

**CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN PRIMARY SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS FROM THE ZF MGCAWU DISTRICT OF THE
NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE.**

by

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Declaration

I Yolande Meryl May with identity number [REDACTED] and student number [REDACTED], do hereby declare that this research dissertation submitted to the Central University of Technology, Free State for the Degree MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS: Master of Education (Research) on the challenges faced by women as primary school principals in leadership positions in the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province is my independent work and complies with the code of Academic Integrity, as well as other relevant policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Central University of Technology Free State; and has not been submitted before to any other institution by myself or any other person in fulfillment (or partial fulfillment) of the requirements for the attainment of any qualification. All the sources observed, questioned and interviewed have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



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Certification

I, Yolande Meryl May, hereby certify that I applied and got permission from the Central University of Technology, Free State to undertake M. Ed degree studies under the supervision of Professor Alfred Henry Makura. The title of my dissertation is: "Challenges faced by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province".



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Abstract

The study reports on the challenges faced by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. South African women in education school leadership positions are still facing various challenges post democracy. The study was conducted from a feminine perspective and employed the qualitative research methodology, allowing the researcher to collect relevant data in a natural school setting. The research objectives were to identify some of the challenges female primary school principals are faced with and to recommend ways women could manage and cope with the perceived challenges presented in school leadership positions. The convenience participant selection was used to identify the four principals participating in the study. Three data collection instruments were employed, namely semi structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires and observations. Research results were analysed using critical discourse analysis techniques as the study primarily focuses on women in school leadership positions. Research findings suggest that female primary school principals are able, competent and possess the necessary skills to effectively manage and deal with the daily challenges such as managing their schools; its learner's and staff members. Despite the challenges faced by women primary school principals the study recommends governments and the Department of Education to appoint more women to school leadership positions. With the necessary support, women are capable of transforming and actively contributing to the future of South African schools.

Key words: Women, primary school principals, leadership, challenges, ZF Mgcawu District.

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List of acronyms

ACE- Advanced Certificate in Education

CAC- Community Advisory Committee

DoE- Department of Education

HOD- Head of Department

N.C- Northern Cape

RSA- Republic of South Africa

SASA- South African School Act

SGB- School Governing Body

SMS-Senior Management Staff

SMT- Senior Management Team

USA- United States of America

ZFM - Zwelentlanga Fatman Mgcawu District Municipality

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Item</i>	<i>Page</i>
Title of Dissertation (author and Institution).....	(i)
Declaration.....	(ii)
Certification.....	(iii)
Abstract.....	(iv)
Acknowledgements.....	(v)
Abbreviations.....	(vi)
List of Acronyms.....	(vii)
Table of Contents.....	(viii)
List of Tables/Figures	(xi)
CHAPTER	
1	
BACKGROUND AND CONTEXTULISATION OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background of the study.....	2
1.3 The Statement of the Research Problem.....	4
1.4 Research questions.....	5
1.5 Aims and Objectives.....	5
1.5.1 Aims of the study.....	5
1.5.2 Objectives of the study.....	6
1.6 The purpose of the Study.....	6
1.7 The Significance of the Study.....	7
1.8 Definition of Key Terms.....	7
1.9 Assumptions.....	8
1.10 Delimitation of the Study.....	9
1.11 Limitations of the Study.....	10
1.12 Summary of the chapters.....	10
1.13 Conclusion.....	11
2	
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	
2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2 Theoretical framework.....	12
2.3 Challenges facing women in school leadership.....	14
2.4 Gender perceptions.....	22
2.5 Coping with challenges.....	25
2.6 Women and leadership.....	26
2.7 Leadership styles.....	28
2.8 Women's approach to school leadership.....	31
2.9 Summary of the Review of Related Literature.....	32
3	
METHODOLOGY	
3.1 Introduction.....	34
3.2 Research paradigm.....	34
3.2.1 Interpretive paradigm.....	35
3.3 Research Design.....	35
3.4 Ethnography and Phenomenology.....	36
3.5 Triangulation.....	37
3.6 The Population and Sample	38
3.6.1 The Population.....	38
3.6.2 The Sample.....	38

3.6.3 The Sampling Procedures.....	39
3.7 Data Sources.....	40
3.8 The Research Instruments.....	40
3.8.1 Interviews.....	41
3.8.1.1 Structured interviews.....	42
3.8.2 Questionnaires.....	43
3.8.3 Observations.....	43
3.9 Data Collection Procedures.....	44
3.10 Data Analysis Techniques.....	45
3.11 Discourse analysis	47
3.12 Critical discourse analysis.....	50
3.13 Credibility and Trustworthiness of the study data.....	51
3.14 Ethical considerations.....	55
3.15 Conclusion.....	57
4 PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA	
4.1 Introduction.....	58
4.2 Sample presentation.....	59
4.3 Data Presentation and Analysis / Interpretation.....	64
4.4 Data Discussion.....	86
4.5 Conclusion.....	91
5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
5.1 Introduction.....	93
5.2 Summary of the findings.....	93
5.3 Conclusions.....	99
5.4 Recommendations.....	101
5.5 Chapter conclusion.....	110
REFERENCES.....	111
APPENDICES.....	125
Appendix 1 Request to the Northern Cape Provincial Office to collect data.....	126
Appendix 2 Approval letter from the Northern Cape Provincial Office.....	127
Appendix 3 Request to collect data to the Northern Cape District Office.....	128
Appendix 4 Approval letter from the Northern Cape District Office.....	129
Appendix 5 Request to conduct research at schools.....	130
Appendix 6 Consent letters from the participating primary schools.....	131
Appendix 7 Consent form to the participating women primary school teachers.....	135
Appendix 8 Principals questionnaire.....	136
Appendix 9 Principals interview schedule.....	138
Appendix 10 Interview transcripts.....	139
Appendix 11 Subordinate teacher's questionnaire.....	155
Appendix 12 Subordinate teacher's consent form.....	158
Appendix 13 Observation schedule.....	159

LIST OF FIGURES, TABLES AND GRAPHS

FIGURES

Figure 10.1 Map of ZF Mgcawu District Municipality.....	9
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TABLES

Table 4.1: Context of the participating sample.....	59
Table 4.2: Profile of the participating principals.....	60
Table 4.3: Profile of the participating female subordinate teachers.....	61
Table 4.4: Summary of women principal's participants' biographical details.....	63
Table 4.5: Subordinate teachers' perceptions.....	71

PIE CHARTS AND GRAPHS

Pie chart 4.1: Percentage of participating primary school principals according to race..	62
Pie chart 4.2: Percentage of subordinate teachers according to race.....	62
Graph 4.3: Racial groupings of the total research participants.....	63

CHAPTER 1

THE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

South Africa's trajectories after the first democratic elections in 1994 are characterised by various experiences, which include the changes and progress that have been witnessed in the country's education system. The years between 1994 and 1999 witnessed a significant increase in the number of women entering the South African educational bureaucracy Mahlase (1997); Mathipa and Tsoka (2001); Chisholm (2001); de la Ray (2005); Moorosi (2006). Moreover, the number of women employed in South African school leadership positions, such as school principals, has also increased significantly between the years 2000 and 2015. The Department of education (2005:42) states that women dominate South Africa's education profession. The South African Department of Education (2005:24) affirms that "the majority of South Africa's education system is made up of female educators" and that women represent over 70% of all educators in the country's teaching force, while only 30% of women are employed as school principals (Department of education, 2005). However, despite this confirmation of significant women presence as teachers, the status of women as school principals in the country's education sector is still a cause for concern, as there exists an unequal representation of women in school administrative and leadership roles. A study conducted by de la Ray (2005:04) opines that the trend of women underrepresentation in South Africa's leadership positions is still evident even though there have been remarkable increases in the number of women in positions of power in the post-apartheid era. It should also be noted that as de la Ray (2005) and Maroosi (2006) assert, multiracial and democratic South Africa has overcome many challenges, yet "women continue to experience discrimination in personal, public and private spheres" (Kanjere 2009:245).

Maseko (2013:01) states, in concurrence with the prevalence of the marginalisation of women that:

Women continue to suffer from occupational segregation and rarely break through the so-called "glass ceiling" which separates them from top-level

leadership and professional positions. The causes that inhibit the performance of women as leaders range from structural and societal obstacles, race, and gender discrimination as well as socio-cultural and gender stereotypes that tend to undermine the ability of women as educational leaders.

As a South African woman, the issue surrounding the various challenges hindering the advancement of women in leadership positions serves a personal significance. Women in educational leadership positions face more challenges than men who also occupy school leadership positions (Maroosi 2006). As a result, the study focuses on the challenges faced by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District, the associated underrepresentation of women school principals and the coping strategies employed to manage the various challenges. The ZF Mgcawu District is made up of relatively small towns and schools wherein the number of women principals is significantly low (Department of Education 2006). Therefore, it appears that there is a dearth of studies regarding the challenges faced by South African women school principals, hence this study which focuses on women principals from the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa.

1.2 Background of the study

The researcher decided to conduct a study on the challenges faced by women in school leadership positions as primary school principals. The study was motivated by the researcher's personal views and perception as a woman pursuing a career in education management and leadership. Historically, gender and leadership in the South African education administration, the education and school environment have been dominated by female or women teachers (Blackmore and Kenway, 1993; Tallerico, 1997; Sachs and Blackmore, 1998), as noted in a study conducted by Chisholm (2001:387), yet education leadership positions, such as the position of school principal, are still a highly male-dominated position. The current study sought to establish some of the similarities and differences between the challenges faced by women working in school leadership positions and the coping strategies employed by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. All of the primary schools participating in this study were

idiosyncratic and under the management of different school principals and therefore are assumed to face different challenges.

South African female teachers were effectively excluded from fulfilling meaningful roles as leaders at school level before 1994. A number of women in 21st century education find themselves faced with diverse challenges in school leadership positions. The Department of Education (2005) has, since the dawn of democracy in South Africa, promulgated a number of policies in an attempt to actualise distributed leadership in South African schools. The domination of female teachers in the public sector, most particularly in primary schooling (foundation and intermediate phase) mirrors an important aspect of gender roles in society. This increasing feminisation of the teaching profession is ironically pitted with a women's underrepresentation in school administrative and leadership positions within the majority of the country's schools. The Department of Education (2005:43) states that by province, primary school level statistics show that women teachers account for between 67% and 75% of teachers. Furthermore, the same document, Department of Education (2005:43), states that more recent figures illustrate that only between 30% and 38% of South African principals are female, although as indicated above, over 70% of the professionals are female and 62% of South Africa's principals are males. The same skewed statistics can be seen in the number of female deputy principals (38, 4%) which are significantly lower in comparison to males (61, 6%) in deputy principal positions. Hence, the Department of Education (2005:44) raised the question, "whether it is equitable or sound practice for senior and managerial posts within schools to be disproportionately filled by males in a predominantly female profession. This question should also be raised whether policy regulations for promotion into senior school level positions are actively redressing these imbalances".

