

Experiences of Principalship: A Case Study of Two Female Leaders of Suburban High Schools in Gauteng.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the experiences of two women principals in leading suburban co-educational high schools in Gauteng province, South Africa. It sought to explore and understand the experiences of two women principals and their leadership roles through the consideration of their challenges, their successes and their leadership styles as demonstrated in their school contexts.

Gender and leadership is an area which remains under-researched in both the South African and the national and international educational leadership fields (Faulkner, 2015; Moorosi, 2010 & 2012). Also in South Africa there is very little knowledge of the experiences of women leading suburban co-educational high schools formerly known as Model C schools (Lumby & Heystek, 2011). This context is particularly interesting and important considering the dramatic change in demography of these schools after 1994, which impacts upon how women principals, in particular, experience and lead these diverse schools and their very diverse communities. As the schools now have heterogeneous ethnic and cultural populations, principals face many different challenges in leadership. In a very patriarchal and traditional culture, which typifies South Africa, it was considered an important aspect of the research to understand the experiences of women specific to these under-researched school contexts.

The research methodology chosen as the most appropriate is a qualitative, interpretivist approach which uses a case study. The two high schools in the case study were purposefully sampled because they were led by women and they were former Model C schools in Gauteng, to the west and north, which under the apartheid regime served only white learners and communities in former affluent white suburban areas. The participants in this study were the two women principals of the two suburban schools. The research instruments chosen were a semi structured questionnaire, loosely based on Coleman's questionnaire from her study of UK head teachers (2001), and follow-up probing interviews to gain more in depth responses to key areas of interest. The research was underpinned by a theoretical framework that contends that context plays a significant role in the two women's experiences and how this might impact upon challenges to their leadership as women, (Christie & Lingard, 2001). Cubillo and Brown (2011) posited in their research that context is critical to women's experiences of leadership, even more than is the case for male leaders.

Evidence from the data collected and analysed in addressing the research questions shows that the two women principals were negatively affected by entrenched patriarchal attitudes within the communities they served. Contexts of former Model C schools played a pivotal role in the two women's experiences as they employed the leadership styles they considered as the ones that best fitted the situations imposed by diverse ethnic and cultural communities. The misconception about former Model C schools, as still being sites of affluence and privilege, also contributed to their challenges, given the demographic changes that contradict this assumption. Despite these challenges, the two women remained strong with the determination to lead successfully 'against the odds' (Coleman, 2001). Family support, work experience, qualifications, confidence and their leadership styles also contributed to their success.

This study recommended the need for further research through a longitudinal and wide ranging study of women's experiences of leadership and specifically on the nature of leadership in these under-researched co-educational former Model C high schools.

Keywords

Gender and leadership, Principalship, South African High Schools, Discrimination, Patriarchy, Glass Ceilings and Walls,

Declaration

I hereby declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university. I have used books, journals and the internet as sources of information that have been carefully referenced through the required referencing conventions.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Otilia Fortunate Chiramba

February 2016

Dedication

- ❖ To my late mother, Paridzirai Marufu and my late father, Onias Fayabo Marufu. They valued education and would have been proud of me. It is because of their early sacrifices and encouragement that I am what I am today.
- ❖ To my late father in law, Zephania Chiramba, I appreciated the fatherly love he gave me.

May their souls rest in eternal peace

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Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

DoE: Department of Education

SGB: School Governing Board

UK: United Kingdom

ACE: Advanced Certificate in Education

BA: Bachelor of Arts

HOD: Head of Department

SMT: School Management Team

GDE: Gauteng Department of Education

1. CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

This research seeks to explore experiences of women principals leading suburban co-educational high schools in Gauteng. The issue of women as leaders in general and education leadership in particular has become an issue of interest and prominence in the last two decades as demonstrated in the international literature (Blackmore, 1999; Coleman, 2001 & 2002; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Hall, 1996; Uwamahoro, 2011). In the South African context the need for women in leadership has become particularly relevant in the post-apartheid era following the formulation and implementation of a national constitution which sought to eliminate gender inequality in South African society (Lumby, et al., 2010; Mahlase, 1997; Moorosi, 2010).

Focussing on gender and leadership in general, some women have taken up the fight against discrimination, ensuring that their voices will be heard in top leadership positions (Faulkner, 2015; Lumby, 2015; Moorosi, 2010; Smulyan, 2000; Uwamahoro, 2011). Cubillo and Brown (2003 p. 280) contend that “while it is true that more women than ever before are slowly chiselling through the glass barrier to take on leadership positions, one can hardly claim to hear the glass ceiling shattering around us”. The metaphor ‘chiselling through’ shows how it is difficult for women to gain entrance to top leadership positions. Although, women gaining entrance into leadership and educational leadership seems to be a slow process, women are now more aware of their rights, “pushing through the glass ceiling and pushing aside glass walls to become leaders” (ibid p. 278).

The findings of research studies, nationally and internationally, have shown that there are many challenges, which continue to impact upon women in accessing and performing principalship (Blackmore, 1999 & 2013; Coleman, 2001; Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Faulkner, 2015; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Lumby, et al., 2010; Smulyan, 2000). It is clear from research studies in South Africa (Moorosi, 2007 & 2010; Mia, 2014) and internationally (Blackmore, 2013; Bush, 2014), that women remain under-represented in leadership in general and educational leadership in particular. There are many reasons established in

research studies for women being reluctant to take up leadership positions (Coleman, 2001 & 2002), and it is clearly shown that those women who have achieved principalship, have done so “against the odds” (ibid 2001 p. 1).

It was established that gender imbalance in educational leadership has its roots in a variety of factors (Moorosi, 2010, Lumby et al., 2010). International literature shows that men are still preferred for leadership positions and that manifests on the level of appointment (Coleman, 2005; Blackmore et al., 2006). In the South African context, socialisation and culture which are patriarchal in nature contribute negatively to women experiences in educational leadership (Faulkner, 2015; Lumby et al., 2010; Moorosi, 2010).

1.2 Background to the study

Discrimination involves treating someone unfavourably because of the person’s gender, age, disability or race. Gender discriminatory practices involve unequal opportunities of employment, preference of one sex over the other on job promotion and unequal treatment of sexes based on traditional stereotypes between sexes in all walks of life. The issue of discrimination facing women in Africa is similar to other continents with the exception of the specific South African cultural contexts determining how discrimination happens (Moorosi, 2010).

Patriarchy is evident in the cultural and traditional beliefs, which still exist in South Africa, and this impacts significantly upon the way women in leadership are viewed (Faulkner, 2015). In South Africa, prior to democracy in 1994, racial and gender inequality was entrenched under the apartheid regime. Act (No. 47) of 1953 perpetuated the unequal allocation of resources and jobs to different racial groups and genders (Mia, 2014; Naidoo, 2013), and was repealed in 1994 when South Africa became a democratic nation.

1.2.1 Policies meant to eradicate inequities and inequalities

After 1994, the new South African government introduced legislation to improve women’s circumstances, as was the case in many countries that wanted to improve equal opportunities

for women. They did this by promoting equity between men and women through the new laws and policies which emphasised gender equality, equal access to employment and equal promotion opportunities (Mia, 2014). South Africa's policies for women's empowerment to promote equal rights, was intended to give greater opportunity irrespective of race and gender. The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 brought with it the goal of gender equality and equity by trying to eliminate discrimination and promote women as well as all those who were disadvantaged by race in the apartheid era (Government gazette: 1996 [No. 176-78]), Mia, 2014).

However, despite recent policies and legislation nationally and internationally, there remain many barriers to women in accessing and performing principalship (Blackmore, 1999 & 2013; Faulkner, 2015; Mia, 2013; Naidoo, 2014). Women are under-represented in principalship not only in South Africa but also internationally, although the teaching force throughout the world is largely dominated by women (Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Bush, 2014; Lumby & Heystek, 2011; Mia, 2014). The most recent provincial statistics for South Africa show that women principals in Gauteng occupy only 33% of principalship posts and that is across all school sectors (Mia, 2014; Naidoo, 2013). There are no specific statistics for women in co-educational government high school principalship posts in South Africa but it is clear from research studies (Faulkner, 2015; Lumby et al., 2010; Mia, 2014; Moorosi, 2007 & 2010) that very few women occupy the principalship posts in these schools.

1.2.2 The context of former Model C schools

The former Model C (suburban) schools are located in the former whites-only suburbs. Such schools used to serve whites only, prior to 1994, however there was a “dramatic demographic change” when the post-apartheid government worked to eliminate segregation (Lumby & Heystek, 2011 p. 5). As a result, such white schools that “previously had learners of only one ethnic heritage, class, and language now support students with different or more diverse demography” (ibid p.6).

The former Model C schools will impose a different set of challenges for leadership as compared with other co-educational high schools in township and rural areas. Schools in township and rural contexts “have served and are still serving black learners” only (ibid).

This means learners and the community in township and rural schools may share the same culture and belong to the same ethnic group, but in contrast to this, the former Model C schools now have very diverse communities both in and out of the school hence heterogeneous ethnic and cultural populations. As stated earlier, this change has occurred because of “a large influx of black learners previously excluded from such schools, which were designated for whites only pre-1994” (Lumby & Heystek, 2011 p. 1). Because of the different contexts and cultures from which the learners and teachers come, these schools face many complex challenges, which impact upon the principals’ leadership and may influence the leadership styles which they regard as being the most suitable for their school and wider community context.

1.3 Problem statement

As I have stated earlier, despite recent equal opportunities policies in many countries, school leadership continues to be monopolised by males in both western and African countries (Blackmore, 2013; Chisholm, 2001; Coleman, 2002; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Moorosi, 2010). Ways and expectations of leadership practices in schools are often shaped by certain gender expectations, beliefs, and stereotypes (Lumby et al., 2010). As said earlier, progress by which women enter leadership roles seems to be slow, and those who break through ‘the glass ceiling’ may view themselves as having entered a male territory when it comes to leadership and school leadership in particular (Billing & Alvesson, 2000). They posit that although leadership may be oriented towards what are thought of as feminine attributes, it is still the case that women may be viewed as incompetent or unsuitable leaders because they are female (ibid).

Furthermore, this is so because of the traditional leadership which favours the great man theories which emphasised masculine traits of dominance as distinguishing factors between leaders and non-leaders (Northouse, 2010). Great man theories “focussed on identifying the innate qualities and characteristics possessed by great social, political and military leaders” (Northouse, 2010 p. 15). As a result, research that time “concentrated on determining the specific traits that clearly differentiated leaders from non-leaders” (ibid). However, with the

growing numbers of females in leadership, there is a need to take into consideration the contexts in which leaders operate.

Women may experience conflicts in the expectations they have for themselves and expectations others have for them in the role of principalship (Smulyan, 2000). Although there are policies, which speak to gender equality and equity, it seems there are covert discriminatory practices, which affect women in accessing, as well as performing as principals, in Western and African countries in general and South Africa in particular (Lumby et al., 2010). It seems women principals in South Africa still face challenges based on gender stereotypes, inequality, and inequity despite the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (Coleman, 2012). Therefore, there is a need to interrogate deeply entrenched cultural beliefs in South Africa (Faulkner, 2015; Moorosi, 2014). These beliefs seem to have a great impact on the experiences of women principals.

Owing to diversity of staff, learners, parents and communities in former Model C schools, women principals may face a different set of challenges as compared to their counterparts in township and rural co-educational high schools. Various diverse sets of values, customs, attitudes, and the distances travelled by learners, may pose many challenges to the women principals in such schools. Therefore, this research seeks to understand the experiences of women leaders in school cohorts and school communities that may be diverse given such demographics.

The long history of women being viewed by men as subordinate to them and their needs and roles, may affect women principals in the way they lead (Moorosi, 2007). Part of the problem in understanding how women lead co-educational high schools in patriarchal societies such as South Africa is that there is very little research into their experiences as women leaders, and of hearing about their experiences first hand (Moorosi, 2010). Recent research moved away from androgynous descriptions of women leaders to a deeper meaning of how women experience leadership (Faulkner, 2015; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Moorosi, 2010). As a result, this new lens enables us to understand women's challenges, successes and leadership styles which define the ways they lead.

1.4 Aims and objectives

This research aimed to examine women's leadership styles, challenges, and successes as central factors in the experiences of women principals in the context of suburban (former Model C) co-educational high schools in Gauteng, South Africa. The experience of leading co-educational schools is different from the experience of leading single sex girls' schools where, conventionally, women leaders have always been accepted. It seems also that the experience of leading co-educational high schools in township schools and rural schools is different from the experience of leading former Model C co-educational high schools (Lumby & Heystek, 2011).

Therefore the aims and objectives of the study are:

- a) To understand women principals' experiences of two leading suburban co-educational high schools.
- b) To explore the impact of context on women's experiences in the two leading co-educational high schools.

1.5 Research questions

The main research question is:

How do women principals experience leadership of suburban co-educational high schools.

From this question, the following sub-questions were generated:

- a) How would the two women describe their challenges and successes within the context in which they are working?
- b) How do the two women define their leadership styles?
- c) What is the effect of their leadership styles on their principalship?

