport a lot as I am a volley ball coach, so to my teachers I am setting a good example in participating in this extra and co-curricular activities even with cultural activities, I'm so involved in those activities. I feel that learners have to be taught these activities. You may find that one learner is not good in class but can excel in those activities which do not mean that the learner has failed to be part of the school.*

However the other two participants revealed that even though they participate in extra-mural activities, there are bound to be challenges. Moreen mentioned that extra and co-curricular activities help to develop learners physically and mentally. Learners do like them but they do not like to stay after school, because of some transport problems they encounter, so they are afraid to walk home alone when others have gone. So if you are involved in the sport code

they want to use teaching and learning time for sport which is impossible. Kholeka stated that she does not have much experience for extra-mural activities because mostly the males in her school are the ones who are leading in that aspect. She mentioned that even there males still believe they can handle sports better than females. She further said that because of the challenges that she has she just let it go because she does not have time to be on the grounds. During extra-curricular activities she finds time to be in her office and do her admin work. The other thing is that most of the times sports happen on weekends and after school while she is expected to be taking care of her children. The study further illustrates how the schools activities are generally not friendly to women's circumstances. The lack of friendliness serves to undermine women's abilities to be involved in the extra mural activities and it is a tactical means of excluding them from participation.

### **4.3 FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT IN SCHOOLS**

#### **4.3.1 Positive Factors Associated with Female Heads of department**

The female heads of department emphasised the main factors which contribute effectively in their management roles in the school. When they were asked to give specific examples that explain the ways in which their experiences affect their responsibilities positively, their responses revealed that they believe in getting along with people, having good human relations, understanding educators circumstances and leading by example. They also indicated that their motherly instinct of being able to sit down and listen to others assists them to perform their duties successfully. To quote from the interviews:

Ntombizonke said:

*The first factor that I think will count will be dedication, if you are not dedicated as a manager you will not succeed in everything that you do. Also time management plays a very important role; you should manage your time effectively. Planning as well, if you did not plan you are like a headless chicken who does not know what to do and when to do it, thus ending up failing in whatever you trying to do. The other factor will be competence; if you are not competence I do not think you will succeed as a manager. Another factor is having good human relations with the people you are working with, being your colleagues, it can be your subordinate, your superior but you need to have very good human relations. You also possess professionalism in whatever you do and be exemplary as I have mentioned earlier, so that all the people that you are leading they should learn from you. Understanding of the learners' and educators' difficulties, differences and behaviours will help you to know what intervention strategies to use when coming across with such problems. The most important one is accountability, you should be held accountable in your phase; that will play a very important role.*

Nomonde responded:

*I think one factor is my personality, I get on well with most people, and I'm very outgoing and honest. So if something is not good I just say it, if someone has done wrong I just tell him or her. I do not beat around the bush. If the learners get out of the hand I discipline him or her.*

Moreen concluded by saying:

*I think the factors would be communication with all people, this positively can help.*

The above responses show that female managers are strong and always work with dedication, apply good management skills to try and assist them to manage their departments well. They all believe that being professional is a major factor that contributes when performing their responsibilities as managers. However, as indicated above, some aspects such as devaluing perceptions of women would need to change in order to support the strengths that women bring to the school management as heads of department. Yet their feminine approaches to management such as being participatory, democratic and collaborative benefits the schools. This affirms the South African constitutional principles and South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996 that are based on human rights, social justice as well as human dignity. It was stated earlier that learners need to be nurtured and loved as minor children; therefore having female managers in schools benefits those learners because they get care from them. Mostly professional teachers are involved in schools who has expected authority of knowledge which they apply in order to produce quality learning and teaching in schools.

#### **4.3.2 Negative Factors Associated with Female Heads of Department**

Despite the fact that female heads of department feel that there are factors that positively contributes to their leadership experiences, on the other hand there are dynamics that tend to disadvantage females, if they find themselves caught in between being a leader at school while being expected to be submissive at the same time. Ntombizonke said that female leaders' competence can always be brought into question by everyone around you. People around will always want you to prove yourself, even beyond what you are competent to do. So Ntombizonke find that as a problem.