The South Africa's education system is in an ever changing educational environment and as a result, the country has made progress and women are becoming increasingly significant in male-dominated leadership positions. There have, according to the International Labour Office (2009), been heavy investments into women's education and changes in labour legislation, and the sharing of family responsibilities with men, which have established the preconditions for women to

participate equally in labour markets. However, the researcher is of the view that the rate at which this is happening is disconcertingly slow and nowhere near the desired level where gender inequalities and discrimination are raised to satisfactory levels. Hence, this study sought to uncover the challenges faced by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District and suggest as well as implement efficient and effective coping strategies.

1.3 The Statement of the Research Problem

The researcher sought to reveal some of the challenges faced by women in school leadership positions within the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province. It came to the researcher's attention, prior to conducting the study that, there were limited studies on the topic of women in education leadership positions. There is also a research existing gap on knowledge about the challenges faced by women school principals (Khumalo 2006) specifically on women primary school principals from the Northern Cape Province. As a citizen of the Northern Cape Province, the researcher recognised that the number of women in school leadership positions, specifically in the position of school principal, is problematic. Despite the strides made by the Employment Equity Act and Affirmative Action with regards to the appointment of more women into school leadership positions within South Africa, women continue to experience challenges in their school administrative roles (Maseko 2013:03). Statistics from the Department of Education (2002:24) indicate that the number of female school principals in South African schools were significantly lower than that of men in school leadership positions, irrespective of the impressive strides made by the South African school government post 1994. Available evidence suggests that there is a gap in the literature on the topic of challenges faced by women in primary school principal and leadership positions in the rural ZF Mgcawu District. Limited research studies have documented the various challenges faced by women in school management and leadership positions in the ZF Mgcawu District. In addition, fewer suggestions on the coping strategies used by these women in leadership positions have been highlighted (Khumalo 2006:02). There appears to be no research that investigates women principals' experiences in school leadership in diverse contexts such as South Africa. Thus, a gap exists in the literature, specifically on what has

been written and observed about the challenges with regards to racial or ethnical issues in leadership positions faced by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province.

The study sets out to establish alternative ways that women in school leadership positions can use to find a balance between managing their schools, personal and professional responsibilities. As a result, the researcher sets out to unpack and suggest efficient and effective coping strategies which women principals administer in an attempt to address personal and professional challenges that come with occupying education leadership positions in South African schools.

1.4 Research questions

The study examines the challenges faced by women as primary school principals in the ZF Mgcawu District. The following research questions are considered in this study:

1. What challenges do women primary school principals perceive as barriers in leadership positions in schools within the ZF Mgcawu District?
2. What perceptions are held by women subordinate teachers regarding gender specific leadership challenges faced by their school principal?
3. How do women primary school principals employ specific coping strategies in addressing the perceived challenges?
4. What leadership styles are displayed by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District?

1.5 Aims and objectives

1.5.1 Aims of the study

The study aimed to investigate the challenges faced by female primary school principals in the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape Province and secondly, to commend ways on how women can manage and overcome challenges prohibiting them from school leadership positions. Thirdly it aimed to propose an effective school management model that female school principals can adopt in managing their schools and finely the study aimed to motivate more women to pursue a career in educational leadership positions such as that of school principal.

1.5.2 Objectives of the study

The above stated purpose of the study necessitated the formulation of a number of objectives. The first objective was to establish the challenges faced by women school principals in the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province. The second objective was to reveal the perceptions held by women subordinate teachers regarding gender specific challenges faced by their school principal. The third objective was to effectively incorporate coping strategies and coping mechanisms. The fourth objective of the study was to determine the leadership styles displayed by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District.

1.6 The Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the various challenges faced by women in school leadership positions in primary schools within the ZF Mgcawu District. The researcher sought to identify the gap between what has been written and that which has not been written on the topic. The study also set out to unpack the perceptions held by the participating female subordinate teachers regarding the challenges faced by their school principals. It also investigated some of the traditional challenges or barriers against women primary school principals by focusing on women's personal characteristics, experiences and school location. The study also explored some of the various coping strategies employed by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District. Maroosi (2006) is of the opinion that although women possess the necessary qualifications they are still hesitant to apply for school leadership positions due to unique challenges such as gender stereotypes, prejudice and biased attitudes, which come with being appointed as a school manager or principal. Hence, the study sought to uncover successful coping strategies and leadership styles employed by women school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District in order that valuable advice and lessons can be adopted by other aspiring women school principals from South Africa as they encounter their career trajectories.

1.7 The Significance of the Study

The research on the challenges faced by women primary school principals in leadership positions takes an in-depth look at the vast challenges faced by today's women in educational leadership positions. The study is of significance in that it attempts to provide insights and inform education stakeholders, including educators and the Department of Education, of the underrepresentation of female primary school principals in the Northern Cape Province and the gender specific challenges faced by female principals. The study hopes to raise awareness and add to existing knowledge regarding the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions within the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province. Through this study, the researcher hopes to provide women primary school principals with insights on coping strategies that can be useful in addressing these challenges. The research study serves as a voice for women from the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape Province aspiring to higher school administrative positions such as being a school principal. Women primary school principals have the ability to make a positive contribution towards the development of South African schools and this can be realised through the Government and Department of Education's implementation of training and mentoring programmes for women in leadership positions. This will empower women school leaders from the ZF Mgcawu District, better equipped and enable them to function more effectively in their positions as school principals. The researcher is of the view that the study shall assist with and contribute to further research on the subject, provide alternative solutions and address the issue of the underrepresentation of women in school management positions.

1.8 Definitions of Key Terms

The following key terms are defined in the context of this study:

1. Women leaders

The term women leaders refer to women or females occupying the position of primary school principal in the ZF Mgcawu District.

2. Discrimination

Ashcroft, Bigger and Coates (1996:19) state that “discrimination is making a distinction between groups (race or gender) of people in order to consciously select them for unfavorable treatment”.

3. Gender stereotypes

The Department of Education (2007:08) defines gender stereotypes as social attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female. Gender stereotypes are a set of beliefs about what it means to be female or male.

4. Leadership style

According to the Department of Education (2008:42), the term leadership style refers to the approach or manner of influencing others by providing direction, implementing plans and motivating people.

5. Challenges

Challenges, as defined by Madlala (2007:08), are the difficulties faced by women which this study views as problematic.

6. Primary schools

The term primary schools is drawn from the Department of Basic Education's (2015:43) definition that it is any school offering at least one grade in the range Grades R to 7 and no grades in the Grade 8 to 12 range.

1.9 Assumptions

The study is underpinned by the following assumptions:

1. The female primary school principals are all willing to share their experiences and challenges with the researcher.
2. The female primary school principals are all from the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape Province.
3. The female principals are all faced with the same or similar challenges with regard to getting into the position of school principal.
4. The participating women principals have all experienced challenges such as gender and race discrimination.

5. Women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District are all frequently perceived in stereotyped roles by fellow community members.
6. The participating ZF Mgcawu District women primary school principals have all succeeded in both their professional and personal lives.

1.10 Delimitation of the study

The research study, which falls in the field of Education Management, was conducted in the ZF Mgcawu District Municipality of the Northern Cape Province. The ZF Mgcawu District is situated in the North Western part of the Northern Cape Province and forms part of one of South Africa's nine Provinces. Relevant data was obtained from two of the ZF Mgcawu's key towns, Upington and Postmasburg. The researcher also included one farm school from Wilgenhoutsdrif, located 60 km from Upington. According to the ZFM's Draft Integrated Development Plan 2014/2015 and 2012-2017, both Upington and Wilgenhoutsdrif fall under the Khara-Hais Municipality which covers an area of 21780 km² and Postmasburg which falls under the Tsantsabane Municipality and covers an area of 18330 km² (see Figure 10.1) in the Northern Cape Province. The study focuses on the challenges faced by women primary school principals, more specifically on the challenges faced by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District.

Figure 10.1

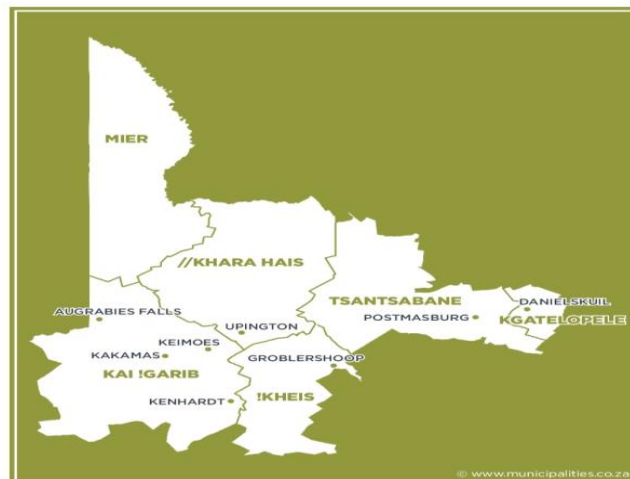


Figure 10.1 Map of ZF Mgcawu District Municipality.

Image source: www.municipalities.co.za. Date of access 14 June 2016

1.11 Limitations of the study

The researcher conducted several interviews with the participating female primary school principals during the collection of relevant data. The data that were generated is limited to what the respondents were willing to share with the researcher. The research questions were of a personal nature thus limiting the responses that the research respondents were willing to share with the researcher. The interview sessions were tape-recorded and conducted in English which was not the first language of the majority of the study respondents. This may have affected their ability to freely and fluently express themselves. The study was also limited to selected schools from two of the key towns in the ZF Mgacwu District. The researcher selected the two towns basing on her familiarity with the area. The issue surrounding travelling between the two provinces limited the amount of time available for the researcher to conduct the interviews. The research could have resulted differently if the study had been conducted in the Free State Province where the researcher spends the most time. A further limitation related to the narrowness of conducting the research study in only one of the nine provinces of South Africa as this reduces the applicability of its findings to the whole of South Africa. The research results might have yielded a different conclusion had the researcher interviewed four more primary school principals from each of South Africa's nine provinces and this would have led to a slight difference in the research findings and results. Despite the above limitations, the research findings are still worthwhile. The research was indeed conducted in the largest province of South Africa and prior to this study, limited research had been done on the challenges faced by women as school principals in the Northern Cape Province (Khumalo 2006:09).

1.12 Summary of the chapters

The research study is divided into five chapters. A brief summary of the chapters is given below.