1.6 Rationale

Research literature on women in leadership in South Africa is still developing (Bush & Crawford, 2012) and there is limited but growing literature on women leaders in township and rural schools (Faulkner, 2015; Lumby, 2015; Mia, 2014; Moorosi, 2010). However,

there is very limited literature on former Model C (suburban) high schools. This research explored experiences of women leaders in former Model C co-educational high schools located in the previously whites-only (pre 1994) suburbs of Gauteng. In township and rural schools, there are “homogeneous, ethnic, and cultural populations,” whereas, as stated earlier, former Model C schools now have complex cultural populations, which are likely to present different kinds of problems (Lumby & Heystek, 2011).

Experiences of women principals in the above contexts show a gap between what is on paper (policy) and what is on the ground (practice), (Christie, 2010). Whilst, the South African Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 emphasises gender equity and equality on school management, research shows there is very little equality and equity between males and females in terms of leadership in education (Moorosi, 2007). Therefore, there is a need to examine the covert discrimination embedded in cultural practices and beliefs, and interrogate societal attitudes to understand more fully the deeply rooted patriarchal attitudes that may prevent women from accessing leadership and from leading effectively once in position (Moorosi, 2010). It is intended that this study will contribute to the growing body of literature on female school leadership of co-educational high schools and the impact of context, through the focus on suburban schools, specifically on the way the women’s leadership is enacted.

1.7 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this research is based on the work of prominent leadership scholars namely Christie and Lingard, (2001) who postulate that the complexities of leadership in schools can be understood when we explore the interplay of the individual, the organisation, and the society.

Christie and Lingard’s (2001) conceptual framework helps to advance the concept of context in understanding leadership. This differs from other frameworks in studies of women in leadership, which tended towards applying Anglophone settings and western cultural perspectives to understand African experiences (Lumby, 2015). But as in Faulkner’s (2015) study, which applied the concept of context to rural and disadvantaged schools, this study

advances the framework of context to underpin and understand the experiences of women principals in suburban co-educational high schools in Gauteng.

As a result, women principals' experiences can better be understood by examining the interplay of three related factors, which are the individual, the organisation, and the society (Christie & Lingard, 2001). The concept of gender is problematic in that societies tend to understand it as the differences between sexes. But there is also socially and psychologically constructed meaning, attributes and values that are taken by self and imposed by others (Lumby & Heystek, 2011). As a result, the individuals and others in society have constructed meanings about women and this is likely to affect them in the way they perform their duties.

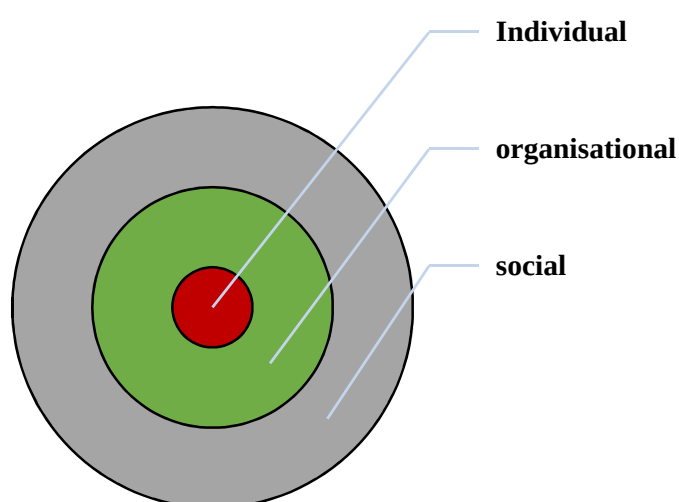


Figure 1 – Conceptual framework, (Christie & Lingard, 2001)

1.7.1 The social factor

Society has its gendered perceptions about women and men, and cultural discourses that favour the masculine in school leadership are deemed to continue to disadvantage women (Lumby, 2004). Research carried out by Moorosi, (2010) with South African high school principals, shows dissatisfaction of the society through one member of School Governing Board. The woman principal in telling her story said she was asked to leave the school because they wanted a strong man to lead the co-educational high school. Another woman principal commented that she felt disrespected when one of the community members referred to her as 'a girl' because she was not married (Moorosi, 2010).

1.7.2 The organisational factor

There is evidence in much research (Mahlase, 1997; Lumby et al., 2010) that patriarchal beliefs in the society are carried over to the schools as an organisation. Research studies show that female principals were subjected to insubordination from their male and female colleagues (Moorosi, 2010; Lumby et al., 2010; Mia 2013; Naidoo, 2012). Some male staff would defy the authority of women principals and respond positively to a male deputy principal (Moorosi, 2010). Women in telling their stories expressed discontent that they were never accepted as principals in the community and extending to the school because of deeply entrenched beliefs about what men and women can do. This has been shown to hinder women from effective participation or promotion to leadership positions in the field (Moorosi, 2010)

1.7.3 The individual factor

Women struggle with internal issues such as professional experience, aspirations, ambitions, and confidence (Ely & Meyerson, 2000) which may contribute to their experiences as leaders. Research shows that many female principals indicate a lack of professional and family support, which may have contributed to their lack of confidence (Lumby et al., 2010; Mia, 2014, Naidoo, 2013). However, those who received professional support from the family in addition to training offered by Department of Education displayed confidence (Moorosi, 2010). Women could not balance well the work at home and at the work place (Moorosi, 2007 & 2010; Naidoo, 2013). Whilst other studies have shown that women principals can balance the roles well with the help of family (Lumby et al., 2010), Smulyan (2000) shows balancing roles remains complex because of societal stereotypes of women; however, overall it seems that women do achieve a work/life balance despite the problems (Coleman, 2002; Lumby et al., 2010; Smulyan, 2000). It is my contention that the framework described above highlights the complexities of factors that determine the experiences of women in educational leadership, and underpins this study.

1.8 Limitations of the study

I had a very limited choice of participants because women principals are in a minority in co-educational former Model C schools in Gauteng. This meant that the data collected would be limited to the two principals selected hence this would impact upon the quantity of data collected. If it had been possible to have a greater number of participants this would have enhanced the study. But the findings cannot be, nor were intended to be, generalised. Therefore, the data collected from the two, though limited in the scope, does not diminish the importance of the findings made as to the principalship experiences of these women.

Within the M. Ed research schedule, the time available for data collection and writing the final report meant I chose to conduct only a small-scale case study. I would have liked to conduct an in-depth study with a larger sample but because of time constraints, two women principals have been chosen as a manageable sample. These were also chosen on geographical basis that they are close to the university hence ease of access. I was also aware that there are time constraints for the women participants because they are very busy people. This small scale case study is not, nor is it intended to be generalisable.

1.9 Chapter overview

This chapter introduced and presented the motivation for exploring experiences of women principals in leading suburban co-educational high schools in Gauteng province. It provided an introduction, background, aims, problem statement, rationale, research questions, conceptual framework and limitations of the research. The issue of gender and leadership has become a prominent issue as many countries including South Africa are working towards eradicating gender imbalances. Despite the growing literature on women leadership, very little is known of women in educational leadership in South Africa. As a result, I am motivated to explore the experiences of women principals in leading suburban co-educational high schools in order to learn more about their successes, challenges and leadership styles.

Chapter two reviewed relevant literature to the study, discussing some key areas, theories related covering national and international literature on women leadership. Chapter three detailed the methodological basis of the research as a case study and discussed the

instruments that were used to collect data, and the data collection processes. Chapter four presented, analysed and interpreted the data. Finally, Chapter five gave a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations for further research.

2. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the research literature in the field and it covers six areas that are relevant to and will inform this study. First, the review looks at the concept of educational leadership as a broad field in which gender and leadership is a subfield. Secondly, the literature review focusses on society and the agents of socialisation which contribute to crucial concepts, gender and discrimination. Thirdly, I focus on women leadership in the context of former Model C co-educational high schools. Fourthly, the review looks at policies that were implemented to overcome gender discriminatory practices in South Africa. Fifthly, I focus on women's leadership styles and lastly I consider the literature, national and international that specifically focusses on the challenges faced by women in principalship.

2.2 Conceptualisation of leadership

The broad field of educational leadership entails three related and mutually reinforcing concepts namely leadership, management, and headship of, which the last is interchangeable with the term principalship. In order to understand women in leadership as a subfield in this broad field, clarification of these critical concepts is useful because they define how principals should lead (Christie & Lingard, 2001). Conflating the concepts of leadership and management is just as problematic as “viewing the whole field in exclusively positive terms” (Christie, 2010, p. 694) and assuming that all principals, whether male or female, have the same experiences.

Cuban (1988) cited in Bush (2011 p. 8) asserts that, “...leadership mean[s] influencing others' action in achieving desirable ends. Leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others. Frequently, they initiate change to reach existing and new goals.” From the definition, one deduces that influence is the key factor; however, values and vision are essential components to effective leadership (Bush, 2011). Distinctive from leadership, the term management means to maintain effectively and efficiently the present organisational

skills (ibid). Defining these terms helps us to understand women in leadership within the broad field of educational leadership and management; focussing on how women leaders enact principalship in former Model C schools. Headship (principalship) like management is tied to positions with, “the executive function of carrying out agreed policy” (Christie, 2010, p. 695). Clarifying these concepts will help us to understand what is required of these women as leaders: their challenges, successes, and their leadership styles. Research shows that although all principals may face challenges despite gender, women principals have a set of challenges which is unique (Lumby et al., 2010). Therefore, clarifying concepts will also help to clear the path for women to rise to the top and lead effectively.

Traditionally, leadership has been viewed in terms of individual traits and does not take into consideration the impact of contexts on individual principals. The leader, in Trait, Skill and Style theories, (Christie, 2010), is detached from the school and the community within which the school is located yet they have a role to play in his\her leadership. This research argues that context plays a pivotal role in explaining the experiences women leaders have. As said earlier leadership through the above theories have been viewed “exclusively in positive terms,” thus, early research tried to replicate the Anglophone experiences to African nationals because they believed leadership can be enacted in the same way (Christie, 2010, p. 694).

Although, there might be similarities, the Anglophone experiences are different from African experiences if the context also plays a pivotal role in understanding how people lead (Bush & Crawford, 2012). Experiences of leading schools differ depending with the individual, the type of school and the community the principal serves hence diverse in contexts. Some held beliefs within certain contexts pose different experiences to different individuals. In the case of South Africa communities are deeply rooted in patriarchy. As a result, it is possible that male and female principals leading organisations within the same contexts may have different sets of experiences because of societal beliefs about males and females.

Women principals may have different experiences of leading suburban co-educational high schools than men. This means the trait theory which emphasizes individual traits is superficial and may not help us to understand leadership in general school contexts and diverse school contexts in particular. “Such a mismatch between the ideal and the actual may impede rather than assist attempts to improve schools” (ibid). Basing on Christie and Lingard’s (2001) assertion, I argue for a theory that does not idealise principals, but the one

which tries to understand their challenges, successes and leadership as influenced by the contexts within which they operate.

What should be taken into consideration is that the ‘great man’ emphasised by the traditional trait theories detaches a person from the organisation. The leader does not operate in isolation, therefore if researchers want to understand any issue within the broad field of educational leadership and management, they should put into consideration the interplay of the person, the organisation and the society (Christie & Lingard, 2001). In this case, we can understand women principals’ experiences if the contexts, that is the community and the schools within which they work are interrogated. By considering these, one may discover that what is viewed as leadership in one organisation is different from how it is viewed in another context. As already argued earlier, context plays a pivotal role in understanding women leaders’ experiences. Therefore, leadership is not only about individuals but has also to do with other dynamics within the contexts (Christie & Lingard, 2001).

2.3 Society and agents of socialisation

Theories of socialisation emphasize the division of gender roles within particular societies. These beliefs would be carried over to the private and public spheres of life and consequently, affect women. A brief explanation of these agents of socialisation helps us to understand how gender is a construct of the society.

The major socialising agent is the society with its cultural and social norms. The functionalist society prescribes the “accepted patterns of behaviour, hierarchies of power, and norms of interaction that shape, and that we, in turn, both perpetuate and resist”, (Smulyan, 2000 p. 5). From birth, people are conditioned to think and behave in a stereotypical manner and as a result, society is where gender differences are first constructed (Bourdieu, 1977).

According to the functionalist theory, society, through its agency, the church, the school, the family and the community places men and women in different socialisation patterns (Morrow & Torres, 1998). Gender roles are not learned once but are a result of constant exposure to gender socialisation; as a result, it is not easy to eradicate such stereotypes (Bourdieu, 1977). The functionalist theorists argue that these different patterns are then accepted through societal indoctrination and they are internalised by everyone. There are many socialisation

theories advocated by many scholars such as Marx, Bourdieu and Althusser, which help us to understand the “root cause of some women’s experiences” (Morrow & Torres, 1998 p.27).

However, though that may be the case, some women do exert personal agency (Faulkner, 2015). Thus, the critical theorists contend, “Control can stimulate resistance [however] it may also discipline, shape and restrict the very opposition it sometimes provokes” (Alvesson & Spicer, 2000 p.373). As a result, in the theory discussed above, not all people consent to what happens in the society but there is potential for conflict and resistance (ibid). Despite societal pressures in functionalist theories, some women do not necessarily conform to the pressures hence acting ‘against the odds.’

Research shows that cultural stereotypes embedded in traditional patriarchal communities appear to be working against women’s opportunities to access and perform principalship (Blackmore 1999 & 2013; Lumby, et al., 2010; Lumby, 2015; Moorosi, 2010 & 2014). “There is much evidence of repressive cultures in South Africa as elsewhere that limit and distort women’s capacity to function as leaders” (Moorosi, 2010 p. 4). These cultural stereotypes seem to be so great and deep that the policies failed to completely eradicate. However, if societies begin critically to reflect on their thinking and perceptions about male and females, very high significant changes are likely to be experienced.