Negative factors that contribute to the experiences of female heads of department include resistance from educators. They also declared that they have to work triple hard in order to prove the point and their competence can always be questioned. When I asked why their competence is always in question Ntombizonke had this to say:

*As a head of department people tend not want to recognise your potential, they are characterised by PHD (the 'pull her down' syndrome). Sometimes they feel threatened by your existence.*

Kholeka said:

*The fact that one has to work hard to balance home chores and professional work, this makes people always wonder how you manage to balance your work duties and home duties.*

Nomonde concluded by saying:

*The only thing that makes the situation worse is that male educators and parents still believe that females are not capable of disciplining learners and also educators, they feel that females have no power in discipline.*

While female heads of department experience negative effects in their responsibilities as managers, they claim that they are not discouraged. They believe in working hard, furthering their studies and attending numerous workshops to develop themselves. Schools benefit from advantages of masculine approaches such as authoritarian, controlling, dominating and autocratic; this is because schools operate on a timetable where it requires certain things to be done on time. Therefore it may be disadvantageous to rely on participatory feminine approaches on this context. This requires female heads of department to be flexible in their use of management approaches

## 4.4 SUPPORTING FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT

### 4.4.1 Dynamics Related to School-Based Support

It was noted in the findings that female heads of department need support from educators; they expect them to be co-operative so that the department will run smoothly with harmony.

When asked about the support needed Moreen said:

*I wish to encourage educators to teach our nation, to go beyond the work given, get help from well-resourced schools and try to find out from well-developed schools with good results how to go about to fulfil your calling. And for teachers to respect anyone who is above them equally, for example not to only take authority from male managers but also to take and respect the authority that comes down from the female managers.*

The above response reveals that female managers see a need for other educators to recognise and respect their authority. They also need to love their work so that the departments will be managed smoothly. Female heads of department need to learn to strike a balance between being too democratic in their approach, in line with the authoritarian demands of running the schools. This will ensure that they are able to meet the deadline and to assure the quality of teaching and learning in the schools.



#### 4.4.2 Dynamics Related to Support from the Department of Basic Education

All participants in the study mentioned that the Department of Education should give them support that will assist them to perform their duties effectively. This is what they have to say with regard to the question based on the support needed.

Nomonde said:

*Although I cannot say ho specifically is responsible but the department should organise more workshops and ensure that all schools receives the invitation on time. More communication channels between the schools and the department are vital. Even the SEM does not visit the schools to find the experiences female managers, especially heads of departments, encounter.*

Moreen added:

*The Department of Education should improve the communication channels with the schools.*

Ntombizonke supported:

*As I have said, all the role players in the institution should give the support.*

Kholeka concluded:

*The Department of education should give support to all female managers in schools.*

The above responses leave the Department of Basic Education with the responsibility to support female heads of department in schools. This means that the Department has to organise workshops to support managers and always check problems that female heads of department encounter, and then assist them in dealing with those problems. If ever there are

policy changes, the Department of Education should inform managers and guide them on how to apply the transformation and provide enough resources through seminar.

#### **4.4.3 Dynamics Related to Support from the Community**

Schools are surrounded by people in the community, hence participants in the study mentioned that the broader society has to provide support and empower them as female managers. The community members have to do away with the belief that females are not good leaders. They have to act as changed agents, have faith in them and give them support.

When participants were asked about the support, some of their responses were as follows:

Moreen said:

*I encourage the parents to change the way of thinking, because some still think that you can only have males in the leadership of the schools or in any sort of leadership, so they do not find it easy to respect females who are in the leadership positions.*

Kholeka supported this:

*Women who are in top management need to come down to us and empower us, share ideas with us as to how they manage challenges, some of us are dying because of stress. That's all I can say.*

The responses reveal that community member have impact in what female heads of department experience in schools. The community members should attend the school meetings frequently so that they will know what is going on in schools around them. There is a need for them to become well informed about the management levels in a school and know

that anyone can manage regardless of gender and do away with the notion that only males can manage.

## **4.5 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I have presented my analysis of the data, and interpreted the findings of the study. The in-depth interviews assisted in identifying the experiences of female managers in schools and the participants responded with confidence. The following themes were discussed: the dynamics of being mothers and teachers at the same time, communication with teachers and related issues of teacher discipline, as well as the gender stereotypes held by members of the society. These factors affected female heads of department experiences of their management roles. The findings also reveal that although female heads of department experience some challenges in performing their duties, they are not discouraged; instead they see themselves growing and displaying professionalism in the work place.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The study sought to explore the experiences of female heads of department in four primary schools in Pinetown South, Durban. It aimed to find out what are their experiences when performing their management duties, and the implications of these experiences for the support that female heads of department require for effective school management. The researcher was influenced by her personal experiences, as a school teacher which exposed her to gender stereotypes. Female heads of department are faced with similar stereotypes in their respective schools. In this chapter I provide a summary of the study findings and recommendations for policy and practice in supporting female heads of department for effective school management, as well as some recommendations for further research in the area of this study. First, I begin with a reiteration of the key research questions that guided this study.

The study was guided by the following key research questions:

1. What are the experiences of female heads of department in schools?
2. How do these experiences affect the effectiveness of female heads of department as managers?
3. How could female heads of department be supported to enhance their effectiveness as managers?