Chapter 1

Chapter one outlined the background of the study, research questions, problem statement, significance of the study, theoretical framework, delimitation and limitation of the study.

Chapter 2

The chapter reviews literature focusing on the challenges faced by female managers in the education sector, their perceptions of the challenges, the effect of the challenges and possible coping strategies that the women primary school principals may employ to address the perceived challenges.

Chapter 3

This chapter presents the research methodology of the study. It outlines the qualitative research approach used to collect the study's data. The chapter also describes the study's research design, population and sample, as well as the data collection and analysis methods.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 focuses on the findings of the investigation. It presents and analyses the data collected from the study's exploration of the challenges faced by women in leadership position using a sample size of 16 respondents.

Chapter 5

This chapter presents the study's final summaries and conclusions. It also outlines the researcher's recommendations for further research.

1.13 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the background to the research problem, the problem statement of the study, as well as the general and specific study aims and objectives. It also outlined the research questions, purpose of the study, significance of the study and the method used to gather information and generate knowledge for the study. The chapter also outlined the delimitations and limitations of the study.

The next chapter reviews literature related to the research topic.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 introduced the research study and outlined the background of the study, problem statement, research questions, significance of the study, theoretical framework and the delimitation and limitation of the study. This chapter focuses on a review of the literature that focuses on the challenges faced by women in leadership positions, the characteristics of the positions, perceptions held by women primary school principals and their subordinate teachers regarding gender specific challenges and that on strategies that can be effectively employed to cope up with the daily challenges. Numerous international authors (Shakeshaft 1987; Rosser 2003; Coleman 2005; Peterson and Runyan 2009; Makura 2010; Shakeshaft and Grogan 2011) have written on the subject of women in leadership positions and considered the reasons for the underrepresentation of women in educational management. The issue concerning women underrepresentation in the South African school leadership and management positions has been reviewed by authors such as Greyvenstein and Van der Westhuizen (1992); Chisholm (2001); de la Ray (2005); Moroosi (2010). The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to determine the perceived challenges women in leadership positions, specifically women primary school principals, experience in school administrative and leadership positions, while also identifying some of the challenges experienced by women principals from developed and developing countries.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This section details the theory guiding the research study. It explains the main tenants of the theory as well as how the theory relates to the study. Merriam (1998:45) defines theoretical framework as a "lens through which the researcher views the world". Imenda and Muyangwa (2006:90) also state that "[a] theoretical framework therefore, is the specific perspective within a given conceptual framework which a given researcher uses to explore, interpret or explain events or behaviour of the research participants under study. Hence, a theoretical framework represents an integrated understanding of issues, within a given field of study, which enables the

researcher to address specific research problems”. It should be noted that, as stated by Bertram and Christiansen (2004:117), the past thirty plus years have witnessed the evolution of feminism to the extent that it no longer comprises a single set of ideas. The research study thus incorporates liberal feminism as a theoretical framework. The purpose of the study framework is to provide the researcher with the necessary guidelines for the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the research data. In this study, the researcher seeks to investigate the extent that liberal feminism assists in explaining women primary school principal's handling of the challenges they face. The study views liberal feminism from the viewpoint of the study participant; primary school principals and the barriers that prevent or disadvantage women in leadership positions.

According to Savin-Beden and Major (2013:134) the theoretical framework guides the researcher thinking about the subject under study and it is intended as an "interpretive or philosophical lens" through which to view data. The discrimination and prejudiced attitudes towards women present one of the vast challenges against women in school leadership roles and this justifies the use of the liberal feminist framework. Scott and Usher (1996:121) state that “since the 1960’s liberal feminism has been the relationship between liberalism and feminism which has underpinned the unequal opportunities prevalent in areas of education and social policy”. The concept itself is defined by Hesse-Biber (2012:265) as “the belief that women are suppressed in contemporary society because they suffer in just discrimination”. In addition, Becks-Moody (2004:51) acknowledges the lack of an over-arching definition feminism notes that, “[d]espite the lack of ability to accept one generic definition, feminists have one common goal: improving the lives of women socially, economically, and politically”. Hesse-Biber (2012:265) adds that liberal feminism seeks no special privileges for women and simply demands that everyone receive equal consideration without discrimination on the basis of their gender. Hence, the employment of liberal feminism as a theoretical framework for the study suggest that women and men have to be treated as equals and should have equal opportunities.

The interpretation of data focuses on the way the researcher relates the results and findings to existing theoretical frameworks (Mouton 2011:109). Trainor and Graue

(2013:13) gives a good description of what a theoretical framework entails by describing it as bringing together assumptions about a particular topic and showing how they present or enacted in real life. This study's results and findings shall be based on or related to the feminist theoretical framework which guides the actions of the research through a set of beliefs or paradigms. Thus, the study shall use liberal feminism to determine the extent to which the female primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District relate to and construct their world.

2.3 Challenges facing women in school leadership positions

Madlala (2007:08) defines challenges as factors that manifest as difficulties or problems which are faced by women in education leadership positions. These challenges include; gender inequality, gender discrimination, and stereotyping, intrinsic and extrinsic challenges. These are noted in a study by Moorosi (2007:507) on the challenges faced by women principals in South Africa. It is documented that women in the South African education system have over the past years had an increased access to management and leadership positions in organisations such as the school, yet the underrepresentation of women is still a cause for concern. This observation is confirmed by the Department of Education (2006) in their statement that women form the majority (68%) of teachers in South Africa. Moorosi (2007) suggests that structural barriers within organisations aid to the establishment of low numbers of women in leadership positions. The structural barriers within organisations have been developed or created by and for men as leadership has historically been associated as a masculine activity. In endorsing this view, Piterman (2008:09) points out that a number of studies conducted internationally have identified correlations between a multitude of structural and cultural forces and the under-representation of women at senior level (Chisholm 2001; Coleman 2005 Shakeshaft and Grogan 2011). An Australian study on the culture of leadership and authority in corporate environments reveals the significance of the role of gender, sexuality and power in shaping the experiences for women (Mills and Tancred 1992; Burton and Ryall 1995; Baird 2007; Piterman 2008). According to Nichols and Nichols (2014:27) women have historically been associated and described by their stereotypical qualities of being compassionate, understanding, nurturing, emotional

and supportive, while men are described as powerful, independent and driven. These societal misconceptions contribute to the barriers and challenges that are encountered by women in educational leadership positions.

Tiao (2006:37) states that women should prepare themselves both personally and professionally in order for them to be successful and excel in the traditionally male space of education leadership. Maseko (2013:01) noted that women in South Africa have been discriminated in the past 20 years (1995-2016) as evidenced in the way they have been denied access to top management and leadership positions. Discrimination against women persistently continues even though more women are getting educated and hold more jobs worldwide than ever before. Most women continue to suffer from occupational segregation in the workplace and rarely break through the so-called "*glass ceiling*" which separates them from top level leadership positions. Women who do manage to break through the "glass ceiling" are faced with serious challenges that compromise their performance in school leadership positions. Therefore the reinforcing of existing stereotypes about women's ability to perform at top levels results in disempowering women. The underrepresentation of women in top positions in South Africa is slowly gaining recognition. Madlala (2007:10) states that although the underrepresentation is now under focus, there are still disproportional numbers of women in top positions and those occupying these positions encounter barriers that impede progress. Thus, women face many challenges which stand in the way of their success as leaders.

2.3.1 Gender Equality

According to de la Rey (2005) while a lot has been done on a global scale to ensure that more women are employed at all levels of governance, they are still in the minority when it comes to authoritative and leadership positions. Gender inequality plays a significant role in South Africa's education system. However, the South African Schools Act seeks to promote a democratic change in the community by integrating various school models into one model that should be acceptable to all and grant equal opportunities to all (Campher 2002:40). This Act protects the diversity of cultures and languages as well as the right of the learner's parents and educators.

Furthermore, the fact that there are more women than men in the educational system in South Africa would suggest that women be offered greater opportunities to become heads and make it to senior leadership level than men. According to the Department of Education, in the year 2012, 4% of women in schools were head teachers compared to 6% of men.

2.3.2 Gender discrimination

Discrimination occurs when an employee suffers unfavourable or unfair treatment due to their sex, race, religion, national origin, disabled or veteran status, or other legally protected characteristics. South African law prohibits discrimination in a number of work-related areas, including recruiting, hiring, job evaluations, promotion policies, training, compensation and disciplinary action. Discrimination can be portrayed in different ways: direct or indirect. Although there is a relative absence of women in educational leadership roles, researchers (Coleman 2005; Peterson and Runyan 2009; Makura 2010) have paid some attention to gender as noted in Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011:31) view that “the literature that identifies as gender research is almost entirely research on women in administration”. Previously, Khumalo (2006:01) observed that the “department of education produced policies to address gender equity in the work place. Amongst other Acts, the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 (RSA 1998) and Administrative action gave more women the opportunities of being appointed to top management. The National Gender Equity Task Team released a report that provided for the assurance that all those finding themselves amongst groups that were previously disadvantaged or discriminated against including women would be considered for promotional opportunities”. This supports Moorosi’s (2010:547) statement that “the Bill of Rights of 1996, guarantees equal treatment while the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 (RSA 1998) guarantees equal opportunity to employment and promotion”. The existence of such policies in South Africa is however contradicted by the way women are still facing challenges and strive to prove their value and worth in their current leadership positions. Furthermore, the majority of women in administrative positions hold positions that are considered feminine and are excluded from any masculine position. This supports the Department of Education’s (2002:16) observation that women

managers in education encounter barriers such as male employees not accepting female manager authority and showing unhappiness over friendships between female managers and other employees. The aim of the current study, which is aware of some progress that has been experienced in the sector, is to raise awareness of the continued discrimination of women in school leadership positions within South African schools.