School as organisations consist of the teachers, the learners and the infrastructure. These factors are relevant to both genders as they, within an organisation, affect the principals in the way they lead despite their gender. However, these factors may have greater impact on women because organisational structures and practices often discriminate against women leaders in their aspirations to take up leadership roles (Lumby et al., 2010). Some socialisation patterns shown by Smulyan (2000) show that both men and women believe that “women lack skills and behaviours...ambition and commitment... needed for administrative success” (2000 p.20). Men are generally encouraged within the organisations to become leaders and women are not.

If male leadership is considered the norm in society and if women attempt to take the leadership position, it is most likely that they would not perform well because without encouragement, they are likely to lack confidence and the know-how to do the job. Despite the odds, some women are also likely to make use of some of the so called weaknesses to progress. In empirical research carried out by Coleman (2007) with women principals in high schools in England, she posits that women leaders are collaborative, inclusive and

democratic, however there were some women who still felt that to be a successful leader; one has to conform to male norms.

In the rural areas in South Africa, what women school leaders experienced shows that, women have very little credibility as leaders, since effective leadership is associated with the physically strong and thus perceived as the domain of males. Faulkner (2015) argued that women leaders in rural areas in South Africa may experience strong opposition to their leadership and authority, from learners and staff of both genders. This can be explained through societal attitudes which construct women as the weaker sex, and as 'second-class citizens' dependent on men. Thus, it is argued that "women's experiences of principalship are adversely affected by the prevailing and entrenched patriarchal attitudes within the communities they serve" (ibid p. 12). However, despite strong opposition, some women are seen to be climbing the ladder of success. If therefore women principals were to get support and encouragement, they are likely to perform beyond excellent.

Through the societal indoctrination women may contribute to the experiences they encounter, both negatively and positively. Constructions about the self are created using preconceived attributes of personal traits, characteristics, abilities, or qualities. Smulyan (2000) asserts that the personal context includes the woman's home, educational background, and training. Thus, it influences her confidence, self-image, perceptions, and values and carries it into other contexts within which she works. In tandem, Lumby et al. (2010) in their empirical research of South African women leaders, show that the family context played a large role in the careers of those women, both positively and negatively.

2.4 Gender and discrimination

As discussed in the first paragraphs, early theories of leadership tend to idealise individual traits as the major factor to effective school leadership (Christie & Lingard, 2001). Only masculine traits were emphasised as effective leadership by great man theories. The great man theories are limited in that it equated leadership to strong, middle aged men as the only necessity to effective leadership. Thus, Smulyan (2000) argues that such literature is inadequate because it fails to "examine the historical, social, institutional and community contexts within which school leaders work..." (p. 6).

Consequently, recent research on gender and leadership provides a dynamic view on the work of principals (ibid). This dynamic is inclusive in that it recognises the potentiality of females in providing effective leadership. However, there are still some repressive cultures in South Africa and internationally, that continue to perpetuate gender stereotypes despite the new gender policies which emphasize the dynamic view. Perhaps there is need to understand the concept of gender which, Brandser (1996) cited in Trinidad and Normore (2004 p. 576) defined as, “the distinctive culturally created qualities of men and women apart from their biological differences.” The cultural norm continues to view women as not suitable for top leadership yet recent gender policies have accommodated women as potential leaders. This contradiction affects women in school leadership both positively and negatively. They can be positively affected in leadership in the sense that they act against the odds by transforming the value of their so called inferior characteristics to benefit the schools (Lumby, 2014). But if women internalise their traits as weak that will obviously not benefit them, nor the schools they lead.

The concept of gender does not simply show us the differences between sexes but it provides the socially and psychologically constructed views, attributes and values that are taken by self and imposed by others (Rao, Stuart & Keheller, 1999). Thus, because of these constructed views and attributes, some women never attempted to take up principal positions, but others attempted and are operating successfully despite the challenges. “Gender issues can therefore, bring progress, stasis or deterioration to school leadership” (Lumby, 2015 p. 4). From theories of socialisation, we learnt that there are certain duties only meant to be performed by men and certain things only meant to be done by women. These stereotypes ended up disadvantaging women hence the discrimination that they experienced.

Although the policies to eliminate overt gender discrimination in South Africa were put in place, it seems the progress is very slow because women are still underrepresented in leadership, and those who progressed still face many challenges. Thus, Bush and Moloi (2007) in their empirical research postulate that the case of covert discrimination in England and in South Africa after 1994 shows that “attitudes change more slowly than the law (p. 11). Tallerico (2000) contends that gender discrimination in leadership is still alive but it happens ‘behind the scenes’ (ibid p. 24).

It seems gender discrimination has long lasting effects on leadership and educational leadership in particular. Mahlase (1997) as well as Bush and Moloi (2007) characterised this

imbalance to patriarchy which is not only a hallmark of apartheid but is also deeply entrenched in African societies. As a consequence, it is noted that societies have their constructions about females and males and that help to perpetuate gender inequities in seeking promotion and accessing leadership positions in schools as well as the corporate world. As a result, schools as microcosms of the larger societies reflect what takes place in the larger societies. If the perceptions within the society are carried over to the schools, women principals are most likely to be affected negatively. Thus, because of internalised views and values about women and man, women are negatively affected with some challenges that are different from those of male principals (Moorosi, 2010).

Christie and Lingard (2001) give us a theoretical framework that helps researchers to interrogate the concept of leadership. In their framework they discussed three factors namely the school, the individual and the society as critical in understanding leadership. In their argument they contend that the context has a pivotal role to play in analysing school leadership. Looking at the leader only gives us a detached meaning of leadership. This research has adopted this theoretical framework (see chapter 1) to help understand how women leaders experience leadership of former Model C co-educational high schools.

Smulyan contends that;

Only when the social, the school and the individual variables are considered can we begin to see how school leadership is a dynamic process of negotiation that takes into consideration, the demands of the moment, the institutional structure, and historical definitions of power and relationships (Smulyan, 2000, p. 6).

This argument helps us to understand that various meanings may be attached to leadership depending with the three critical elements as mentioned above.

From the above notion I learnt that leadership in suburban schools can be very different from leadership in rural and township schools because of the different contexts. This research, therefore argues that women principals in former Model C Schools face challenges which are unique to such context although they may be similarities with other contexts. This argument helps researchers to understand and fight prior knowledge about educational leadership which is rigid, detached and “impervious to larger equity issues, social realities and social problems” (ibid p. 16).

2.5 Women in leadership in former Model C schools

From the research literature, there is considerable evidence that even if some women managed to break the glass ceiling, they still face challenges in educational leadership in disadvantaged schools (Faulkner, 2015; Lumby, 2015; Mia, 2014; Naidoo, 2013; Naidoo & Perumal, 2014; Zikhali & Perumal, 2015). Most of these disadvantaged schools include rural and township schools which were formerly underprivileged because of apartheid in the case of South Africa.

However, it seems the schools that were formerly advantaged also have challenges now because of diverse demography and that may pose additional challenges to leadership. Principals who used to lead learners and teachers of one ethnic heritage are now faced with diverse ethnic groups with a minority in the ethnic group the leader is used to. Research refers to such leaders as ‘cross boundary leaders’ (Bush & Moloi, 2007 p. 24; Moloi, 2007 p. 16). Given such a scenario, it seems they may be challenges for leadership in such diversity and it is to my contention that the situation is worse when the leader is a woman given how women face challenges in township and rural co-educational high schools yet most of the teachers and learners belong to one ethnic heritage. Furthermore, Moloi (2007) argues that cross boundary leaders experience either direct or hidden discrimination and most of them progress despite these barriers. “The problems are exacerbated for women leaders, who face double, bind, that is, of racism and sexism in some schools and communities” (Bush & Moloi, 2007 p. 25).

I argue that these principals may face worse problems as compared to rural and township schools principals. My argument is that leadership becomes a big challenge when diversity, gender, sexism and racism are not properly handled. It seems in South African former Model C schools, that there are white principals leading schools with a majority of black learners, and this creates additional challenges for leadership.

2.6 Policies to overcome discriminatory employment barriers

As Chisholm (2001) posits, the implementation of policies and legislation in South Africa, to redress inequities, have not been sufficient to eradicate the deeply embedded gendered socio-

cultural traditions (Blackmore, 2013; Faulkner, 2015; Moorosi, 2014). As discussed earlier, South Africa is patriarchal in nature and the society is deeply entrenched in patriarchal attitudes with prejudices against women (Bush, 2014). It seems the law has failed to completely uproot the gender stereotypes; therefore there is need for people to reflect on societal sex-role stereotypes. However, “these policies are a starting point; a commitment to slowly uproot these insidious social practices” (Moorosi, 2010 p. 560).

2.7 Women’s leadership styles

Lumby et al (2010) in their research concluded that some of the women leaders across the school sectors valued the mothering characteristic. Some of women participants in their research clearly viewed a mothering characteristic as “highly skilled and valuable to the principal role” (Lumby et al., 2010, p. 40). Both nurturing and mothering are characteristics which are ascribed to women but may not necessarily be the case for school leadership. However, other research posits that an emphasis on mothering and nurturing attributes ascribed to women’s leadership style and characteristics, may be limiting women through stereotyping them into what is socially acceptable for women in a patriarchal context. Whilst mothering characteristics may be oversimplification or a gender stereotype which is perpetuated, some women principals have transformed its inferiority complex to make it relevant in leading schools (Moorosi, 2010).

Faulkner (2015) in her research in deeply rural schools shows that women principals showed a caring and a nurturing attitude, coupled with a strong sense of duty and service to the school, despite the challenges they were facing. In other research, the women leaders’ priority was to interact frequently with their staff, the learners, the parents and the wider community, (Conner, 1992). Billing and Alvesson (2000), postulate that the 21st century leadership styles require the support for flexibility, change and transformation. Thus Smulyan (2000) concludes that female leadership styles in education are suited for this with decisions made in the best interests of students and what is appropriate in the context not what is in the policies. Many women leaders demonstrate a collaborative style, consensual decision-making and emphasise teamwork (Billing & Alvesson, 2000). Women can employ facilitative leadership in that they enable others to make their contributions through delegation, encouragement, and ‘nudging from behind’ (Grove & Montgomery, 2000 p. 10).

Women may transform people's self-interest into organisational goals by encouraging feelings of self-worth, participation, and sharing of power and information (ibid). Because of their style, which emphasises collaboration and sharing of information, women can influence teachers to use desirable teaching methods. There is much evidence that because of these leadership styles women principals have the leadership capabilities that match best within twenty-first century complex organisations, which, it is deemed, require consensus management and a more democratic leadership style: these are widely regarded as female leadership traits (Billing & Alvesson, 2001; Lumby et. al., 2010; Smulyan, 2000).

2.7.1 Challenges facing women in principalship

The notion of a 'glass ceiling' tries to explain the invisible barriers that trap women and hinder them from attaining top positions in leadership. Women are underrepresented in educational leadership in South Africa and internationally because of gender discrimination in accessing as well as challenges in performing principalship (Lumby et al., 2010). This research focuses on challenges that hinder women principals in their performance of duty. The concepts of 'glass ceiling and glass walls' shows us how organisations, culture and attitude may perpetuate rigid sex segregation in organisations (Uwumahoro, 2011). Thus it is vital for this research to extract from the community, the school and individuals covert and overt discrimination practices that hinder them from leading schools effectively. Cubillo and Brown (2003) refer to glass ceilings and glass walls as "horizontal and vertical barriers faced by women within their cultures and environments" (p. 278). From the analysis of the barriers below one learns the society needs to be taught to eradicate stereotypes about males and females in societies.

As stated earlier South African society is deeply patriarchal in nature (Moorosi, 2010 & 2015). Society has its own construction about what roles males and females should play (Lumby, et al., 2010). As a result, society has taught individuals that if one thinks of a doctor, manager, or engineer, they should picture males but if one thinks of house cleaners, nurses and teachers' one should picture a female. These are the traditional stereotypes and because of such kinds of constructions in society, many women principals have experienced difficult and often traumatic experiences as leaders of co-educational high schools (Faulkner, 2015; Lumby, 2015; Moorosi, 2010 & 2014).

Women principals may face challenges that male principals do not encounter (Growe & Montgomery, 2000; Naidoo & Perumal, 2014). For instance, gender constructions have the view that women principals cannot discipline the older students in co-educational high schools, especially male students (Lumby, et al., 2010). In South African schools, corporal punishment is banned; therefore the issue of physical strength is not a disadvantage to female leadership in schools.

There is a claim that women leaders are weak and emotional, and that males hate working with a female as their leaders (Moorosi 2007). In the same vein, research carried out by Mahlase (1997) in South African schools shows that woman are viewed as not suitable for leadership roles, and that according to tradition and custom their place is in the home. Because principalship is viewed as a busy profession and women are associated with caring for the family and house hold chores they may not be able to balance the two (Moorosi, 2010). Lumby et al (2010) in their empirical research posited that women principals who got support from the family could balance the two, whilst those who did not get support were surmounted by many challenges in attempting to balance the two.

Research undertaken in Turkey by Celikten (2005), posits that society only wants women to be teachers taking care of their children but not to be leaders. Thus most women principals are located at primary school level because of their perceived nurturing qualities which are deemed, traditionally, to be more suited to this context and age group. Therefore, society's attitude in ascribing certain roles to males and females is often an obstacle and barrier to women and their career progression.