To answer these questions the study adopted a qualitative case study design. The study employed semi-structured interviews and observation with four female heads of department in four schools situated in Pinetown South, Durban, as its methods of data collection.

## **5.2 Summary of the Findings**

Firstly, the analysis employed reveal that the main findings are based on experience related to gender stereotypes and their impact on female heads of department when performing their management duties in schools. The findings of the study indicate that female heads of department experience internalise the negative stereotype about them and tend to believe that males listen to other males.

Secondly, their dual responsibilities are challenges for female heads of department. This mean while they perform their management and teaching duties they play mother figures to learners. The female heads of department are expected to understand their learners' home background so as to find the ways to draw interest of learners in different learning areas.

Female heads of department find it difficult to discipline educators (both females and males) due to the historical background of females in South Africa and the associated stereotyping of men as the disciplinarians. The data reveals that both female and male educators are reluctant

to take instructions from female heads of department. This is caught up in the patriarchal stereotype that males are better leaders than females.

Thirdly, female heads of department are exposed to unworkable expectations, as they are expected to act like men in order to be recognised.

Fourthly, female heads of department felt undermined just because they are females, and not because of their not being able to perform their management responsibilities. The findings are also show that when parents come to visit the school, they expect to see a male figure in the management positions of the school. The implication of these findings is that female heads of department are trapped in traditional roles.

Despite the fact that female heads of department encounter a variety of gender-based experiences in their management responsibilities, the study shows how they engaged in empowering management strategies which included involving all the colleagues in the decision making processes, in the spirit of collegiality. The findings of the study imply that these female heads of department do not allow PHD (the 'pull her down' syndrome) to discourage them; instead they find ways to prove that they are effective managers. Female heads of department use an empowering style of leadership, being approachable and encouraging staff members to work as team and make decisions that will lead to the success of the school.

## **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.3.1 Implications for Policy and Practice**

The study revealed that there are many reasons that contribute to the experiences of female heads of department. The main finding of the study is that female heads of department experience gender stereotypes and their impact when performing their management duties in schools. The following are recommendations which are being highlighted as positive solutions to fight against gender stereotypes that exist in schools.

- The support from all stakeholders of the school is required to uplift effectiveness of female managers.
- The establishment of support systems at all levels is needed to assist female managers to discuss their experiences, with an intention to find solutions of how to deal with their experiences.
- There should be more workshops to equip female managers with new information on the education system and the management skills required for effective management of schools.
- Female heads of department need to be informed of all new programmes that are established to develop teaching and learning in schools and to help empower them.

- There is a need for community members to become change agents and to move away from the idea of traditional hierarchy. This will allow women to eliminate the gender stereotypes that exist in schools.
  
- The Department of Basic Education should put emphasise on policies designed to address gender equity in schools.

### **5.3.2 Implications for Further Research**

It is evident from the study findings that the policies put forward to ensure that everyone is treated equally in the work place, and to give the majority of females a chance to participate in school management without any discrimination, are being ignored. The following is recommended for further research:

- How the female heads of department' experiences affect them outside the work place.
  
- The extent to which female heads of department have belief in themselves in their duties as female managers.
  
- Addressing the issue of motivation, meaning if they are still motivated enough to apply for higher positions.



## **5.4 CONCLUSION**

The study's aim is to explore the experiences of female heads of department in primary schools in Pinetown South Durban. The research data answered the following critical questions: What are the experiences of female heads of department in schools? How do these experiences affect female heads of department's effectiveness as leaders? And how could female heads of department be supported to enhance their effectiveness as leaders? Data for this case study was generated through semi-structured interviews and observation. The findings of the study are that female Heads of department experience dynamics related to the gender stereotypes, the dynamics of being a mother, teacher and the manager at the same time, gender-related communication with teachers, and gender dynamics related to teacher discipline. Further to that female heads of department had to employ different management styles which are perceived as feminine style of management.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

#### **A. Biographical information**

- i) How old are you?
- ii) How many years of teaching experience?
- iii) Is your school Principal is a Male OR Female
- iv) What is the total number of SMT members in your school?

Number of female

number of males

- v) What resources does your school have?

#### **B) Experiences of female HOD**

1) Comment on your experiences regarding the following responsibilities:

- Teaching
- Extra and Co-Curricular
- Personnel
- General/ Administrative
- Communication with educators and parents

2) What factors do you think account for your experiences regarding the above mentioned responsibilities?