2.3.3 Gender Stereotypes

Stereotypes can influence the way in which men and women are perceived in the workplace. Gender stereotypes are indeed still pervasive and widely shared. Brundrett, Burton and Smith (2005:45) opines that “stereotypes prevail throughout societies that link males with leadership and women with supportive and subordinate roles”. Gender impacts the style in which leaders decide to lead and how they lead. The subject of gender and leadership is closely linked with the discussion on gender discrimination which considers the sexist views and stereotypical statements made against different sexes. Brundrett, Burton and Smith (2005:46) observe that education is a community of practice located in a feminised and highly gender-segregated occupation centred on children”. Brundrett, Burton and Smith (2005:46) note further that “generally men have no cause to question their status and are accepted in it, whereas a woman is likely to have to explain her position”. Thus, women are placed in positions where they often feel the need to justify themselves in administrative positions and as leaders. A number of women in leadership also endure gender stereotypes and discrimination. Brundrett, Burton and Smith (2005:46) state that a majority of the women they interviewed felt the need to justify their existence as leaders and managers, both at the time of application for headship and while serving as heads or leaders. The existence of a dominant male-centred image of a leader compels women who take on the role as leaders; in this case the role as school principals, to constantly deal with the inherent contradiction of being in a powerful position but at the same time not being what is expected. Brundrett, Burton and Smith (2005:46) also note that “female leaders are faced with being judged both physically and on terms of how well they carry out their leadership and work duties”. Stereotyping is, therefore, part of the many challenges serving as barriers to

leadership positions. Nonetheless, the advancement of women into leadership positions should not be accompanied with obstacles such as sacrificing having a family. Brundrette, Burton and Smith (2005) observed that only half of the women he had interviewed had children and childlessness was becoming increasingly common. He observes that a “proportion of young women interviewed, were making the choice to remain childless in view of the demands of the job, something that is not necessary for men to do” (Brundrett, Burton and Smith 2005:46). Women in leadership should not face unfair consequences in their pursuit for a career as school principals. As such, acts of gender specific discrimination in South African schools should be actively addressed and abolished. Ironically, beliefs about differences between men and women persist and these impact on labour market outcomes. Men and women share descriptions of 'typical' men and women and both tend to describe men and women in terms of opposites; men typically being described as strong and active and women as weak and passive. Moreover, male traits tend to be valued more highly than female traits. The achievement orientation of men also tends to be valued more highly than the nurturing and affiliation typically ascribed to women. Contrary to the commonly held stereotypes, research indicates that there are few gender differences in terms of abilities, attitudes or commitment, or in management styles and leadership attributes. In fact, a number of researchers (Growe and Montgomery 2000; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs; Tamkins 2004 and Makura 2010) have shown that a good manager is described predominantly in masculine terms so that not only are most managers men but good management is thought to be a 'manly business'.

2.3.4 Intrinsic barriers

Intrinsic barriers are internal barriers in the form of behaviours and attitudes by women which influence their lives and regarded, according to Madlala (2007) and Van der Westhuizen (1997:545) as the “so-called” deficiencies or inequalities possessed by women. These internal or personal barriers influence the lives of women and are regarded as the inadequacies within women that are linked their femaleness. The barriers are manifested in the society’s traditional and stereotypical attitudes towards the feminine characteristics, which can be classified into socialisation, sex- stereotypes and multiple roles. Thus, women are socialised in a

particular way which leads them to exhibit psychological characteristics or certain personality attributes. Women often internalise the negative stereotypes about their role and abilities, which leads to them to underperform and not reach their full potential. According to the DoE (2005:43) the majority of South African teachers, particularly those from the Northern Cape Province, are women and the majority of school managers are men. Madlala (2007:11) states that there has been a gradual increase in the number of women reaching leadership positions and that the basic societal assumptions, based on the distribution of power in society, endorse men as leaders and identify women in subordinate roles. A study by Mathipa and Tsoko (2001) places the challenges women view as barriers into the following categories; cultural, psychological and family related barriers. The psychological barriers include, low self-confidence, low self-esteem, lack of aspiration, fear of failure or success, lack of community support, lack of support from subordinates and less career orientation. The second category includes family related factors such as the difficulty of balancing career and family responsibilities, role/family conflict and lack of support from spouses.

2.3.4.1 Psychological factors

Psychological factors are vested within the person and these, in the context of this study, are associated with how women in leadership perceive themselves. Coetzer (2004:03) believes that all management behaviour starts from within the individual's deepest self. The way a person behaves is also influenced by the way that person views him or herself. Coetzer (2004:03) points out further that the motives that determine an individual's specific behaviour stem from a very specific frame of reference which is embedded in their subconscious.

2.3.4.2 Women's low self-esteem / confidence

The South African Department of Education (2004:13) points out that the feeling of inferiority lets women managers allow anyone to walk over them instead of making them take charge. It is of paramount importance for a manager to first accept him or herself because a low self-esteem affects one's performance at work. Coetzer (2004:4) states that a manager's failure to live with themselves means that they will not be able to get along with others. Coetzer (2004:3) also points out that many

individuals in senior positions experience major problems with inferiority complexes and are constantly trying to prove themselves at all cost.

Stereotypical beliefs such as those about women's inability to be competitive and decisive and perceptions that they are often emotionally unstable continue to plague women managers (Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs and Tamkins 2004). Women are generally viewed as unable to control their tempers and always throwing temper tantrums when expected to manage any given situation. Women are also considered as bearing grudges and not forgetting and forgiving easily when hurt. Chisholm (2001) states that an approach that draws attention to the problems women face as individuals, would try to affect their individual psychological factors (such as women's confidence and self-esteem) which prevent them from putting themselves forward for leadership positions. Finally, Chisholm (2001) reported that self-esteem and confidence are common factors which impede women managers' effectiveness in their profession. A woman manager may be her worst enemy as her attitudes and beliefs about herself and others can prove to be her worst enemy. This is particularly the case if women believe that they are not good enough for the position or that any criticism is a personal attack. A feeling of inferiority makes women managers let everyone walk all over themselves instead of taking charge. The opposite of this, the belief that you know it all and nobody can tell you because you are the manager, is equally destructive.

2.3.5 Extrinsic barriers

Madlala (2007:18) refers to these as the 'barriers imposed on the individual by various factors external to one's own state, such as culture, institutional structure, practices and patterns that restrict access to administrative positions. In the next section the researcher elaborates on some of these factors.

2.3.5.1 Cultural factors

Bush and Middlewood (2013:53) opine that the concept of culture has become increasingly significant in education from the 1970's into the twenty-first century. According to Handy (1987:107) in Van der Westhuizen (2002:120) the word culture refers to the inherited ideas, values, habits, traditions, knowledge and beliefs of a country, society or group of people that motivate and encourage people to enhance

and cultivate traditions. Van der Westhuizen (2002:120) states that culture includes everything people do and create as members of a specific society, which is a body of people with similar knowledge and convictions. As in most aspects of life cultural beliefs, manifest themselves in the school situation. The cultural factors here include beliefs held by individuals within the school as an organisation that contribute to the organisational culture adopted by the school. Bush and Middlewood (2013:53) assert that culture in the school relates to the informal aspects of the organisation rather than their official elements. Khumalo (2006:11) also states that teachers are part of society and carry with them their cultural beliefs as individuals in the organisation. Hence, as noted by Bush and Middlewood (2013:53), cultural elements such as beliefs and values, are at the heart of an organisation with the ideologies held by individuals influencing their behaviour and the behaviour of others.

Teachers bring with them their cultural belief systems when they enter schools. Dimmock and Walker (2002) outline different societal dimensions, also referred to as national culture, which include male domination of decision-making in social and professional life that play a significant role in society. According to Khumalo (2006) some cultures believe that women are inferior to men and cannot be managers over men as they consider women to be weak and not fit for management positions. Bush and Middlewood (2013:56) evaluated the impact of these cultural beliefs in 89 secondary schools in the Shaanxi Province carried out by Coleman, Qiang and Li (1998) that attribute such inequalities to the continuing dominance of patriarchy. Moorosi (2010) observes that South African women's ability to lead is often compromised by cultural and traditional values held by society. Society has established a predetermined perception about women as managers which affect women negatively or positively. The Department of Education (2004:17) argues that men and women, who hold the values that consider women managers to be inferior to men, are more likely to create difficulties for women managers. According to the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 (RSA 1998:12) the dominance of males in management has resulted in a culture in which male behaviour patterns are perceived to be the norm and a situation where women often find it difficult to be accepted as equals by their male colleagues.

2.3.5.2 Social factors

A study conducted by Olubunmi (2013:02) on breaking the barrier of stereotypes in higher education management in Nigeria found out that African traditional belief and philosophy rated women as second class citizens and considered them as subordinate to men. This view is prominently manifested in the African day to day life, starting from the micro society (the home) to the larger communities in Africa, most especially in African societies such as Nigeria.

2.3.5.3 Organisational culture

Organisational culture is defined as the realities, values, symbols and rituals held in common by members of an organisation which contribute to the creation of norms and expectations of behaviour (Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs and Tamkins 2004). It defines conduct within an organisation, determines what is and is not valued, and how authority is asserted (James and Saville-Smith, 1992). In some instances, this influence extends to systemic discrimination, which is defined as a complex of direct and/or indirect discriminatory practices that operate to produce general employment disadvantages for a particular group. Therefore, the organisational and managerial values in these organisations tend to be characterised by stereotypical views of women's roles, attributes, preferences and commitments.

2.4 Gender Perceptions

2.4.1 Perceptions of women in school leadership positions

Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge and Ngcobo (2008:78) state that the most important element of managing a school is ensuring quality leadership. School principals need to create the necessary structure and determine the essential procedures for the efficient functioning of the school. According to Campher (2002:42), the management of a school is a complex process that includes the development of tactical plans for use in the implementation of strategies and control of resources in an attempt to achieve organisational objectives. The role of the school principals, according to Naidu et al (2008:80), is made up of a number of administrative skills which include; "problem analysis, judgment, organisational ability and decisiveness. The second category of principals' skill is interpersonal which include leadership, sensitivity, oral communication and written communication. The third category of principal's skill is

intrapersonal which include stress tolerance, range of interest, personal motivation and educational values". Khumalo (2006:11) states that the challenges women face as school principals originate from a multiplicity of factors. The discussion in this chapter seeks to identify the challenges women principals experience in education. Studies conducted by authors such as Coleman (2000) and Shakeshaft (2007) examined the barriers that diminish women from reaching administrative positions and document a number of reasons that prevent women from moving into formal leadership positions in schools. According to Shakeshaft (2007:04), the barriers to women in school management are primarily rooted in the devaluation of women, sex-discrimination, and an absence of support systems, family responsibilities and lack of job interest. Shakeshaft (2007) states further that sex discrimination in educational leadership is rooted in the devaluation of women in society. The worldwide devaluation of women is among other factors what cause or lead to women resisting the pursuit of positions of power in schools. A study conducted by Coleman (2000) found out that the resistance to female leadership in the United Kingdom was not different from the experiences of women from Uganda and the United States of America. It has been documented across cultures that men and women are viewed as different. Although progress has been made and equality has been established and gained by societies across the world, different expectations and attitudes are still held for men and women. Therefore, the negative attitudes held towards women in pursuit of administrative positions in schools contribute to the lack of women advancing in school administration.