Chisholm, (2001) posits that women's lack of confidence in leading schools stems from receiving little or no encouragement to seek leadership positions. Contrary to this, research by Lumby et al (2010) of women leaders of South African schools shows that many of the principals 'presented a healthy level of self-esteem'.

It is clear that in order to understand the different responses from women undertaking the same role, there is a need to explore the context which informs their different experiences, and interrogate the research in this field both nationally and internationally. In this chapter, literature on the concept of educational leadership as a broad field in which gender and leadership is a subfield was reviewed. Secondly, the literature review focussed on society and the agents of socialisation which contribute to crucial concepts, gender and discrimination were discussed. Thirdly, I focus on leadership and women leaders in the

context of suburban co-educational high schools. Policies that were implemented to overcome gender discriminatory practices in South Africa were examined. Women's leadership styles and the challenges faced by women in principalship nationally and internationally were discussed.

3. CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This research study explored the experiences of two women principals in managing suburban co-educational high schools in Gauteng. Qualitative methodology, and the use of the case study approach, was considered the most appropriate research method for the focus of the study. The primary purpose of qualitative research is to enable an in-depth understanding of social practice. In this research, through the data collection methods used, it has provided insight into the participants' experiences and styles of leadership as well as the contexts in which these participants lead.

3.2 Research design

This research is underpinned by interpretivist, paradigmatic assumptions. The interpretivist paradigm "places emphasis on the way human beings give meaning to their lives; reasons are accepted as legitimate causes of human behaviour; and agential perspectives are prioritised" (Morrison, 2012 p. 16). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) postulate that social meaning is created through interaction and people's interpretation of the interactions. Thus, in their conclusion (ibid p. 17) they contend that "the only way to understand social reality is from the perspective enmeshed within it." This paradigm rejects positivists' objective truth and argues that the truth is subjective, meaning that multiple truths can be constructed within social contexts by individuals (Morrison, 2012).

Social reality within this paradigms means that society and individuals cannot be separated thereby dismissing positivists' objective detached truths (ibid). Individuals should therefore be understood with social contexts because contexts play a significant role in what, why and how the individuals operate. Thus, I learnt about the two women principals' experiences in their actual contexts of leadership. I also needed to be aware of the fact that I should "insert myself in the women principals' continual process of meaning-construction in order to understand it" (Morrison 2012 p. 20). Because my research requires the two women

principals to voice their experiences, it was through their responding to questionnaires and participating in interviews that I was able to hear and understand their voices, and gather the data from these lived experiences.

I therefore considered the interpretivist paradigm to be the most suitable approach for this study, given its subjective nature, experiences of women leaders, the research questions and how these were addressed (Morrison, 2012). It is intended that this empirical research will enable the exploration, analysis and interpretation of the women principals' experiences through the voices of the women themselves. This latter is a key factor in the research and is an area which has been under researched in gender and leadership studies (Faulkner, 2015; Smulyan, 2000).

Since I have argued for an interpretivist paradigm for this research which emphasised human life as "experienced and constructed from a subjective perspective...therefore the data collected and analysed have qualitative... significance" (Morrison, 2012 p. 23). I am rooted in the qualitative design which gives meaning to research that explains "individuals' lived experiences" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006 p. 23). Creswell (2008) contends that qualitative studies work in addressing a research problem in which one needs to explore and learn from the participants.

A qualitative research approach guided this case study, which was a very small sample. It involved collecting and analysing in-depth information from a small group of respondents and participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Because qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach and it is characterised by the study of attitudes and behaviours in their natural setting, I determined that it best fitted this research. In order to address the research questions, the focus of this qualitative, interpretivist research is on what the participants say and do, and how they make meaning of their actions and behaviours (Morrison, 2012).

Morrison (2012 p. 22) also postulates that, "strategies that take the subject's perspective are central" and the case study may be the most appropriate research approach to explore the nature of the experiences of the women in this study (Morrison, 2012, p. 23). Creswell (2000 p.143) postulates that case study is an, "in-depth exploration of bounded systems" and system in this context can refer to an activity, event, process or individuals. Case studies best fit this research because they allow the researcher to be in the natural context of the research taking testimony of experiences of the two women principals in their real-life contexts (Bassey, 1999 cited in Bush, 2012).

3.2.1 Participant sampling

Purposeful sampling was used in choosing participants who have experienced and understand the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Two women principals who lead former Model C schools were identified. McMillan and Schumacher (2014 p. 5) postulate that sampling is “choosing individuals who are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about phenomenon of interest.” In this case it was women leaders in the contexts of suburban co-educational high schools. Whilst women and leadership is under researched in rural and township schools, research has also overlooked women leaders in suburban co-educational high school. This may be because they were rated as advantaged schools pre-1994, however, since there were dramatic demographic changes after 1994, an in-depth analysis of how women experience leadership of such schools was vital, given the diverse nature of the learners and communities they now serve.

As I had a small number of participants, it allowed me to collect rich, detailed data from which themes were established. Although my research was limited it was purposive in that it only explored the experiences of the two women principals in former Model C schools. The focus of the research was on the principals revealing their experiences as women leaders in suburban co-educational high schools, and where the demographics of the schools and the communities they serve have changed radically since 1994 creating very different contexts for leadership.

The two women principals were contacted telephonically and via email to request their participation in the study and an invitation letter was attached (Appendix 1). The participants contacted me via e-mail informing me that they would like to participate. One female principal was on leave and she responded very quickly, but the other one took longer since it was in the middle of the term and she was very busy.

The selection of only two women principals was informed by time constraints as indicated in chapter one, but also because there are very few women principals in co-educational high schools, and even fewer in suburban co-educational high schools. Furthermore, small samples bring depth of understanding which a larger sample may not have allowed. For this small scale research I therefore invited the two women principals to respond to the semi-structured questionnaire. I also did a follow up interview session in order to obtain clarity

from their responses to the initial questionnaire. These instruments are explained in detail below.

3.3 Data collection methods

The research instruments that were used for data collection were semi structured questionnaires and interviews (Appendix 3), the latter being a follow up to the written responses of the questionnaire to gain greater depth and clarity regarding the participant's responses in the former.

3.3.1 The semi-structured questionnaire

The semi structured questionnaire, loosely based on Coleman's (2001) study of women secondary head teachers in the UK, was used to collect data (Appendix 3). The advantage of using a semi-structured questionnaire was that it allowed the two women principals to respond to the questions when it was convenient to them, and to afford more opportunity for depth of response (Creswell, 2008). The two principals were given the semi-structured questionnaire for a period of two weeks to allow time to respond to the questions in their own space and time, unhindered by the presence of the researcher.

With face to face interviews, it might be possible for a participant to give the response which she thinks the researcher wants. As a result, the two women principals had time to reflect and think critically. Furthermore, semi-structured questionnaires allowed them time to think carefully before responding to each question, and therefore avoided one word responses which is a problem when using more closed question, structured questionnaires. However, the two women principals provided very short responses and other questions were not responded to, as a result, there was need to rephrase, to question and probe further in a follow-up interview session.

3.3.2 Follow-up probing interview session

One interview session was scheduled with each participant. The interviews were audio-recorded. I also used my interview protocol to write supplementary notes during the probing interview sessions. The in-depth interview session took the form of a conversation. I probed deeply to discover new clues and to open up new dimensions of a problem. Furthermore, this deep probing was intended to obtain accurate and detailed stories that were based on the personal experiences of the two women in leading co-ed high schools. These kinds of instrument, made the process very flexible because I could do a follow up of the interesting ideas, explore further and elicit clarity on issues highlighted in the initial questionnaire. I clarified or rephrased questions if or when required by the participants. To gain more depth and clarity, each interview was scheduled for sixty minutes. The time structure also varied depending on the progress of the session and also time limitations of the participant.

The first interview for principal 1 took place at Charlotte's house, as she was still on leave of absence; and the second interview for principal 2 took place at Jane's school office. During the interview session, I reviewed the purpose of the study and the style of questioning. Although probing follow-up interviews were specifically meant for clarity, non-verbal signs which were observed during those interviews gave additional meaning to the words said by the participant. Coleman (2012 p. 254) argues that "face to face interviews enable the interviewer to observe visual clues...observe body language which may indicate comfort or discomfort." In these interview sessions nothing should be taken for granted or trivialised; the body language also helped me to understand what the two women experienced. Through these women's facial expressions I could see what they enjoyed in their experiences and what they did not enjoy. They could also hit the table and raise their voices in expressions of anger and frustration. They gave voice and expression to the various emotions they had experienced in dealing with the many and varied experiences.

Furthermore, these kinds of instruments give to the previously voiceless a voice to speak out their lived experiences (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Lumby (2012, p. 237) contends that "speaking for the less powerful, risks embedding powerlessness further [therefore], inclusion of the voice of the less powerful should be axiomatic." Employing these instruments helped the women principals to write as well speak about their lived experiences in their schools. Probing follow-up interviews also enhanced reliability; that is, they established consistency

of the data and took cognisance of the need to establish the trustworthiness of the participants' responses, within the interpretivist paradigm (Bush, 2012). Complex issues were probed and the responses clarified.

Whilst the semi-structured interview process helped in eliciting information from the respondent, I did not overlook its potential weakness. Because of its flexibility, data became voluminous, took time to gather as well as being very time consuming to collate and analyse (Norris, 1997). The other disadvantage associated with semi-structured interviews is bias. Bias can be explained as making mistakes or errors in the process of interview (ibid). Sources of those mistakes are interviewer characteristics, interviewee characteristics and "the substantive content of the questions" (Cohen & Manion, 1994 p. 282). Because of flexible long conversations with participants, both interviewer and interviewee bias could creep in. The respondents may "overstate or understate the true value of an attribute" hence problems of validity and reliability (Cohen & Manion 1994, p. 281). On the other hand, the researcher may fail to "review the participants' presuppositions in the light of experiences or to imagine the world differently so as to maintain their scepticism" (Norris, 1997 p. 120). Bias was mitigated by providing a conducive environment for the respondents, probing, rephrasing and clarifying questions where possible without also allowing my misconceptions about certain beliefs to prevail. I carefully formulated my questions and I attended two research workshops on how to conduct interviews (Bush, 2012). I also had to rephrase and repeat what the respondent had said to elicit the respondent's confirmation (ibid).

3.4 Data collection and analysis

As already discussed in the previous section data were collected through semi-structured questionnaires and follow-up audio-recorded interviews. I used an interview protocol form to add supplementary notes during the interviews. The two participants all answered the initial questionnaire and both participated in the probing, follow up interview sessions. Macmillan and Schumacher (2014), postulate that data analysis is an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories. Analysis of data is the process through which qualitative researchers transcribe, synthesise, and make meaning from data starting with specific data and ending with categories and patterns (ibid p.7). My task, as a researcher was to sift relevant interactions that helped me to understand

the leadership experiences of the two women which were under study. I listened to the recorded interviews and transcribed them. I read the transcripts several times to identify phrases and statements that relate to the topic under study. This was a useful process because it provided an opportunity to identify the common issues that ran through the participants' responses within the context of the research questions. The process of analysis also enabled the categorisation of any common issues identified to be placed into themes to aid the analysis. Since it was a qualitative research, data were reported using direct quotes at times in the analysis, so that meaning would not be distorted by me and the reader.

3.5 Validity and reliability

I have taken due regard as to how reliability and trustworthiness of the participants' responses can be established. Bush (2012 p.83) postulates that "the concepts of validity and reliability may be rejected as positivist construct, which cannot easily be applied to qualitative methods including most types of interviews." As a result, Norris (1997) suggests that we should not just dismiss the two concepts as nonsensical in qualitative research, rather we should "re-appraise their meaning and use" (p. 14). As this research was exploring the two women's experiences, as perceived and voiced by each, it was difficult to apply the traditional methods of triangulation to validate the responses. Because, as already discussed above it is difficult to achieve the traditional validity and reliability in semi-structured questionnaires and interviews, Bassey (1999) in Bush (2012) suggested an alternative concept of trustworthiness for both positivist validity and reliability. I therefore established the trustworthiness, and truthfulness, of the responses by accepting that if the two women principals believed what they said was the truth, and that this was their perception of the events and experiences that are part of their leadership of schools, then I would be satisfied with the validity and reliability of the data which inform how the research questions have been addressed (Bush, 2007; Morrison, 2012). Generalising the findings was never an option because of my understanding that contexts are unique and therefore data drawn from specific contexts (Guba, 2008) only give meaning to those specific contexts.

3.6 Ethical considerations

I have complied with the ethical requirements of the University of the Witwatersrand on the protocols and rules for ethical clearance and process. Ethics clearance was granted for the research from the University of the Witwatersrand (Appendix 5). Permission to conduct research in public schools was also granted by Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) (Appendix 4). I informed the participants about the nature of the study in a letter of information (Appendix 1). I invited the participants to participate voluntarily in my research study. The two women principals chose to participate and they had the right to withdraw from the research study anytime without prejudice. Consent was also sought from the participants and they both consented to responding to the questionnaire and participating in the follow-up, audio-recorded interview session (Appendix 2).