3) Effect of experiences on Heads of department' effectiveness

i) Give specific examples that explain the ways in which the above mentioned experiences affect you and your responsibilities positively as :

- A female
- HOD
- A person

Give specific examples that explain the ways in which the above mentioned experiences affect you and your responsibilities negatively as :

- A female
- HOD
- A person

ii) With regards to the experiences that affect you negatively as an HOD, what factors within the school that ease / worsen this dynamic?

iii) What requirements do you think are needed to support your effective role as a HOD?

iv) Who should provide this support?

v) What else would you like to share regarding your experiences as a HOD in this school?

## **APPENDIX B**

### **OBSERVATION SCHEDULES**

I am going to look at :

- i) Participation of female HOD in the SMT and Staff meetings
- ii) Decision making regarding the issues discussed
- iii) Who gains more respect during the meeting
- iv) What kind of extra co-curricular activities the female Heads of department engage in and some of their challenges regarding the above.

## APPENDIX C

P.O. Box 1205

Tongaat

4400

12 August 2010

The Director General

Department of Education

Truro House

17 Victoria Embankment

DURBAN

4000

Dear Sir

### **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PINETOWN SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOLS.**

My name is Silindile Mkhize. I am doing a Masters degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, specialising in Gender and Education. The requirement towards completion of this degree is that I should conduct a research study that relates to my research focus.

I hereby request permission to conduct research in Pinetown South Primary Schools. My research focuses on experiences of female Heads of department in the primary schools. The aim of my project is to find out the experiences of female Heads of department in the primary schools and give understanding of how these experiences affect their effectiveness as female Heads of department.

Issues of confidentiality and anonymity will be observed. Participation will be voluntary and they will be allowed to withdraw at any stage from the interview should they wish so.

For more information about my project you can contact my supervisor, Dr Pholoho Morojele, and his contact details are as follows:- (031) 2603432(W), 071 0410352(Cell), address: Private Bag X 03, Ashwood, 3605. Email address: morojele@ukzn.ac.za

I promise to share the result of this study with the Department of Education.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

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Silindile Mkhize



## **APPENDIX D**

### **Letter of informed consent to research participants**

P.O. Box 1205

Tongaat

4400

12 August 2010

Dear Madam

My name is Silindile Mkhize, as my contact details are 0732300748. I am a Masters Student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Edgewood Campus. I am conducting a research as part of my project in my studies. The title of my study is to investigate experiences of female Heads of department in primary schools. The aim of this project is to find out the experiences of female Heads of department in the primary schools and give understanding of how these experiences affect their effectiveness as female Heads of department.

I request you to kindly participate in this study. You will be required to participate in individual interviews of approximately 40 minutes. We will both discuss the date and the place where the interview will take place. I will also observe School Management Team and Staff meetings with your permission.

Anonymity will be observed to secure your privacy in this study by using pseudonyms in the report. Your participation will be voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any stage if you feel that you no longer want to be part of this study. Information discussed during interviews

will be recorded on the tape recorder and will be kept in a safe place; no one will have access to your responses besides me and my supervisor.

For more information about my project you can contact my supervisor Dr Pholoho Morojele, and his contact details are as follows:- (031) 2603432(W), 071 0410352(Cell), address: Private Bag X 03, Ashwood, 3605. Email address: [morojele@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:morojele@ukzn.ac.za)

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

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Silindile Mkhize

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## DECLARATION

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.

.....

GNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Letter of Request to Conduct Research: School Principals**

P.O. Box 1205

Tongaat

4400

12 August 2010

The Principal

Nkosenye Primary School

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Dear Sir/Madam

#### **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL.**

I hereby request permission to conduct a research in your school for academic purposes. The study will involve interviewing female Heads of department and observing School Management Team and Staff meetings.

I am currently registered for a Masters degree specializing in Gender and Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The requirement towards completion of this degree is that I should conduct a research that relates to my research focus. My research focus is on

experiences of female Heads of department in the primary schools. The information received will be strictly confidential and anonymous.

You are free to contact my supervisor Dr Pholoho Morojele. His contact details are as follows:- (031) 260 3432(W) and 0710410352(Cell). Address: Private Bag X 03, Ashwood, 3605. Email address: morojele@ukzn.ac.za

Your corporation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

---

Silindile Mkhize

## APPENDIX F



29 November 2010

Ms S Mkhize  
School of Education  
EDGEWOOD CAMPUS

Dear Ms Mkhize

**PROTOCOL: Experiences of female Heads of Department: A case study of 4 female HOD's  
in Primary schools**

**ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/1364/2010 M: Faculty of Education**

In response to your application dated 25 November 2010, Student Number: **201504391** the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been given **FULL APPROVAL**.

**PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.**

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

Yours faithfully

  
.....  
**Professor Steve Collings (Chair)**  
**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

SC/sn

cc: M Pholoho (Supervisor)  
cc: Mr N Memela