2.4.2 Perceptions of Female subordinate teachers

The Department of Education (2004:16) identifies the following reasons as barriers to women in school administration; fellow female employees not accepting women managers' authority; male employees not accepting women authority and female managers or employees viewing leaders as friends and not as managers. The Department of Education (Republic of South Africa) (2004:17) also argues that men and women who hold values that consider women are inferior to men are more likely to create difficulties for women managers. The Department of Education (Republic of South Africa) (2004:17) states further that such circumstances could result in men

resisting the authority of a women manager and perceiving attempts at asserting herself and ensuring that strategic objectives are met as a desire to humiliate them. Nonetheless, there are possibilities that the position of women can be improved for the better. Ogunsanya (2004:147) postulates that men in Nigeria are more likely to get involved in signing protocols and influencing government to embrace the laws and statutes that protect women if they are made to understand the challenges faced by women.

2.4.3 Women's perceptions on gender specific challenges

Brundrett, Burton, and Smith (2005:37) state that "leadership is a gendered concept". This view is strengthened by the observation by Brundrett et al (2005:35) further state that "even though women occupy positions of leadership and responsibility, there is a tendency to assume that the rightful leader is male. Research has consistently shown that the qualities that are identified as those of a leader or manager are also the qualities that are quite independently assessed by both men and women as being those of men". Brundrett, Burton and Smith (2005:38) also note that "the identification of leadership with men is deeply ingrained in our understanding of society and family and this continues even though considerable changes have been taking place in terms of work participation. However, there is still an automatic association with support and nurturing and an association of men with work in the public sphere". Nonetheless, women's positions and roles in the work place are also influenced by the societal expectations of what they have to do at the home front. As noted by Hensen (2014:11) "it is impossible to think about gender conflicts in the workplace without considering the connection between work and home responsibilities. In a nation claiming to eradicate discrimination, women continue to have conflicts and frustrations in the work place and home". To Hensen (2014:25), "stereotypes for both men and women plague educators, as they experience conflicts if they do not behave within the stereotypes". The author elaborates by stating that men's conflicts or challenges stem from some wondering about the manliness of men who would remain in the classroom and take orders instead of giving them. Hensen (2014:26) also notes that "historically, superintendents preferred to hire women as teachers because they were less likely to question administrative authority and policies than men and that male administrators managed to find other males by raising above the

sphere of women and associating literally with men in business, government and other organisations thus keeping women in their place”.

2.5 Coping with challenges

According to Tiao (2006:40) “women today are still the major caregivers for children and the elderly in their families. They continue to struggle between work and family and their careers are more likely to be interrupted when conflict occurs”. Thus, it is the researcher's assumption that women have more personal related responsibilities towards their family members. Women assume the role of primary care giver and as a result face additional challenges as they are now responsible for juggling more than they usually would. Tiao (2006:41) further states that women can deal with their psychological barriers if motivated and encouraged to focus on “improving their individual strengths and confidence”. Tiao's (2006:41) study underscores that “the future woman leader needs to know herself, be herself, do her best, use her strengths, recognise her limitations, view things positively, have confidence, establish quality support systems and take assertive action”. As a result, women can make careful arrangements such as delegating both family and work-related tasks, which leads to the reduction of burdens at home. Women also benefit from support systems such as hiring full and or part-time housemaids and baby sitters to assist with childcare and everyday household responsibilities such as cooking and cleaning. Studies involving fourteen women were conducted and these obtained similar conclusions and emphasised a time management strategy that combines personal and professional obligations (Coleman 2005, Shakeshaft and Grogan 2011). In addition, Gupton and Slick's (1996:35) study on women's coping strategies identifies five methods that address the challenges faced by female principals in order to function effectively and these are: encouraging female principals to cultivate a desire to succeed, learning to be comfortable with pursuing power, using a participatory leadership style, broadening one's educational qualifications, and developing mentoring and development skills.

2.6 Women and Leadership

This section of the review of related literature outlines specific leadership theories and explores the more popular leadership styles employed by women in school leadership positions.

2.6.1 Women in school leadership positions

Leadership is defined by Yukl (2006:08) as the operation where groups of people are persuaded to agree on certain matters concerning how things need to be done and why they need to be done in a certain way. It is the process of accommodating all stakeholders in an effort to achieve shared objectives. Both women and men occupy leadership positions in South African schools and different challenges may arise as is common in all managerial positions. The researcher draws on additional readings that worldwide men are usually imagined as occupying the leadership position in organisations such as the school (Rosener 1990; Gouws and Kotze 2007). Brundrett Burton and Smith al (2005:45) is of the opinion that both men and women possess the essential qualities needed by leaders and managers. Therefore, various studies have examined the different ways in which men and women lead (Grove and Montgomery 2000; Mdluli 2002; Tiao 2006; Lowen 2009; Hensen 2014). On these readings, the study assumes that good leaders should possess great leadership qualities irrespective of their gender. According to Collins (2001) “great leadership involves being effective in building for the future, setting appropriate goals, satisfying others by making yourself and others feel good and conducting one-self in an ethical manner”. Thus the study opines that the success of the school leader should be based on the leadership approach and values they instilled as school leaders irrespective of their gender.

2.6.2 Ways of women leadership

Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011:05) note that there exists a fairly rich body of literature on women school principals, women superintendents or Heads of Departments and other women in education. The literature on women leaders offers a clear picture of women’s professional activities and decision making. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011:06) thus have identified five themes that illustrate what women leaders in education pay attention to and these are; rational leadership, leadership for social

justice, leadership for learning, spiritual leadership and balanced leadership, which they consider as key departures from traditional male leadership themes. These themes are quite significant to the study and in defining women leadership. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011:06) further elaborate on relational leadership and suggest that this type of leadership is linked to relationships with others in a horizontal rather than hierarchical sense, involving the participation of subordinates as equals. The second theme of social justice is motivated by a strong desire to transform learning conditions and opportunities of those who have been least served by current educational policies and practices. Hence, more women than men express this yearning for social justice in their views about entering into education to change the lives of children and that of institutions so that all children have a chance. The third theme discussed by Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011:15) is spiritual leadership. Herein both black and white female administrators discuss the relationship between spirituality and the ways in which they model their behaviour and inspire others. Furthermore, these women acknowledge the importance of spirituality to their success and ability to push forward during difficult situations. Women leaders are also likely to introduce and support strong programs in staff development, encourage innovation, and experiment with instructional approaches. These women also focus on the importance of instructional competence in teachers and are more attentive to task completion with instructional programmes. Finally, balanced leadership is a critical component that women in educational leadership find important. Here, as Grogan (2011) reports, many women leaders in education essentially manage two lives, which are the household and a school or district. Women, just as men, experience the day-to-day activities of leading a school or district as a consuming experience. However, unlike men, a number of women leaders report extensive additional work when they go home as they continue to maintain the majority of traditional family and home responsibilities. Gupton and Slick (1996) suggest that learning to balance family and work dimensions can actually enhance women's performance.

2.6.3 Leadership theories

Luthans and Avolio (2003) introduced the concept of authentic leadership development into the literature as a way of establishing positive behaviour within

organisations (Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber 2009). The researcher incorporated literature based on Luthans and Avolio (2003) theory on authentic leadership development. The authentic leadership theory is closely related to what democratic leadership entails as it is associated with the way leaders make decisions within the organisation after encouraging subordinates to share information and their personal opinion regarding a given decision. The theory was developed to determine whether this type of leadership within organisations worked and what about it that did not work.

2.7 Leadership styles

This section outlines the basic leadership styles employed by women school principals in school leadership positions. The term leadership style is defined as the way in which leadership is conducted. Studies have noted that different leadership styles need to be used with different people in different situations. Grole and Montgomery (2000) note that men and women display different leadership styles that vary due to that men and women view what is considered to be good leadership differently. Men see leadership as leading and women see leadership as facilitating. The school principal embrace different leadership styles when working on tasks with subordinates and when guiding learners (Squelch 1994:06; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs and Tamkins 2004:420). It is important for school principals to keep their leadership style flexible as this assists in responding to different people and situations. It has been documented in countries such as the U.S.A that women's approach to school leadership is associated with more feminine characteristics where men's leadership styles are more masculine (Tallerico and Burstyn 1996; Getskow 1996; Grole and Montgomery 2000). Although men and women are equally successful as school leaders their approach to leadership may differ women leaders as noted by Grole and Montgomery (2000) are more focused on instructional leadership, supporting and involving their subordinate teachers. The employed leadership styles that are under focus in this study are considered below.

2.7.1 Autocratic leadership

Scholars (Campher 2003; Yukl 2006; Bush 2011) have provided different definitions for different leadership styles. In this section the autocratic leadership style is known

for its firmness of control as its type of leader demonstrates strong leadership that is “firm” in its approach. An autocratic leader makes high demands, dictates and orders subordinates because of the position they hold (Campher 2003:48). In addition, autocratic leaders arrange all tasks and assignments and usually make decisions without consulting members of the staff during the decision making process, yet they provide for the full understanding of what is expected or required from subordinates (Campher 2003:48). This type of leadership, therefore, offers minimal involvement from subordinates and is characterised by the high extent of unilateral execution of authority.

2.7.2 Democratic leadership

Democratic leadership is leadership by participation and focuses more on teamwork. The democratic manager delegate’s authority to his/her staff and offers them the responsibility to complete assigned tasks. Staff will complete the tasks using their own work methods. However, the task must be completed on time. Thus, employees are here involved in decision making and acquire a sense of belonging. Hoyle and Wallance (2005:124) state that “participation refers to opportunities that staff members have in engaging in processes regarding organisational decision-making”. Squelch and Lemmer (1994:07) further points out that democratic leadership also means that the “participative approach will succeed in ‘bonding’ staff together and in easing the pressures on school principals”. The democratic leadership approach seeks to encourage or invite subordinates to participate in the development of decision making, generating new ideas, building team tasks and encourages team work (Campher 2003:48). The democratic leader enables subordinates to work on their own and at their own pace, providing them with feedback and rewards participation. It may be beneficial for the female educator to adopt this type of management style as power over decision-making is shared. This may result in a positive perception of the woman leader as someone willing to involve and encourage the participation of subordinates in the management and running of the school. The democratic approach to leadership will increase school effectiveness and everyone participates in the decision-making process. Hence, the democratic

leadership style is viewed as more successful than the autocratic approach to leadership.

2.7.3 Transactional leadership

According to Thomas (1995:117) in Campher (2003:48) “transformational leadership focuses largely on extrinsic needs and motives and that under transactional leadership, leaders and followers exchange needs and services in order to accomplish independent objectives”. Miller and Miller (2001:182) define transactional leadership as “leadership in which relationships with subordinates are based upon an exchange for some valued resource, interaction between the principal and teachers”. This type of leadership “is usually episodic, short lived and limited to the transaction”, (Bush 2011:19). The main limitation to this type of leadership is that it does not provide for commitment to the vision and values of the school in the long-term. Hence, the principal should seek to enhance intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to subordinates as a reward or solution (Bush 2011:28).