Macmillan and Schumacher, (2006 p. 333) argue that qualitative research is “personally intrusive” that is, it may invade and may endanger personal rights and relations and there is need for the researcher to take into account ethical considerations. As a result, I presented participants’ names using pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. Furthermore, the community and the schools from which the data were collected and reported have not been specifically revealed and identified. I assured confidentiality as the interviews took place in private on a one to one basis between me and the participant. The data I recorded and transcribed were also kept confidential. Upon completion of my study the transcripts and recorded data will be kept confidential and safely in a secure manner and will be destroyed after three to five years in accordance with the university requirements. Ensuring that qualitative research is conducted in an ethical manner enhances validity and reliability.

3.7 Reflections on the process and instruments

I gave the participants questionnaires to respond to and I thought they were going to write much more than they did. The written responses to the questionnaire were done briefly in one page and this necessitated me creating more time for probing interview sessions. The two interview sessions I conducted had a different feel in interaction and each provided a unique opportunity for furthering the data gathering process and gaining more in depth,

personal responses. The first interview with Charlotte was in her house: this was very free, relaxed and informal. Jane's interview was in her school office, and a very business-like atmosphere was evident. There was much more detail elicited from the interview with Charlotte as compared to Jane's responses, which were quite brief and closed initially. However, my second interview with Jane was more fluid than the first because I had gained experience from the interviews with Charlotte which I then applied to my interactions with Jane. She was more responsive and open, perhaps as a result of my greater confidences and ability to provide empathy.

4. CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

Data for this study was collected from the interviews with the two women high schools principals who were central to this study. The research explored the two participants' experiences of leadership within the contexts of their suburban co-educational high schools which were formerly all-white schools pre 1994.

The themes discussed in this chapter emerged from the participants' responses to the interviews, and help to address the research questions which underpin this study. The statements made by participants were compared and of significance are the converging ideas of how these participants experienced leadership, and also the noticeable difference in their experiences, as they have expressed this. Because of these variations in experiences, it seems leadership strategies and styles are affected by context, as well as the approach of the individual.

From the data gathered, the following themes emerged;

- Role of family
- Induction, training and development of women principals
- Confidence and education
- Professional route to becoming principals
- Gender discrimination in accessing and performing principalship
- Women's leadership styles and their impact on leading
- Misconceptions about former Model C schools

4.2 Background and profile of the schools

As discussed in chapter one, prior to 1994 the two schools were all-white schools. Following the new principles of equity, equality and human right formed by the new democratic

government post 1994, any child would be allowed access to any school irrespective of the child's race, religion and cultural beliefs (Maringe & Vilakazi, 2015). Moreover, freedom of movement and choice became one of the legislative policies and in that law the right to education was enshrined (ibid). Because of this, the two schools in this research experienced dramatic demographic changes after 1994 and black students are now the majority with some travelling long distances from surrounding townships to attend school. There is now a mixture of learners from a variety of backgrounds and communities, both local and wide spread but these are primarily black, coloured and Indian communities.

School A

This school is situated in the west of Gauteng and in a predominantly white residential area of Johannesburg. The majority of learners are black with only a few Indian and coloured students. In this school there are no whites at all. This school has a principal and two deputies.

School B

This school is situated in the northern suburbs of Gauteng. Although the majority of students are black, there is quite a number of Indian and a handful of coloured students. Only 6% of the students are whites. This school has a principal and three deputies. **Table 1** below summarises the background and profiles of school A and school B.

Table 1 – Demographics of schools

	Deputies		Teachers		Learners			
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Black	Indian	Coloured	White
School A	1	1	36	24	1 355	5	60	0
School B	2	1	20	39	395	320	141	59

4.2.1 Age, Marital status and experience with the contexts

Table 2 shows that both participants are above fifty years and are both married. Further evidence from the two women's responses shows that prior middle management contributed

significantly to their current management. It seems both participants have been enacting HOD and deputy principals' positions for quite long in the suburban schools. Charlotte has experiences of different schools in her teaching life whereas Jane has been at the same school since she started teaching as she commented:

My advantage is that I know this school intimately, because I have been at this school since I started my career. I think what made me successful is that I have been at this school for a very long time (Jane)

Table 2 – Biographical information of participants

	Pseudo & Race	Age Years	Marital status	Highest Qualification	Teaching Experience	Principalship Experience
School A	Charlotte (White)	60	Married	Post graduate honours degree	38 years	5 years
School B	Jane (White)	53	Married	Post graduate diploma	31 years	8 years

Working at the same school for a very long time seemed to be advantageous to Jane since she claimed to know it very well. Charlotte's movement from school to school seemed to be also an advantage to her,

I have a feel of different school environments and schools are different.

This was an advantage for her because she is in a position to understand that schools are different hence they call for different approaches to leadership. Jane is also aware of how schools are different:

When I go to a girls' high school nearby, I feel like I am on a different planet because it is hugely different from my school (Jane).

The two women were eager to talk about their experiences and it became interesting to me because of their open and sociable personalities. They had intimate knowledge and concern for the schools they lead, and could even refer to many issues and events around the school without opening school documents to verify. They could easily remember even the minor

issues around their schools, which indicate how they have become part of the schools they lead.

I noted that the two women were very responsive to the contexts within which they worked. Because they were fully aware of how school contexts may be different, they were in a position to identify and implement the leadership styles which they thought were appropriate and effective for the communities they served. Their school catered for learners of diverse backgrounds therefore there was a need to be flexible in the ways they led because diversity can be problematic if one fails to handle it. Both women were very keen to share their stories.

4.3 The two women's experiences of leadership

Contextual factors have the potential to impact negatively or positively on the two women principals' experiences. Therefore their experiences will be drawn from the contextual factors namely the individual/personal, the organisation and the social as argued in the theoretical framework in Chapter one.

4.3.1 The role of family

Of the two women interviewed, both are married and stay with their husbands and children. Charlotte has a son who has progressed to be a teacher and Jane has a son who is matriculating this year. Analysis of data shows that the families of these two women leaders positively impact on their careers.

The women showed support from their husbands and each displayed a different kind of support received. Jane explained how her husband was supportive;

My husband is an advocate so he has been helping me with the law part of the school...There is a lot more you can get into trouble for as a principal, just out of ignorance. My husband supports me emotionally as well as professionally helping me to interpret things (Jane).

Although Charlotte also gets support from her husband, she did not quite specify the kind of support. Like Jane, Charlotte emphasised emotional support from her husband as she commented;

Throughout my career, my husband has been very supportive.

Caring for the families seemed to be a big problem to most career women who are mothers (Lumby et al., 2010) however; Charlotte and Jane have not allowed it to be a restricting factor to their leadership. The support they get from their children, husbands and other relatives at home mitigated this problem faced by most career women. It seems their sons and husbands understood the nature of these women's careers. Much of these women principals' time was spent on their work, however, they made it a point to try to compensate for family time lost because they are quite aware that because of the nature of their jobs, the family time is somehow lost. Thus Jane said:

I think it's (career impact on family) not necessarily to do with being a principal. Any mother who works quite long hours is obviously torn a bit between family and work...a lot of women in different kinds of jobs will feel that sometimes their families are a little bit neglected...women are responsible for running the home as well. It does not have an extreme impact but at times families get neglected.

Charlotte is also quite aware of career impact on family however, their families would understand. They both find ways to compensate for family's lost time. Charlotte also commented;

I used to go to work on Saturdays and I used to work up to six o'clock during work days. I am always the first to come to school and the last to leave.

She would not see that as a problem but as her dedication to her principalship and although she compensate for lost family time, she would also make her family understand the nature of her job. However, Smulyan (2000) argues that if women leaders fail to strike a balance between their work and life one or both elements are likely to suffer. Balancing the two is not a big challenge as these two principals under this study claim. However, striking balance between the two is a problem unique to women as men on the same positions do not necessarily face such challenges (Lumby, 2010).

Family support and balancing work and family, it seems the two women get enough support from their families. Thus, if family impacts on the women's careers in a positive sense

women are likely to be successful in their careers. However, if the impact is negative, that is if women do not get support from the family and if they do not budget their time to cater for family as well as their work, women are likely to be negatively affected and that will negatively impact on the schools (Lumby et al., 2010). Even if the impact of family is negative some women successfully achieve against the odds (Coleman, 2002). Women in this study could also balance domestic responsibilities, family life and the work place well. However any female principals who fail to strike a balance are likely not to realise their successes in their careers (Moorosi, 2007). This is consistent with Lumby et al.'s (2010) research who found out those women's challenges in leadership stem from failure to balance their perceived gender roles at home and their careers.

4.4 Induction, training and development of women principals

It seems there is no adequate induction done by the department of education on how new principals may handle policy. Thus, Jane relies on her husband to get support on the policy part of the system she is not well-versed with, but in which her husband is an expert;

My husband is an advocate, so he has been helping me with the law part of the school
(Jane)

Charlotte also lacks expertise in the area of policy and finance and one may conclude that she did not get any induction;

Policy and financial responsibility is a very huge problem (Charlotte)

Research carried by Moorosi (2010) to South African Secondary schools women principals shows that women lack training in management. This is an indication that the department of education is not doing enough in as far as giving induction to these newly appointed is concerned. This is evident from what Jane said;

I received only one or two workshops from the Department of education (Jane).

The two women principals claimed that most of the training they did was self-sourced and Jane claimed not to have received any induction from the previous principal.

From the previous principal none, not even handover. Very well informed members of the school governing board were mentors. Sourced external run courses and attended conferences. Learned the hard way (Jane)

Charlotte's response was

I received training from Principal of Possibility programme, union training, district training and financial training (Charlotte).

It seems the training they receive is still not enough because they have challenges in School financial management, policy implementation and disciplinary problems.

My challenges are maintaining discipline in large schools knowing the policies and consistently managing within this framework because operating smoothly within policies helps one to manage confidently (Charlotte).

4.5 Confidence and education

Confidence and education are other factors which impact on women as they perform their principalship (Moorosi, 2010). The two women showed a high level of confidence in what they do;

I am very competent in what I do (Jane)

I am a positive person and I am very ambitious (Charlotte)

The two women displayed a high level of belief in their competencies. But for Charlotte, the use of the word 'ambitious' shows a characteristic beyond confidence. These two women showed determination, enthusiasm and commitment to what they do.

Apart from acquiring a post graduate diploma and a post graduate degree as shown in **Table 2**, Charlotte and Jane took courses, modules and workshops in leadership and management;

I have a Bachelor of Arts degree (B.A), post graduate diplomas- Higher Diploma in Education and Further diploma in Education; Bachelor of Education honours Degree in Management, Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) (Charlotte).

I have a Bachelor of Arts in English, Drama and film and a post graduate Diploma in Education (Jane).

Educational qualifications seemed to have been a significant factor which helped these female principals in enacting principalship. Their education and qualification have positive effects on their career. This is confirmed in Lumby et al.'s (2010) empirical research on women who enacted principalship and those who were aspiring to be principals, education was viewed to be the strongest theme where bachelor's or master's, educational management courses and other short courses were seen to be very useful in principalship.

4.6 Professional route to becoming principals

Prior management experience played a pivotal role in preparing them for principalship. This is a significant personal factor that did not only prepare them for principalship, but it boosted their confidence as well. These women principals seem to have enacted the senior teacher, head of department and deputy posts for a very long time before they become principals. Significantly, Charlotte and Jane were already exposed to management through their prior management experience.

I have been a teacher, then Head of Department (HOD) English, then deputy. I am also a provincial examiner and a moderator for English NCS examinations. Much of my knowledge as a principal is drawn from my experience as a deputy. The previous principal's management style was to delegate. I kind of learnt about everything...he gave it (work) to the deputies to do. There are a few things that I have not done before. I did disciplinary hearing. I have done interviews and I have done staff placement. Everything I do now in school, I once experienced it in my role as a deputy (Jane).

I started as a teacher then HOD Geography, deputy, senior deputy and then principal. I also worked for Umalusi, marking exams, senior marker, chief marker, examiner, external moderator, wrote and edited books. I enacted an HOD post for geography for quite long and I became a deputy then senior deputy, the roles I performed for quite long and I was quite confident that I could lead a school (Charlotte).

The exposure to prior management prepared these female principals for principalship. This is consistent with women in Moorosi's (2010) study who did not only use prior experience as a "booster of confidence" but also as a factor that made them suitable for principalship (p. 552). These experiences prepared them with necessary skills, knowledge and all aspects of school administrative work (Lumby, 2010).

4.7 Gender discrimination in accessing principalship

Of significance was how hard it was for Charlotte and Jane to access principalship. The two women had concerns to voice on their accessing principalship as well as their early days as new principals:

The former principal wanted the male deputy to be next on line...I was promoted to be the principal although there was a delay...there was no handover from the old principal...not even keys to the office...not even a file...it was quite stressful (Jane)

I went for interviews but never got the job...frustrated...I went for an interview again and never got the job and one lady came to me and said; 'You did not get the job because a man is coming from Cape town to get this job' (Charlotte).

This is a significant finding which shows that it was never easy for both women principals to get appointed. Equally significant is the fact that Jane did not get any hand over from the previous male principal because he preferred the male deputy to take over. It can be stressful like what she said. This data is important in that it supports the fact that there is a continual "preference for male leadership which mostly manifests at the level of appointment" (Moorosi, 2010 p.547). Women are still viewed as capable of only performing inferior roles by societies (Lumby, 2015). Because of these frustrations and stressful conditions at the level of accessing, it is most likely that many women may give up resulting in underrepresentation of women in leadership of suburban co-educational high schools.