2.7.4 Transformational leadership

The transformational leadership style is the opposite of the transactional leadership style as it encourages the pursuit of higher-level goals and motivates subordinates to do more than what is initially expected from them. This type of leadership involves getting followers or subordinate staff members, in this particular study getting teachers to achieve more than what they had set out to achieve. The transformational leader motivates staff achievement and motivates going beyond achieving the initial objectives. This is supported by Burns (1978:20) who describes transformational leadership as a process within which “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation”. Campher et al (2003:48) supports Burns (1978) statement by stating that transformational leadership focuses largely on a high-order, intrinsic motives and the needs of others. Transformative leadership is in two stages with one concerned with higher order psychological needs for esteem, autonomy and self-actualisation and second with moral questions of goodness, righteousness, duty and obligation Campher et al (2003). Bush (2011:19) argues that transformational leadership is based on the commitment and capacity of organisational members. Yukl (2006:08) argues that transactional leadership includes

contingent reward behaviour, passive management-by-exception, (a form of monitoring) and has eight attributes. These are: creating and building school vision, establishing school goals, providing for intellectual stimulation and personal growth, offering support that empowers staff, encouraging high performance, establishing a productive school culture and empowering staff by fostering participation in decisions made about the school.

2.8 Women's approach to school leadership

Women in management are adopting successful management styles by drawing on their personal experiences as women. According to Adler (2005:113) "generally there is a difference between how women and men manage. Women respond to collective responsive relationships as a team member and are non-competitive, whereas men are autocratic, hierarchical, and competitive and often do not question change. When looking at the different ways men and women conceptualise their work Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011:25) produce evidence that women view the job more as master teacher or educational leader in contrast to male views, which derive from a managerial perspective". Moreover, management is seen as a technician, requiring rational problem solving techniques, strong task direction and detachment. Decisions about selecting and developing women for management posts are also influenced by judgments about the extent to which they are seen as capable of meeting a masculine conception of its demands. According to Grogan (1996:158) women leaders are equipped with a leadership style that is more consensus building and more open and inclusive.

2.8.1 The management role of the school principal

The principal's role in the management of a school can be compared to that of a managing director of a corporate company whose product is education and whose clients are parents, learners and the community (Campher 2002:42). A study by Loock (1995:176) shows that school principals have to acquire the skill of sharing and working together with governing bodies in order to effectively lead schools. Furthermore, the most important element for ensuring quality in an organisation, such as a school, is leadership. The principal of the school needs to create the necessary structure and determine the essential procedures for the efficient functioning of the

school. According to Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge and Ngcobo (2008:78) this takes into account the school as an organisation in an integrated system of interdependent structures and functions. The principal needs to establish his/her role as leader by motivating subordinates, establishing and creating a sense of purpose and direction, and aligning and inspiring people in the organisation (Campher 2002:42). The school manager provides for the coordination of human, material, technological and financial resources needed by the school to reach its goals. The management of a school is a complex process that includes the development of tactical plans which are used to implement strategies and also control resources in an attempt to achieve organisational objectives. The school management may achieve its goals and objectives if relevant policies and systems are in place (Naidu et al 2008:79). Management Works of School Principals are made up of a number of administrative skills which include; problem analysis, judgment, organisational ability and decisiveness. The second category of principals' skill is interpersonal which include leadership, sensitivity, oral communication and written communication. The third category of a principal's requisite skills is the intrapersonal which include stress tolerance, a range of interest, personal motivation and educational values (Naidu et al 2008:80). Gupton and Slick (1996) identify five areas in which the principal must function effectively, which are school community relations, staff personnel development, pupil personnel development, educational program development, and business and building development.

2.9 Summary of the Review of Related Literature

Chapter 2 reviewed literature on issues manifesting as challenges against women primary school principals in school leadership positions. The challenges discussed above, such as the personal, professional, psychological and cultural challenges, have a negative impact on women in school leadership positions. Women school principals who allow these factors to affect them will experience ineffectiveness and inefficiency at management level. These challenges differ from one school to the other but nevertheless, originate from various sources, such as the cultural, social, psychological, change and leadership styles. Therefore, the conducted literature review points to the fact that women in school leadership positions, such as the

school principal, are faced with challenges ranging from personal to professional ones in their roles as school leaders and administrators.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The study set out to establish some of the challenges faced by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. The previous chapter reviewed literature on the challenges faced by women primary school principals. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology used in this study. The research methodology is viewed as an approach to examine the research questions, research results and the research instruments employed during the course of the study. Thus, the chapter reveals how the researcher conducted the interviews, administered the questionnaires and how observations were done. This chapter also focuses on the way relevant data were gathered, analysed and interpreted. A qualitative research approach employed during the investigation on the challenges faced by women primary school principals in the ZF Mgcawu District is also discussed. The study was conducted at selected primary schools from two of the ZF Mgcawu Districts 'key towns in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa.

3.2 Research paradigm

The term "*paradigm*" is referred to a design for collecting and interpreting data (Barker 2003:312). The proposed study is framed within the interpretive perspective. The interpretive paradigm was selected as it links to the purpose of the research study (Bitzer 2015:01). According to Elisha (2012:34) Creswell (2009) defines the research paradigms as actions guided by a set of basic beliefs. Thus the interpretive perspective fits the purpose of this study and is the most suitable research paradigm, as it provides the researcher with an in-depth understanding of the experiences of those, participating in the study. The approach also provides the researcher with an insider's perspective resulting in the credibility and trustworthiness of the obtained data. According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2011:08) the interpretive paradigm refers to the meaning the research participants give to their everyday experiences and perceptions. Creswell, as stated in Elisha (2012:32), opines that the interpretive paradigm is a worldview that explains the way some researchers

perceive the world and the nature of research. Therefore the research paradigm is referred to as a framework or set of beliefs, values, academic ideas and assumptions shared by researchers regarding the nature and conduct of research (Gupton and Slick 1996).

3.2.1 Interpretive paradigm

Piaw (2012:05) explains that the interpretive paradigm examines the characteristics of a small group of subjects. An example would be to examine the working style of a group of managers identified as excellent leaders. Thus the researcher employed the interpretive research method to engage with the research participants in order to fully understand the perceptions and challenges faced by women primary school principals. The research study employs the interpretative paradigm as it seeks to attach meaning to the experiences and perceptions of each of the women participating in the research study. Maree (2013:21) states that interpretative paradigm “foregrounds the meaning that individuals or communities assign to their experience. An interpretive paradigm is a view of social science, examining the practice of research”. In this case therefore, the interpretive paradigms ought to understand the different challenges faced by women in education leadership positions and have different perceptions of these challenges. Furthermore Lambert (2012:225) describes the interpretive paradigm as a paradigm “based on the belief that what we accept as real arises from the different perceptions of different people, interacting with complex social and physical environments”. Thus, the interpretive paradigm fits the purpose of this research study and is the most suitable approach as it provides the researcher with an in-depth understanding of the experiences of those participating in the study. The approach also provides the researcher with an insider’s perspective resulting in the validity and reliability of the data obtained.

3.3 Research design

The researcher adopted the qualitative research design for this study which falls under the interpretive paradigm (Makura 2009:06). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:20) the research design is a strategy for investigations and collecting data with a purpose of generating empirical evidence that will be used to answer the research questions. The research design describes who will be studied,

the observed participants who will be participating in the study and also where and when the study will be conducted. Flick (2007:36) opines that the “research design is a procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher for collecting and analysing evidence that will make it possible for the investigator to answer questions validly and objectively”.

The most suitable research design for this study were to employ a qualitative and descriptive research approach as the researcher describes the specific challenges and coping mechanisms employed by the research respondents. Conrad and Serlin (2011:148) define qualitative research as discovering and understanding the experiences, perspectives and thoughts of participants. Creswell (2009:39) also points out that a researcher engaged in qualitative research relies on the views of the participants, their perceptions and experiences; gathers information consisting largely of words and texts; and conducts research in a subjective and biased manner. Thus, relevant data is obtained from the participating principals as well as from three subordinate teachers from each of the participating primary schools by means of observations, questionnaires and interviews in order to establish the gender specific challenges faced by women primary school principals. The first step involved the identification of the participating schools and its principals. A total of four primary school principals were identified and three subordinate teachers under each principal were selected.

3.4 Ethnography and phenomenology

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2007:32) the ethnographic approach occurs when “the researcher studies the entire social group in its natural setting by closely examining the group’s customs and ways of life with the aim of describing and interpreting patterns and behaviour, values and practices”. In this study, the researcher studies the principals from the participating schools, particularly the actions of these principals, their conduct and the way they manage their schools. The researcher sought to investigate the type of leadership styles employed and how the principals interact with subordinates and learners in the school environment.

Phenomenological research, as stated by Bloomberg and Volpe (2007:32) investigates the meaning of the lived experiences of people in order to identify the

core essence of the human experience phenomena as described by the research participants. The research seeks to establish the challenges faced by women in school leadership positions. The study also proposes ways to overcome these challenges that serve as barriers to women aspiring for managerial positions.

3.5 Triangulation

The researcher incorporates triangulation into the study as a measure to ensure the credibility and the trustworthiness of the study data. As stated in De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2002:341) “the researcher seeks out several different types of sources that could provide insight about the same events or relationship”. Piaw (2012:10) notes that the triangulation of data is used to improve the reliability of the research when the research sample size is relatively small. The researcher is also able to view the phenomenon or the collected data from different perspectives. Piaw (2012:10) confirms this by stating that the triangulation method suggests that the research data can be viewed from various angles by employing different research instruments and arriving at similar results. Hence, the study incorporates triangulation in order to implement different methods or instruments when reviewing data. Furthermore, the use of triangulation increases the credibility of the instruments by observing or viewing something from different angles or viewpoints (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont 2002:341).

The researcher uses triangulation in this study in an attempt to measure the gathered research data from multiple viewpoints. The researcher makes use of triangulation by using the data collected from both the participating school principals and the subordinate teachers from the ZF Mgcawu District. The researcher conducted individual interviews with the participating primary school principals who addressed issues surrounding the perceived challenges and the observed coping strategies. The researcher also distributed questionnaires among the four participating women principals and twelve of their female subordinate teachers. The administration of the employed research instruments namely, individual interviews, open-ended questionnaires and observations, forms the triangulation of the research instruments and aids to the trustworthiness of the research data and results as triangulation gives dimension and confirmation on the data provided by each of the participating women

primary school principals (Creswell 2007 and Hensen 2014:50). The method of triangulation used during this research study correlates with Richards (2015:158) description of triangulation as a method which is incorporated by the researcher when handling different sets of data in order to address specific research questions. The researcher, therefore, incorporated triangulation to determine whether the collected data assists in answering the research questions and aid in the understanding of the phenomenon under study.