In their journey of promotion seeking, Charlotte and Jane seemed to have been ripped off of their confidence as they both commented;

I was always shortlisted but I never got the job and I thought there was something wrong with me (Charlotte)

The former principal preferred the other male deputy to be his successor and I thought I would never get the job (Jane)

Although they were faced with these challenges, they did not give in to those challenges. Instead they continued applying for principalship even though it seemed their efforts were disapproved. I also discovered that gender discrimination is higher at the level of accessing principalship than enacting principalship. Discrimination of women is a hallmark of apartheid and it is deeply entrenched in African societies which are patriarchal in nature (Faulkner, 2015). As a result, even after the eradication of gender inequalities, after independence, women are still viewed as subordinates to men (Moorosi, 2010). They are seen as not capable of leading but can do other jobs under the supervision of men. Because of this it seems accessing stage of women principals from both national and international literature is where most discrimination takes place (Coleman, 2005; Moorosi, 2005). This research was mostly on Charlotte and Jane's experiences on enacting leadership, emerging data showed that the two ladies had a lot to say on gender discrimination at the level of accessing.

I got the job when I was 55, very old to be a principal (Charlotte).

I think he (former principal) went to the department and the forms were delayed... I only took up the post in May and it was delayed like by a year (Jane)

The barriers which are at the accessing level and which may not be overt were also seen to be acting against the women principals' promotions.

4.8 Gender discrimination in performing principalship

From the analysis, Charlotte and Jane claimed not to have seriously faced challenges related to gender in their enactment of principalship in their schools; however they were not in a position to precisely contend that they do not face any discrimination

Not overtly (Jane)

I don't think there is any since I became a principal (Charlotte)

From their responses, it is possible that these two women did not face any discrimination or it might be that discrimination was there but they overlooked its presents because of their

personalities discussed earlier of dedication, strength and commitment to successfully leading the schools. From Jane's response I learnt that discrimination might have been present but it did not directly affect them as in the level of accessing. Both national and international literature confirms that most discrimination happens at the level of accessing such that discrimination at enactment of principalship becomes minor and even unnoticeable (Blackmore, 2006).

Overt discrimination had since become illegal, teachers and learners may discriminate but a kind of discrimination which is hidden and which does not break the law, and that is covert discrimination. This kind of discrimination manifests in what Jane said;

I am sure there are people in the staff who think it's better to have a male principal. But no-one has ever mentioned it to me. Things to do with discrimination, stereotypes and attitudes do not confront me directly under the system (Jane).

Overt gender discrimination practises may have gone but it seems there are covert gender discrimination practices that indirectly affect women in their leadership roles as principals (Lumby et al., 2010). It may not be easy to eradicate such misconceptions voiced by Jane because patriarchy is deeply rooted in South African communities (Faulkner, 2015; Moorosi, 2014) and voicing these concerns in a way make people realise their gender misconceptions about men and women. Women have a very long history of being viewed as subordinates to men in many communities, therefore despite the law, discrimination may happen unconsciously. However, it seems the majority of teachers and learners do respect and are positive with the kind of leadership these women bring to their school contexts.

4.9 Gender discrimination from the community

Both Charlotte and Jane contend that they do not face any gender discrimination from the school communities which they are leading. The communities respect and they were even happy with the way these women were leading. This reveals the successes of these women in leading diverse communities in suburban high schools.

They often give positive feedback (Charlotte)

I have good reputation in the community (Jane)

However, although Jane attested to have good standing within the community she is leading, there are certain perceptions within this diverse community as Jane asserted;

In this school, we have high placement of Muslim learners and there is a certain feeling in the community as people often ask me this question; ‘Do the Muslim fathers respect the female principal?’...I have never felt any discrimination from a Muslim family, learner or father based on gender

Jane thinks the first impression you show on your leadership determines how people will see you throughout your leadership life. The first impression one gives helps people to erase their misconceptions about you and the social roles played by women. Jane asserted that;

Maybe initially, they felt putting a woman as a principal in a school is a disadvantage but I am very competent in what I do. So I expect that if there was any misconceptions about me [people who wanted to pull her down], I have put them to failure.

When leading communities of diverse cultural, ethnical and racial groups it is good as a leader to be well-versed with cultural difference so that you show respect of other people’s cultures. Both Jane and Charlotte showed that if one once to be successful in leading such communities, one needs to show respect for diversity (Lumby & Heystek, 2011). Jane commented;

There are some little things you just learn about the community, for example, Muslim community. Muslim fathers who come through this door, I can’t shake hands with a male Muslim. It’s something they are not comfortable with and I have to be aware of. Don’t make a big scene of it and don’t be offended. Its little things like that you have to be aware of (Jane)

Considering others’ feelings first is a strategy used by Jane as a way of accommodating some minority groups within her context. Furthermore, respect for others’ cultures in diverse communities is used by Jane as a strategy for earning respect from different ethnical groups.

The two female leaders both contend that their School governing Boards are very supportive like Charlotte commented;

My SGB excels beyond excellent. The chairperson of SGB uses his influence to source things for the school (Charlotte).

When Jane was still a new principal her biggest challenges were from the Department of Education officials who intimidated and bullied her. She voiced;

The problem was mainly around the issue of admission of learners...I have heard a lot of problems throughout these years, like, they said, you take this learner, you do this or open up a classroom and if you don't we will discipline you. Those things are very very stressful (Jane)

It is most possible that with such threats and intimidation from the department of education, many women may quit or may never try for promotions on leadership (Moorosi, 2010). Moreover if women leaders continue to work under such stressful conditions, they will never realise their full potential. Gender equality in leadership may only be realised if women are given equal chance and support. Through support they might develop self-confidence and positive attitude (Lumby et al., 2010). But with the scenario as shown in the participant's extracts, on district officers' threats and lack of induction to the newly appointed, it seems we are far from realising gender equality in education. This evidence is quite significant in helping fight challenges faced by women.

4.10 Women's leadership styles

Both the women participants demonstrated through their responses that they are making use of a variety of leadership styles. From data analysis, the two women showed responsiveness to the context through the way they led.

The overriding decision of any principal is when you manage and lead for what is best for the learner, the school and the community (Jane)

This is consistent with Van Deventer and Kruger's (2003) assertion that there is no one best leadership style but the situation determines the style to use. Consequently, if leaders and female leaders in particular want to be effective and successful in their leadership they have to consider the context, that is, the people and their circumstances in order to understand a true picture of the contexts they are leading. Jane and Charlotte lead schools with diverse circumstances and people within the contexts they lead are very different thus, they exhibit a variety of styles in response to the context of people from advantaged communities as well as disadvantaged communities, people of diverse ethnical backgrounds and cultural beliefs.

Therefore, successful leadership is not all about traditional charismatic traits in leaders, but the school, the learners and the communities served by the school, also determine the experiences of these women leaders.

Charlotte and Jane adopted collaboration as their leadership style. They showed their interest in teamwork as they emphasized inclusive team building and decision making agreed upon by every member. These women employed collaborative leadership that made them flourish, as well as helping others who were once excluded, the women, the black teachers and learners now take part in group work and decision making. Thus Jane indicated;

I know a lot about teamwork and how it works. It allows people to co-operate towards a common goal despite individual differences and backgrounds (Jane)

She sees potential in both male and female teachers, both white and black learner which can lead to school effectiveness. As a result, she harnesses the potential in every staff member and learners so that they could work for the best interest of the school. Everyone is talented in some way that can help the school to improve. Charlotte spoke of the success she achieved through incorporating collaboration;

We plan and work together and if I can do it, I can inspire my staff so that we can do it together. If some staff starts doing something, I will stand alongside him/her as well as inspiring others. I think it helps a lot.

In both responses above, staff members are viewed as unique individuals but working for the common good of the organisation. This is consistent with Moorosi's (2006) research on South African secondary school female principals. She asserted that many women leaders exhibit consensual decision making and emphasise teamwork. Working together in agreement and harmony is effective in connecting various individual ideas for the common good of the schools. Thus, for schools to be effective principals may encourage individuals' commitment, harmony and teamwork. This is supported by Grant's (2005) assertion that people's potentials vary depending upon the individuals, and if various potentials in people are put together, they may help in school improvement and effectiveness.

Collaborative leadership is a new form of leadership which is inclusive and it's said to be attractive to female leaders (Ryan, 2006). Ryan (2006)'s point is that collaborative leadership is mostly exhibited in women leaders, and has the potential to make all members of the group active, worthy and feel belonging to the group as they contribute something

towards improvement. Although collaborative or consensual leadership (used as synonyms by participants) seems to be very effective in use, some scholars see it as problematic (De Grauwe, 2005). The problem emanates from the argument that it is unique to women and it goes contrary to educational market imperatives which were once in favour of masculine leadership which is against power-sharing forms of leadership (Reay, 2002). However, this style as exhibited by Charlotte and Jane seems to be very relevant and inclusive because all teachers take part in building the vision of the schools.

If a staff member comes up with a bright idea we all discuss it, come to an agreement stand alongside to support him\her (Charlotte)

Furthermore, although this style seemed to work for the better, traditional leadership seems not to value it (Lumby et al., 2010) because they believed that it is not easy to reach consensus especially when people have a variety of ideas to contribute. Trying such a style shows that Charlotte and Jane are accommodative of the 21st century which calls for new forms of styles that should be flexible to address the ever changing environments (Alvesson & Billing, 2000).

Charlotte and Jane also exhibit a style which manifests from servant leadership. Charlotte asserted;

I don't tread on my authority over the staff. I am actually there to serve them. I am there to serve the children and I am there to serve the parents. So my attitude is one of giving service and at the same time leading. I lead by example (Charlotte)

Jane also thinks her style has a lot to do with servant leadership;

I do think I will qualify for servant leadership because I am very devoted to the school and I think I do lead by example. So I work very very hard because I believe in excellent service (Jane).

The two women appeared to be devoted to the schools, the staffs, the parents and the learners. Furthermore, they believed that leading by example is a style which helps the subordinates to watch and learn as opposed to compelling the subordinates to do whilst the leader is detached from the task.

I said to my staff right from the beginning that I will never ask them to do something I am not prepared to do (Charlotte)

Thus, Bush (1996) postulates that women leaders may be flexible and may possess interpersonal skills which allow the stakeholders to understand and participate better as they learn from their leaders. Being exemplary has become a common factor which defines these women's styles. These women leaders did not impose their authority but they participate along with others in order to achieve. Alvesson and Billing (2000 p. 144) postulate that the scholars of gender have indicated this as feminine orientation to leadership which has become inconsistent with traditional managers who impose their authority on others. It is argued that people work better through persuasion and influence rather than force (ibid).

The two female leaders showed that they also lead by consulting. They both argued that consultation helps to harness the potential in individuals as well as enabling them to be more inclusive. As a result, they believe in the power of consulting as opposed to traditional leadership which view only leaders as the custodian of all knowledge (Alvesson & Billing, 2000). Because the two women principals were never inducted in their new roles, they relied on others within the contexts that were more knowledgeable. From the participants, I discovered the use of consultation when one wants to learn and employ the best method of doing things.

I have a very big experienced management team and I do consult with them. I also do consult with my husband on the law part of education which proves a challenge to me. It's quite useful to have a lawyer on your governing board...or someone who is familiar with that educational law to be on the safe side (Jane).

Jane consults with her husband on the policy part of the system. Furthermore, there are also members of the school Governing Board who work as mentors to support her and help her understand her career. Like Jane, Charlotte also consults her management team as well as staff members.

I do consult with teachers, School governing board (SGB) and School Management Team (SMT) (Charlotte)

Although both claim to use consultation and consensus approaches, Jane felt that she has been over consultative especially with the teachers therefore she has since become more autocratic in her style.

The danger of being too consultative is that we are dealing with a staff of 65 teachers and they are quite difficult to manage, they have got their ideas and they like their own way. So I think at times you have to be an autocratic leader (Jane).

Although consultation proves to be beneficial, it is at times problematic when people do not come to consensus on decision making therefore, in such situations, Jane has since adopted autocratic leadership in her style not because she tries to emulate men but she considered it to be the best in as far as the situation and the context at hand is concerned. Thus some scholars argued, instead of putting labels to styles as feminine and masculine, (Alvesson & Billing 2000 p.152) suggest that we should look beyond gender differences and see these styles as complementary where “men as well as women are capable of acting in what may be labelled masculine and feminine ways...dependent upon the situation.” Labels only help to widen the inequality gap between men and women without necessarily contributing to school effectiveness.

Mia (2014) contended that each leadership style despite the fact that its feminine or masculine orientation may have certain advantages depending with the context. As a result, Jane combined different styles, including the one which is perceived as masculine, making use of each style to close the gap which the previously adopted style could not address. Alvesson and Billing (2000) postulated that we should stop looking at these leading styles as gendered because each style whether feminine or masculine have the potential to improve schools when merged by principals whether male or female.

The two female principals see the potential of delegation of responsibilities in their roles as principals. Both Charlotte and Jane raised delegation of responsibility as their style and Jane clearly demonstrated how she did it. She sees the importance of having both male and female teachers at each level of leadership in suburban co-educational high schools.

The management in co-ed high schools has to be thought about very careful. I am very lucky because I have three deputies and one is a very strong female and the other two are male. I think if we had a female managing team at the highest level of this co-ed school, I think we would battle. Boys need male role models especially in education they bond sometimes well to a male authority. I feel I have managed the potential difficulty of female principal controlling boys as well as girls (Jane).

Placing both males and females in management is a strategy for Jane in that she delegates anything to do with boys to male authority and anything to do with girls to female authority.

Moreover, placing females in administrative roles was recommended by Coleman (2000) as a strategy to create role models for girls as well as protecting them from sexual harassment and reduction of gender inequality.

When it's a co-educational high school, it seems there is need to complement males and females to make the schools very effective. In this case, Jane was not arguing that female leaders are not in a position to discipline the boys but to her it's a dynamic she understands that boys feel comfortable with male authority. However if women cannot be in control of boys by themselves, some scholars call that a weakness in female leaders (Lumby et al., 2000). Jane did not see it as a weakness on her part but as harnessing the potential in male teachers to help boys flourish as boys get exposure to male role models. Charlotte and Jane prove to follow a kind of leadership which allows distribution of authority within the whole school. It is evident from their stories that if learners or parents want to query or have suggestions about certain issues, there are certain channels within the schools that have to be taken and not just going straight to the school principal even with petty issues that can be solved at the lowest level of leadership.

Most of the problems in this school are solved at the lower levels of leadership. In other co-ed high schools there may be only four male teachers whilst I have 17 male teachers and they are all amazing and they make such a difference to the boys. I definitely think there are issues which these boys have which they are more comfortable when dealing with the male staff (Jane)

To further strengthen her argument, Jane compared her school to other schools as she talked of yet another dynamic which she claims it's unique to her school and makes her school very effective.

I have grade heads for each grade and each grade is controlled by two teachers, a male and a female and most of the problems in the school are solved at that level (Jane)

Therefore Jane is very much into the idea that co-educational high schools need both male and female authority in equal proportions to function successfully. Her idea is not to eliminate men but to work together with everyone at the same time giving access of opportunity to everyone.

Charlotte on the other hand gave emphasis to a style of leadership which is relational.

I know all my staff members, I know their problems and I know their families because I ask them. I visit them in hospital. I visit my colleagues' children in hospital. I take time to know who I work with. Even my ground staff, I know how many children they have, I know which school they go to. So they are always comfortable to come to talk to me (Charlotte).

Charlotte acknowledged that knowing her staff intimately helps them to feel the concern and love from the principal so that they see the school as part of their homes hence delivering well. However, some scholars think that much of the time for instructional leadership is wasted in trying to build relations with the staff. Because of that some critics of feminine leadership viewed it as a feminine leadership style which they perceive to be very weak (Alvesson & Billing, 2000). Charlotte does not share the sentiment because she claims it is how she builds unity. In other words, it is a conscious strategy directed at building unity. She attempts to build unity and hopes it will work to unite people in diverse contexts for the common good of the school.

Furthermore, Charlotte valued respect for everyone in the organisational context so that learners, parents, teachers and the community may feel to be part of the system.

I respect them. I even respect a grade 8 boy or girl. My style is not to scream and shout, beat and bash and belittle. I don't do that. I don't belittle people. That's why my staff is secure (Charlotte).

Respect for others is used by Charlotte as a concept to make the people around feel secure. Respect may also bring openness and staff will be in a position to disclose their concerns and may foster an atmosphere of trust leading to a conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning.

4.11 Effects of the two women's leadership on their principalship

From data gathered, it seems the styles employed by the two women principals have complementary and significant value to their principalship. The female leadership styles discussed in this chapter namely consultative, servant leadership, collaboration, delegation, relational and empathy seem to add value to their principalship, and however they may impact negatively depending on contextual factors.

It seems people respond positively to how Charlotte and Jane lead

I think they feel secure and deliver well (Charlotte)

Learners and parents are appreciative and positive. The majority of the staff does not have problems with the way I lead (Jane)

A significant finding shows that the community, teachers, learners and parents respond positively to the way the two principals lead. It is evident that people are beginning to understand women's leadership although it has been argued (Blackmore, 2013; Chisholm, 2001; Lumby et al., 2010) that it is not completely accepted. Research indicates that women, because of their styles of leadership they have capabilities that fit twenty-first century complex schools (Alvesson & Billing, 2000). This acts as a positive factor to the women in this study.

It was interesting to note that Charlotte and Jane deliberately employed the above leadership styles not because they are viewed as feminine leadership styles (Alvesson & Billing, 2000; Moorosi, 2010) but that they were appropriate in the contexts they were leading. Thus, Christie and Lingard (2001) argue leadership should be understood and interpreted in terms of the contexts the leaders are operating within. Because former Model C schools serve learners and communities of diverse backgrounds, Charlotte and Jane acknowledged that their styles helped them to be effective.

My use of various leadership styles is determined by the situation at hand (Jane)

4.12 Misconceptions about former Model C schools

In respondent led research, everything discussed as significant by respondents should be taken as valuable data. The two women in this study showed frustrations about people's misconceptions of the former Model C schools. This emerged as a cause for concern for these women principals. From data analysis, I found out that these schools are still viewed as advantaged schools yet there are many changes that took place after 1994 which of course led to deterioration in funding and resource availability of these schools. Prior to 1994 they were all-white schools with the unequal distribution of resources which was in favour of those schools.

I think the perception of former Model C schools is very wrong. Because when I read from literature about former Model C schools and their privileges I get incredibly angry because my school is a transformed school and many of our learners are fee exemption learners. (Jane)

My school is one of the poorest former Model C schools with many learners exempted from paying fees. The school also accommodates many learners from a nearby informal settlement. Therefore the school does not have enough funds to run and even to pay water and lights (Charlotte).

The two former Model C schools led by Charlotte and Jane appear to have transformed and if the Department of Education officials lack awareness of the reality of the situation, it gives unnecessary pressure to the principals within such organisation hence challenging experiences of principalship (Lumby & Heystek, 2011).

In summary, based on Christie and Lingard's (2001) three part framework, **Table 3** below presents the impact of contexts on the two women's experiences:

Table 3 – Summary of principals' experiences

Context	Positive Impact (successes)	Negative Impact (challenges)
The Individual	• Family support • Balance work\life • Prior-management experience • Education and qualifications	• Lack of induction • Insufficient training in policy and finance
The school	• Respect from the majority of learners and teachers • Positive response from staffs and learners • Effective leadership styles	• Poverty and diversity • Intimidation from education officials • No handover from the previous principal • Delay in accessing principalship • Misconceptions about former Model C schools • Insufficient training from the department • Covert discrimination
The social	• Respect from the majority of parents and the community • Supportive SGBs	• Covert discrimination • Poverty

Table 3 shows that there have been negative factors but because of how the two women reacted to these patriarchal negative factors they have not necessarily been negative in terms of their experiences. Through the theoretical framework, I have gathered how the two women experienced leadership of former Model C co-educational high school. The personal factors which, includes family support, home experience, confidence, education and their qualifications impact positively on their experiences. The two women have both emotional and professional support from their husbands. Charlotte and Jane also indicated that they are in a position to balance their life at work and life at home. The two women's qualifications and prior management experience help them to be confident and successful in their careers.

Charlotte and Jane are strong, ambitious and dedicated leaders who refuse to be intimidated by the negative attitudes surrounding their leadership in schools with some individuals doubting their capability especially in the accessing stage and early days of principalship. Support from their families, the majority of their staff, and majority of the parents helped them to excel against the odds. However, they clearly indicate that the department of education needs to offer more support to principals at induction and throughout their tenure. This lack of district support as claimed by the two women principals is well observed in many research studies, (Faulkner, 2015; Lumby, 2010; Moorosi, 2010 & 2012).

The context of the two former Model C schools researched revealed that though the schools may fall under the same category of diverse context and formerly advantaged schools, they imposed different experiences to the two women principals. Findings for this study, as already discussed in chapter three are not, nor are intended to be, generalisable.

5. CHAPTER 5: GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore the experiences of two principals in leading former Model C high schools. It also sought to explore women principals' challenges, successes as well as their leadership styles in leading diverse ethnic schools which were formerly all-white, pre democracy in South Africa in 1994. Central to this study was to give 'voice to the voiceless' (Smulyan, 2000), showing the nature and the impact specifically of women's experiences in suburban co-educational high schools which remains an under researched area. Highlighting and bringing awareness of their experiences in those contexts may lead to eradication of challenges for effective leadership. Firstly, this chapter draws together and gives conclusions to what was discovered about the experiences of women principals in leading suburban co-educational high schools, and considers how the research questions were addressed. Secondly, the chapter reflects on the limitations of the study and also make recommendations for further research. The research questions were:

- How would the two women principals describe their challenges and successes within the contexts in which they work?
- How do the two women principals define their leadership styles?
- What is the effect of their leadership styles on their principalship?

5.2 Conclusions

This study explored the two women principals' experiences in leading suburban co-educational high schools as well as the impact of contexts on the two women leaders' experiences. Because the study sought for an understanding based on the two women's perceptions of their experiences (and not on how others view them) as leaders, it employed an exploratory approach which is an aspect of qualitative research which seeks an in-depth understanding of social practices of the two women principals. Therefore, the research questions aimed to discover the two women's construction of their leadership based on their

experiences within suburban contexts. Below, I will demonstrate how the main and the sub-research questions have been answered;

5.2.1 Conclusions for each research question

The first sub-research question was; *how would the two women principals describe their challenges and successes within the contexts in which they work?* The question required me to explore the women's challenges, progress and successes in as far as leading former Model C high schools was concerned. I started by outlining what these women said were their challenges.

Research question 1

Challenges of discrimination

Charlotte and Jane experienced discrimination in accessing principalship. In enacting principalship, both seemed to be not aware of having experienced much of it. It is evident that early days of enactment were quite difficult because of critical scrutiny and threats especially to Jane. Covert discrimination might have been present because they appeared to feel there was discrimination but could not actually tell. It is quite possible that covert discrimination still exist because of the cultural stereotypes embedded in South African traditional patriarchal communities (Faulkner, 2015; Lumby, 2015). They are aware of how women are regarded in the society especially by the Muslim communities. However, it seems the two women under research have very strong personalities and were determined to succeed by disregarding or overlooking some of these covert discriminatory practices. Furthermore, the impact of discrimination especially on accessing principalship might have provoked enthusiasm to succeed hence success against the odds. This is supported by Lumby et al., (2010) that women should fight discrimination by acting against it. It is a fact that not all women can stand such pressure, as a result, some women may decide to quit, this leading to underrepresentation of women in leadership. Experiences of intimidation and threats from the department, teachers, learners, parents and the community may negatively affect the principal as well.

This study shows that to a large extent the problems faced by these women had less to do with gender (as they expressed their perceptions and beliefs) but more to do with the generic problems of leading former Model C co-educational high schools in a period of transformation with the resulting demographic changes in the schools. These generic problems range from instilling discipline in schools with diversity, managing and implementing policy and dealing with financial issues. Because the department of education did not offer much support these two women went out of their way to source support in their roles as principals, but they still faced many challenges in their leadership roles.

Progress and success despite the challenges

From this empirical research, there was evidence of progress towards success in as far as eradication of gender imbalances is concerned in the two schools researched. Both principals believe that most of the teachers, learners, parents and the community respect and emulate the way they lead. They both confirmed that they received substantial support from their families, their husbands and their colleagues, both female and male. However, Jane did not receive any form of induction or handover from the previous male principal because of his preference for the male deputy to be his successor. Moreover, the two principals claimed to have received insufficient training for principalship from the Department of Education. Charlotte waited for a long time to access promotion as a deputy principal as well as principalship. She only gained principalship when she was fifty-five years, an age very close to her retirement. Although my focus was not on how they accessed their principalship, it seemed a lot of discrimination is experienced on accessing principalship.

Research question 2

Women's leadership styles

The evidence that was gathered initially through a brief questionnaire then a follow-up interview showed that the two women principals to a large extent exhibit similar ways of leading in these contexts. Both women showed that they lead by collaborative, relational, and consultative styles. However, Jane believed consultation may be effective and useful to a certain extent because some situations and people within her context called for autocratic leadership as discussed in chapter 4. This suggests that the two principals despite the diverse

ethnic backgrounds in their schools have the same desire to unite by emphasising consensual decision making and consider every individual as a member of the team necessary for the effectiveness of the school.

Charlotte and Jane placed emphasis on employing servant leadership. Servant leadership is defined as “serving people through [one’s] inherent strength” (Adair, 1989 cited in Maringe et al., 2015 p. 20). Such kind of leadership allows one to look at hidden causes of teacher behaviour or learner behaviour and work together with the teachers in order to overcome negative tendencies (ibid).

This is a way of showing their commitment and dedication to their organisations. Instead of just delegating everything to the subordinates, they lead by example helping and demonstrating to their staff how to do things. They feel that showing staff, parents and learners how things are done will help them and inspire them to be committed for the common good.

Unique to Jane is the criteria of diverse staff placement which she used in different leadership roles. She emphasised the fact that since the school has diverse learners, she places teachers who represent the diversity of the learners in school in terms of gender and to a lesser extent in terms of ethnicity, to various classroom situations and leadership positions. She believes that boys need male staff as girls need female staff. As a result she has males and female in her management team. She also introduced grade heads for each grade, male and female so that if there are issues concerning boys only or girls only, the leadership is well balanced.