3.6 The Population and Sample

3.6.1 The Population

Bertram and Christiansen (2004:59) state that “in research, the population refers to the total number of individuals, groups or organisations that could be included in a study and to which the study findings are to be generalized”. The selected target population were all the female primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu Municipality District. According to Gay (1987:100) the population consists of all the casts or individuals intended for study. The population thus refers to the entire group or elements who share common characteristics, with this study’s population consisting of all women principals from the ZF Mgcawu District. The population under study also included women subordinate teachers working under each of the participating school principals. According to a telephone communication between the researcher and Ms Makgwagfi from the ZF Mgcawu District office in August 2016, there are a total of 99 schools in the ZF Mgcawu District with 55 making up the primary school phase, grade R to grade 7, and these constitute the population of the study. It should be noted that a study which investigates the progress of all schools managed by female principals in South Africa would have all South African schools as the population of the study. However, obtaining data from every school in South Africa would be virtually impossible, hence the need to select a sample of schools from the population.

3.6.2 The Sample

The research sample is a representative portion of a population. According Tichapondwa (2013:122), a research sample is a group of subjects or individuals

selected from all the other respondents in a population from which the study is being conducted who share similar characteristics. The research sample as stated by Imenda and Muyangwa (2006:98) is a group of people partaking in a study from which the researcher obtains or generates relevant data. A simpler description of a sample is given by Sapsford and Jupp (2006:26) as being the selected elements from a population, thus suggesting that the aim of sampling is to obtain consistent and unbiased estimates of the population's status.

This study's sample consisted of a total of sixteen female participants, four women primary school principals from the key towns in the ZF Mgqawu District of the Northern Cape Province and twelve women subordinate teachers. The researcher selected a total of 16 participants in order to gain insight from a variety of participants from different schools. Four participants from four schools in the Northern Cape Province were selected based on convenience and their ease of accessibility. The researcher was confident that the selected sample size would contribute to the study results. All of the participants were selected by employing the convenience sampling technique. The selected women participants all shared specific characteristics and had a minimum of ten years' experience in a management or administrative position. The participating principals were all from the Northern Cape Province and were between the ages of 46 and 60 years.

3.6.3 The Sampling Procedure

The researcher employed the convenience sampling technique, which according to Tichapondwa (2013:123) is also known as accidental sampling. Harding (2013:18) notes that the convenience sampling technique should only be used out of necessity. The convenience sampling technique was used because the researcher deliberately chose the participating women principals on the basis of their experiences, ethnicities and school location. According to Briggs, Coleman and Morrison (2012:145), convenience sampling occurs in situations where the researcher has easy access to particular areas. This statement is supported by Harding (2013:18) in their view that convenience sampling refers to the selection of cases where access is easiest. Thus, the researcher purposely decided to include the identified research respondents basing on their familiarity with the Northern Cape Province and having previously

worked with particular school principals and head-teachers from the ZF Mgcawu District. Harding (2013) is of the opinion that one of the limitations of implementing the convenience sampling technique is that respondents are chosen by the researcher on the basis of convenience rather than whether they are more likely to contribute to the data that could assist with the answering of the research questions and research objectives. The researcher prevented this type of limitation from occurring in this study by employing a pilot testing of the research instruments, in particular the structured interview.

3.7 Data Sources

The respondents participating assisted in the study's systematic collection of data through the provision of personal opinions and experiences as principals or other stakeholders, and with regard to their interaction with policy makers, the Department of Education and the government. The primary data sources involved in the study include four women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District and twelve subordinate teachers. The main data collection techniques employed in this study are structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires and non-participative observations.

3.8 The Research Instruments

This section describes the research instruments employed in the study and the reasons why these particular research instruments were selected. Hofstee (2013:115) defines research instruments as the "tools" that one employs to gather data intended for analysis. This researcher made use of three different research instruments, including individual interviews conducted with the participating primary school principals at the identified schools, and open-ended questionnaires and observations were administered in the study.

The researcher first conducted face to face interviews with the participating women primary school principals. The interviews involved the researcher's engagement in a conversation with each respondent wherein the researcher asks the respondent to answer a number of questions in order to generate relevant information about the topic under study. The conversations are recorded by means of a tape recorder in order to accurately capture data. The individual interviews with the identified primary

school principals were beneficial to the research study because they provided the researcher with the opportunity to engage in a face to face interaction with the research participants. This type of interview session also enabled the researcher to interact with the participating women primary school principals on a more intimate and personal level. The interviews assisted the researcher to view the participants' body language, during the face to face conversation, which cannot be recorded on tape. Secondly, the researcher employed open-ended questionnaires. These were used in this study because of the sensitive nature surrounding the issue of women and discrimination against women on the basis of their gender. The use of a questionnaire ensured the anonymity of the research participants and provided them with a high degree of freedom while answering particular questions. A questionnaire also covers a large geographical area and can be administered into the field without the presence of the researcher. Thirdly, non-participative observations were conducted by the researcher. Thus the researcher incorporated the ethnographic approach in order to establish the specific coping strategies and leadership styles employed by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape Province.

According to Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer (2011:375) the ethnographic approach is a value neutral approach to data collection. In this way the researcher incorporated ethnographic research as part of the research strategy. The researcher employed observations to detect the coping strategies employed by the participating women primary school principals on a daily basis. The researcher used an observation schedule to observe the women principals in the natural school setting during everyday situations. The researcher is in this way able to observe patterns of behaviour of the study participants, how they communicate and interact with one another (Biggam 2009:84). The next section describes the research instruments employed in the study.

3.8.1 Interviews

Interviews are modes of gathering information through asking questions. According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014:84), interviews are conversations between the researcher and the research respondents. However, interviews are different from the

everyday or day-to-day conversation as the researcher is the person who sets the agenda and asks the questions. Bertram and Christiansen (2014:84) state further that interviews are structured and focused conversations where the researcher has particular information in mind that he or she wants to obtain from the respondents. In this study, the researcher conducted individual interviews with each of the participating primary school principals. The researcher also designed particular questions to be answered by the four participating women primary school principals from schools in the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province in order to collect relevant research data. The participating school principals represented the country's different racial groups, which allowed the researcher to compare and identify similarities between the challenges experienced by most women principals regardless of their different cultures. These interviews were arranged to reveal the thoughts and opinions of the participating women primary school principals regarding the perceived challenges they are faced with in the position of school principal. The interviews were also recorded and scheduled to take place in the office of the participating primary school principals.

3.8.1.1 Structured Interviews

The research study made use of structured interviews as a method of gathering data. Structured interviews allow the researcher to set up a series of pre-planned questions using a set of predetermined questions that are short, clearly worded and requiring more precise answers. According Harding (2013:31), structured interviews provide some structure and guidance to the interviewer. The researcher decided to incorporate structured interviews as a research instrument in order to arrive at specific answers. Harding (2013:30) comments further that structured interviews are a method of generating or collecting data through standardised interview schedules, using the same questions to be asked to each of the participants, and also asking questions in a particular order.

The researcher conducted interviews with the participating primary school principals, visiting the schools and tape recording the interviews and discussions. During the interviews the researcher focused on specific research questions such as; what

challenges do women primary school principals perceive as barriers to leadership positions in schools within the ZF Mgcawu District?

3.8.2 Questionnaires

Data were collected from the participating subordinate teachers using open-ended questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered to all the participants participating in the study as a means to obtain bio-data from all of the participants. The research study employed questionnaires as the primary source in revealing the perceptions held by women subordinate teachers regarding the gender specific leadership challenges faced by their school principals. The researcher decided to incorporate questionnaires in the data collection process in order to be able to triangulate the research results and achieve a more rounded picture of the collected information Biggam (2008:101). The questionnaire consisted of a series of open-ended questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. DeVos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpport (2002:172) define questionnaires as a series of questions on a form which are completed by those participating in the research study in an attempt to reveal new information or data. De Vos Strydom, Fouche and Delpport (2002) also state that the basic objective of the research questionnaire is to obtain facts and opinions about a phenomenon under study from the participants involved. Cohen, Manionand Morrison (2011:377) shed further light on the administration of questionnaires in a research project by stating that questionnaires are an instrument or tool that is widely used for collecting information that can be administered without the presence of the researcher and is often comparatively straight forward to analyse. Burton, Burndrett and Jones (2014:141) describe a questionnaire as a written form of questioning offering a rapid, effective, efficient and confidential means of collecting a large number of responses.

3.8.3 Observations

Kumar (2012:140) views observations as a purposeful systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon while it is taking place. In this study, the researcher implemented observational techniques involving the observer as a non-participant, wherein according to Maree (2013:85) "the researcher gets into a situation focusing mainly on his her role as observer in the situation and

remains uninvolved and does not influence the dynamics of the setting”. Kumar (2012:141) describes non-participating observations as involving a researcher that does not get involved in the activities of the group. The researcher, here, remains a passive observer, watching and listening, and drawing his or her own conclusions. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:350), “observations are ways for the researcher to see and hear what is occurring naturally in the research site”. Put simply, observation involves the researcher watching, recording and analysing events of interest. The researcher will visit the participating schools and school principals and observe various activities as they unfold on a daily basis. The researcher attempts to address research question three by identifying the specific challenges that women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District face. Fraenkel and Wallen (2003:114) describe observations as more than just looking or listening. Burton, Burndrett and Jones (2014:116) state that a special kind of watching is required in order to make the step from simply looking at the situation to real observational research.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedures are the different techniques used to gather relevant information and the instruments used to analyse and interpret information. The researcher followed specific ethical protocol procedures aligned with the Central University of Technology's ethical protocols before conducting and collecting data for the study. The researcher obtained formal approval from the Central University of Technology upon drafting and presenting a conceptual research proposal. The researcher presented the proposed research study to the Department of Research Committee (DRC) who upon approval sends the prospective proposal to the Faculty Research of Innovation Committee (FRIC) who approved the prospective research topic. The researcher, as a student at the Central University of Technology, then registered the approved proposed research with the faculty. Thereafter, the registration committee and the University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC) who approve the scientific merit of protocols and title registrations, approved the proposed study, its title and associated research procedures and registered on the universities database.