Charlotte placed emphasis on a relational type of leadership where she thinks leadership can be very effective when she knows and respect her staff, parents and learners. She stopped corporal punishment which was still practised against the law and also shouting which was rampant at that school and introduced respect for each other. The fact that she builds in depth knowledge of and sound relationships with her staff commands respect and feeling of togetherness. What is important is that the two women principals never tried to adopt masculine traits to be successful leaders (Cubillo & Brown, 2013). Women therefore can be very successful leaders without imitating male leadership styles.

Research question 3

Impact of their styles

The two women's styles seem to be working for their success. The fact that they employ collaboration, social and emotional intelligence styles and concern for the learner seem to be positive to their staffs and the community. Servant leadership is also what the two women emphasised as showing dedication to the schools they are leading. Because of the way they lead, the two women command respect from the staffs and the communities they are leading. Both staffs parents and the community feel they are part and parcel of the school because the two women principals do harness the potentials in all individuals hence school effectiveness.

Despite the challenges they encountered on accessing and Jane's first days of principalship which include intimidation, lack of support from the education department, covert discrimination, Charlotte and Jane disregarded the odds by creating opportunities and leading styles that made them successful in their leadership roles. They were even determined to educate themselves for their new roles. However, not all women can stand such pressures. Therefore it is imperative for the Department of Education to pave a way for women so that they realise their successes without discrimination obstacles.

Women should not therefore be intimidated and threatened but encouraged. Also a cause for concern is that women should be mentored on how to handle policy because it appeared to be a challenge to both women. Although it seems society is slowly accepting that women are capable of leading effectively, there are some amongst the staff and the community who still feel they need males for leaders. This shows how society is deeply entrenched in patriarchal practises and they turn a blind eye to transformation (Faulkner, 2015; Moorosi, 2010).

In terms of the personality, the two women under exploration showed they have suitable qualifications for principalship. They even attained post graduate degrees and diplomas. They were also very confident and showed that they were very successful in performing their duties. Although they are quite aware of their responsibilities as mothers and how the two roles may impact negatively on each other they plan and try to minimise the impact. This goes contrary to the notion that women are predominantly home-makers, child-bearers, lack confidence and motivation and fear the challenges of leadership (Lumby et al., 2010). In fact, these two women went extra miles to source for courses, workshops and knowledgeable individuals that helped them to acquire knowledge on some aspects of their roles as leaders.

With regards to former Model C schools as organisations, the majority of the staff and learners respect how these two women lead, however there are some few who have shown though covertly that they prefer male leadership in Jane's school. In Charlotte's school, it seems her leadership is accepted by nearly everyone. It seems age and physical appearances also play a pivotal role in whether people will respect your leadership or not. Jane is small and quiet, in her early fifties and she thought because of that in her early days of leadership people thought she may not be capable of leading such a big school and people had to learn and understand that, 'I am a very strong woman'.

The fact that Charlotte believes she did not face any discrimination as a principal shows us that not all women face discrimination in practice. However, it is a fascinating subjective truth because while research shows that it is common in patriarchal societies like South Africa to face discrimination as a woman leader, it is very interesting that Charlotte did not consider that she faces any discrimination in her school and that's her voiced truth.

Both women are frustrated about the misconception of the privileges associated with the former Model C Schools. It emerged that former Model C schools are no longer advantaged as they also accommodate learners from very far away townships and those from nearby informal settlements who are exempted from paying fees and since they have quite a number of learners like that, the schools' finances are strained. These schools now need government intervention just like any other schools. Charlotte's school has become poor to an extent that they cannot pay for water and lights yet it is grouped as an advantaged schools and advantaged in this case has lost its meaning. Hard working, so they said is what made them successful.

The parents and the community respect and like the leadership offered by the two principals, as shown through their comments to them. However, the Gauteng Department of Education is not doing what needs to be done to induct and mentor these newly placed women principals. The gender equity and equality policies are not effectively monitored to eradicate quickly these differences between men and women. This shows a serious misalignment between gender policies and practice. Women in this study had to work extra hard in order to prove that they are capable.

The main research question

This research's overarching research question is; *how do women principals experience leadership of former Model C co-educational high schools?* They may be many challenges in their contexts ranging from gender discrimination, lack of training and home challenges but the two women under study have not allowed those challenges to affect their principalship. In fact, they work to find ways to ameliorate such challenges. The two women principals varied their leadership styles and that had a positive impact on their running of the schools in their contexts.

5.3 Important reflections and contributions of this research

I feel that I did not give the participants much voice to talk about former Model C schools and accessing principalship. Whilst I felt that interviewing a participant in her house was ideal because she felt relaxed, phone calls from relatives were disturbances. Interviews in a school office were very formal and the participant could easily recall scenes because she was in the context where most, if not all, of her experiences happen.

This research has gathered crucial contributions towards understanding the context of the former Model C schools and women leadership in the present time. However, a longitudinal research is needed to understand fully the experiences of women principals in suburban secondary schools that had dramatic demographic changes post 1994.

5.4 Recommendations

From the findings, this study exposed the need for further research in experiences of principalship in suburban high schools. Therefore, recommendations are very important for planning for future research. The contexts in which Charlotte and Jane lead call for many different styles in their leadership and from the findings I discovered the two women exhibited a variety of styles. Equally important is how the contexts present challenging circumstance to the two women and how the women succeeded despite the challenges.

Through their personalities and leadership styles discussed in chapter 4 the two women succeeded against the odds. This study was small and because of that it cannot be generalised. As a result, a bigger study which may be generalised is recommended. Such a study may also help to inform and direct future policies. The other recommendations are presented in bullet points below;

- Equal opportunity to both genders should be taken into consideration when recruiting principals. Policies should be practical and fairness and transparency should accompany how principals are appointed.
- The Department of Education should encourage, and support new female principals by conducting courses and workshops to learn more in their new roles especially on how to handle policy in schools and school finance.
- Principals must be taught on how to handle diversity in schools harness people's interests towards common good despite heterogeneity.
- There should also be a policy on handover takeover from an outgoing to an incoming principal so that the new female principals find things in place.
- The community and societies should be trained and made aware of gender issues.
- The women who aspire to become leaders must be supported and receive mentorship.
- Women must be encouraged to continue with their professional development as it will give them confidence in their roles as leaders.
- Research may be conducted on leadership of former Model C schools and whether they are still privileged/advantaged, their status and their position need to be conducted.
- Research on women's experiences not only in suburban schools but also in township, and rural schools countrywide should be conducted to enable greater understanding of women's experiences in leadership.

5.5 Summary of conclusions and recommendations

Charlotte and Jane's experiences were negatively affected by entrenched patriarchal attitudes within the communities they served. As shown in research policy and legislation has failed to completely erase such attitudes internationally and South Africa in particular (Faulkner, 2015; Chisholm, 2001; Coleman, 2001). Context also plays a pivotal role in principals'

experiences (Christie & Lingard, 2001; Cubillo & Brown, 2011; Moorosi, 2010). This is particularly so in South African former Model C schools where the contexts cater for diverse ethnical and cultural communities and this called for the two women principals to lead in certain ways. Despite the challenges the two women remained strong and led the schools against the odds. Their families, qualifications and confidence contributed to their success. I would conclude by stating emphatically that it is therefore critical to understand the current context of former Model C schools and the consequent implications for leadership of these very diverse schools and their stakeholders/communities. This needs to be done using a longitudinal and wide sample size in order to understand leaders' varying experiences through greater depth, width and time frames.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Introduction letter to principals with request to conduct research in schools and gain their participation

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS) Division July 2015

PARTICIPANT'S INFORMATION LETTER AND INFORMED CONSENT

Dear

This letter serves to introduce myself: my name is Otilia Chiramba and I am a full time Masters student with the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. As part of my degree requirements, I have to undertake a small-scale research project in the area of my specialisation namely gender and educational leadership. I am therefore warmly inviting you and your school to participate in this research study. The topic of my research is ***Women's experiences of leadership: A case study of two female suburban high school principals in Gauteng.***

The research intends to explore, through listening to your account, how women leaders experience principalship in former Model C co-educational high schools. The research will use an initial brief questionnaire and then a follow-up interview to clarify and explore in more depth your written responses. Your participation in this research could take up to six hours of your time in total, i.e. completing the questionnaire and participating in the interview. To assist me in the writing up of the information from the interviews, in addition to note taking I will ask for your permission to use a voice recorder, but this will be entirely voluntary.

Your participation in the study is voluntary and you can withdraw your participation at any point without prejudice. All information obtained during the course of this study will be kept strictly confidential and interviews will be on a one to one basis in a private setting. The reporting of the data in the research report will not identify you or the school, as pseudonyms will be used. The data will be used only for the purposes of the research report, and for any academic presentations or academic articles which may arise from the study in the future.

Your participation in this study will be highly appreciated and the results of the research can be made available for viewing at your request.

Thank you in anticipation of your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

**Otilia Chiramba Student No. 904048
Contact number: 0733810580**

Appendix 2: Participant's consent letter

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Division of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Research Topic: Women's experiences of leadership: A case study of two female suburban high school principals in Gauteng

PARTICIPANT'S INFORMED CONSENT

I confirm that the researcher, Otilia Chiramba, has personally informed me of the nature of the study.

I have also received, read, and understood the Information and Consent Letter regarding the study.

I am aware that all information that I provide will be anonymously processed in the M.Ed research report, and in any related research work, academic journal articles or conference presentations undertaken by the researcher, Otilia Chiramba

I am aware that any information I provide will be used for the purposes of the completion of the M.Ed research report and may be used by the researcher, Otilia Chiramba, in articles within research journals and for presentations at academic conferences.

In light of the requirements of the study, I understand that the data collected during the study will be processed in a computerized system by the researcher, Otilia Chiramba

I am aware that the raw data gathered by the researcher, Otilia Chiramba, including audio tapes and written notes, will be kept safely by the researcher, Otilia Chiramba, and will then be destroyed after three – five years, in accordance with University requirements.

I understand that I may at any stage, withdraw my consent and participation from the study without prejudice to me.

I give my consent to participate voluntarily in the study. YES/NO

I understand that notes may be taken by the researcher, Otilia Chiramba, and that audio recording of the conversations between us may be made.

I give my consent to note taking by the researcher, Otilia Chiramba YES/NO

I give my consent to the audio recording of the conversations between the researcher, Otilia Chiramba, and me YES/NO

Name of participant:

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3 - Semi structured questionnaire

- a. What are your qualifications?
- b. When did you become a teacher?
- c. What is your marital status?
- d. If you are or have been married or in a permanent relationship, do you have children?
- e. How has the above affected or influenced your performance of principalship?
- f. Have you had/ do you have support from family in your career?
- g. How would you describe this support or lack of it?
- h. What professional route did you take to become a principal?
- i. Did you receive any training /development in support of your principalship?
- j. How would you describe your leadership styles?
- k. How do you think your staff and learners respond to the way you lead?
- l. How do you think the parents and the community respond to the way you lead?
- m. Have you ever been aware of, or experienced, sexist and/or racist attitudes in your career and as a principal?
- n. What do you consider to be the challenges you face as a woman principal?
- o. What do you consider to be the positive factors of being a woman principal?
- p. Have you ever regretted your decision to become a school principal?

Please provide your responses to the above questions on a separate sheet and write as much as you wish to express your thoughts on each of the above questions

Thank you for your time

Appendix 4 – Gauteng Department of Education Approval letter



GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

For administrative use:
Reference no: D2015 / 130
enquiries: Diane Bunting 011 843 6303

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	22 June 2015
Validity of Research Approval:	22 June 2015 to 2 October 2015
Name of Researcher:	Chiramba O.F.
Address of Researcher:	Number 26 Northcliff Terrace; Sixth Road West; Northcliff; 2195
Telephone / Fax Number/s:	073 381 0500
Email address:	otiliachiramba@gmail.com
Research Topic:	Women's experiences of leadership: A case study of two female suburban High School Principals in Gauteng
Number and type of schools:	TWO Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Gauteng North and Gauteng West

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to the Principal, SGB and the relevant District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted. However participation is VOLUNTARY.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher has agreed to and may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

CONDITIONS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN GDE

1. The District/Head Office Senior Managers concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter;
2. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB);

Handwritten signature
2015/06/23

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Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research

9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0908
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

3. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned;
4. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Participation is voluntary and additional remuneration will not be paid;
5. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal and/or Director must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage;
6. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year;
7. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent and learner;
8. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources;
10. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations;
11. On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management with one Hard Cover, an electronic copy and a Research Summary of the completed Research Report;
12. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned; and
13. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director and school concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



Dr David Makhado

Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 2015/06/23

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Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research

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Appendix 5 – Ethics Clearance

Wits School of Education

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25 June 2015

Student Number: 904048

Protocol Number: 2015ECE027M

Dear Otilia Chiramba

Application for Ethics Clearance: Master of Education

Thank you very much for your ethics application. The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

Women's experiences of leadership: A case study of two female suburban high school principals in Gauteng

The committee recently met and I am pleased to inform you that **clearance was granted**. However, there were a few small issues which the committee would appreciate you attending to before embarking on your research.

The following comments were made:

- Provide the names of the schools in the project information section
- Be explicit on how the participants will be selected.
- The principal should be acknowledged as the custodian of the research site and as a participant in this study. The information letter to the principal must include a request for the permission to conduct the research in the school.

Please use the above protocol number in all correspondence to the relevant research parties (schools, parents, learners etc.) and include it in your research report or project on the title page.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

All the best with your research project.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Mabete".

Wits School of Education

011 717-3416

Cc Supervisor: Dr Caroline Faulkner

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