Structured data collection methods were adopted for this study. The researcher also opted to use these data collection methods as part of the qualitative research approach which is appropriate in investigating the research questions in order to provide rich descriptions and explanations of situational influences (Telford 1996:30). A formal letter requesting permission to conduct the research was hand delivered to each of the perspective primary school principals and the participating subordinate teachers prior to the researcher's arrival at the schools and scheduled time frame to gather the research data. The most suitable candidates to participate in the study had already been chosen through the use of a pilot interview conducted prior to the data collection. Interviews were scheduled to take place during times that suit the schedules of those participating in the study. An agreement between the researcher and the school principals was reached regarding the time and place the scheduled interview would be conducted. Finally, the interviews were scheduled to take place in the comfort of the participating school principals' office, the school staffroom and or board rooms.

Data were obtained through the distribution of open-ended questionnaires, non-participative observations and structured face to face interviews with the participating primary school principals and subordinate teachers from the ZF Mgqawu District. The open-ended questionnaires were hand delivered to the participating subordinate teachers, and these were scheduled for the collection within 48 hours after the initial distribution. According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport, (2002:174) administering questionnaires in this manner enable the respondents to complete the questionnaires on their own time. The administration of questionnaires by hand usually saves time and offers an opportunity for the researcher to interact with respondents. Thus, in this case, the researcher hand delivered the questionnaires and in the process personally interacted with the selected subordinate occupying different positions in school administration and teaching.

3.10 Data Analysis Techniques

This section focuses on how each of the research questions were answered using data generated from the conducted individual interviews, open-ended questionnaires and non-participating observational techniques. Data analysis is an ongoing process

which involves the breaking-up of data into manageable themes, patterns, different parts, trends and relationships (Savin-Baden and Major 2013:434; Mouton 2011:108). Maree (2013:99) also states that qualitative data analyses documents through a range of approaches, processes and procedures whereby researchers extract some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation from the qualitative data collected from the participants and situations that they are investigating.

The researcher employed the interpretive research approach which, according to Maree (2013:103), "involves the use of specific data analysis strategies aimed at understanding how participants make meaning of a phenomenon under study". Maree (2013:100) further states that "when analysing qualitative data, the goal is to summarise what you have seen or heard into themes, patterns or categories that aid your interpretation of what is emerging". According to Lambert (2012:168-169) data analyses involves interpreting your research findings and relating them to the literature by reading data closely, identifying common themes, finding perspectives and identifying representative quotations or events. The study was underpinned by four research questions in an attempt to answer the questions involved in the gathering of relevant data through individual interviews with the school principals, non-participative observations and the distribution of open-ended questionnaires among the participating women subordinate teachers from the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape Province. Imenda and Muyangwa (2000:92) are of the opinion that once data has been collected, the researcher is faced with the task of organising the gathered information in line with the research questions and objectives of the study. Hence, the researcher used the study's research questions, which are outlined below, to categorise and organise the generated data.

3.10.1 What challenges are perceived by primary school principals as barriers to leadership positions within the ZF Mgcawu District?

The first research question was addressed through the analysis of the conducted individual interviews with the participating school principals. The interviews were conducted in order to establish the perceptions held by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District regarding the challenges they perceive as barriers in school leadership positions.

3.10.2 What perceptions are held by women subordinate teachers regarding gender specific leadership challenges faced by their school principal?

The second research question was attended to by the implementation of open-ended questionnaires. The questionnaire was completed by a total of twelve subordinate teachers, three under each of the identified school principals. The questionnaire sought to reveal the perceptions held by women subordinate teachers regarding the gender specific challenges faced by their school principal.

3.10.3 How do women primary school principals employ specific coping strategies in addressing the perceived challenges?

The third research question was addressed through the implementation of non-participative observations, whereby the researcher observed the specific coping strategies employed by the participating principals in the natural or normal school setting. The researcher provides a discussion of the data revealed during the scheduled observations.

3.10.4 What leadership styles seem to be displayed by women principals from the ZF Mgcawu District?

The fourth research question set out to determine the leadership styles that were displayed by women principals from the ZF Mgcawu District. The question was addressed by means of the administered questionnaires and individual interviews conducted with the participating women principals.

3.11 Discourse analysis

The researcher incorporated discourse analysis in determining the gender specific challenges faced by women primary school principals from the Northern Cape Province. According to Keller (2013:04) the term discourse means a simple conversation or an interchange of information taking place between different people. Discourse analysis, as described by Maree (2013:102), is the study of what is spoken or written. As a result, this researcher makes use of discourse analysis techniques during the analysis of the research data.

The researcher incorporates discourse analysis techniques by studying the interview transcripts of the recorded conversation between the researcher and the participating women primary school principals. Discourse analysis techniques are also administered when analysing written text and focusing on the meaning behind what has been said, which is what the researcher applied when analysing information obtained from the research questionnaires.

Maree (2013) states further that discourse analysis aims to reveal the sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias. It also attempts to erase the manner in which dominant forces in society construct versions of reality that favour their interests. Keller (2013:03) states that “discourse theories and discourse analyses are concerned with the actual use of written or spoken language and other symbolic forms in social practices”. Keller (2013) states further that discourse analysis concentrates on the empirical investigation of discourses, thus the term refers to a research perspective on particular research objects that are understood as discourses. Muncie (2006:75), in Harding (2013:138), argues that discourse analysis involves the study of the maintenance of power relations and showing how power is achieved through the use of words.

Hence, the researcher incorporated discourse analyses techniques in the analyses of the conducted interviews, questionnaires and observations. Data were analysed using critical discourse analysis techniques (discussed under 3.12) by studying the spoken and written text from the interview transcriptions. The analysis of the interview transcriptions was based on the respective research questions. The data collected from the participating school principals and subordinate teachers were categorised under the respective research questions from which common patterns were identified in line with the qualitative research approach. Thus, the employment of discourse analysis techniques in the analyses of the research data was appropriate for this study as it set out to achieve what is stated in the theoretical framework of the study. The next section provides the research questions and briefly discusses how each question was addressed.

3.11.1 What challenges were perceived by women primary school principals as barriers to leadership positions in schools within the ZF Mgcawu District?

The first research question was addressed by conducting structured interviews with the participating primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape Province. This type of interview provides some structure or guidance to the interviewer (Harding 2013:31) and indeed the researcher employed a set of pre-planned questions which were asked in the same order during each of the interview questions. The researcher focused on what is said and the meaning behind what had been said during the interview in accordance with the tenets of discourse analysis as stated by Maree (2013:102).

3.11.2 What perceptions are held by women subordinate teachers regarding gender specific leadership challenges faced by their school principal?

Both interviews and research questionnaires were used to generate answers for this question. The employed questionnaire was open-ended and thus encouraged the subordinate teachers to elaborate their perceptions of the challenges faced by their school principal. As mentioned in the previous section, discourse analysis is the study of what is spoken or written, and more importantly discourse analysis "aims at revealing the discourse sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias" (Maree 2013:102). For this reason, the researcher is confident in the applicability of the generated data from the questionnaires to the research study. Thus, this research question generated data on perceptions of gender and power in school administration that is of relevance to the study. The researcher went on to interpret the responses of the participating subordinate teachers and categorises them into relevant themes, as discussed in chapter 4 of the study.

3.11.3 How do women primary school principals employ specific coping strategies to address the perceived challenges?

The third research question was addressed through the interviews conducted with the selected women primary school principals and from the observation schedule administered by the researcher. The researcher specifically addresses some of the employed coping mechanisms during the interviews. The observation schedule was

drawn up in way that enabled the researcher to view the potential coping strategies without disrupting the principal and the natural school setting. The observed coping strategies were grouped into emerging themes and are discussed in the next chapter.

3.11.4 What leadership styles are displayed by women principals from the ZF Mgcawu District?

The researcher sought answers to this question by focusing on the interview answers provided by the participating women primary school principals, responses from the open-ended questionnaires administered to selected female subordinate teachers, and from data revealed by the observation schedule. The researcher specifically paid attention to the gathered data regarding the chosen leadership style, observed how different types of leadership styles were employed and determined the success of the employed styles. Following this, the researcher coded the relevant data into themes, as discussed in chapter 4.

3.12 Critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis is an analytic approach that examines details in the language of texts. It is therefore concerned with revealing the meaning behind what is said and how written texts are interpreted. The term critical discourse analysis stems from discourse analysis with its approach and primary focus, on social power abuse, dominance, inequality, ideological and political dimensions of discourse (Lambert 2012; Maree 2013; Cameron and Panovic 2014). Critical discourse analysis is described by Cameron and Panovic (2014:66), as something that shapes our understanding of reality. In addition, Rogers (2013), in Trainor and Graue (2013:67), states that critical discourse analysis refers to approaches in a wide net of discourse analyses that explore power, domination, liberation and privilege. However, critical discourse analysis in research is concerned with issues of power. This focus is applicable to this study as it relates to how women's leadership is perceived. Wooffitt (2002:137) elaborates that, critical discourse seeks to reveal how social and political inequalities are manifested and reproduced, which is a view that relates to women leadership. Therefore, the researcher incorporated critical discourse analysis into her study in order to reveal the challenges women school principals face in their respective school leadership positions.

3.13 Credibility and trustworthiness of the study data

This section outlines how the researcher achieved rigour of qualitative data. It views the methods employed by the researcher to establish trustworthiness of the research data. The researcher set out to establish credibility and trustworthiness of the research data by drawing on the four criteria presented in Lincoln and Guba's (1985) framework. Lincoln and Guba (1985) initially identified four criteria of trustworthiness in qualitative research and introduced a fifth in 1994 (Krefting 1991:215; Creswell 2007:203; Cope 2014:89). These criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and the fifth is authenticity. According to Krefting (1991:215) and Cope (2014:89), credibility refers to the truth value of the data. Transferability refers to the applicability of the findings to other settings or groups. Dependability refers to the constancy of the data on similar conditions. Conformability refers to the neutrality of the data while authenticity is regarded by Tobin and Begly (2004:132) as a feature significant to naturalistic inquiry. All these characteristics of data trustworthiness were ensured through an appreciation of the viewpoint of the participants.

3.13.1 Credibility of the data

This section focuses on the specific strategies employed by the researcher as a means of enriching the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. To the researcher's understanding, the credibility of a study involves establishing that the data results from a given research study are believable. Mthembu (2013:41) notes that credibility is the analysis of data through a process of reflecting, sifting, exploring, judging its relevance and meaning and ultimately developing themes and essences that accurately depict the experience. The trustworthiness and credibility of this study was framed within the Lincoln and Guba (1985) four criteria of trustworthiness which are credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. The credibility of the study data was established by allowing the participants to express their points of view with regard to the study phenomenon, by means of triangulation through conducting structured interviews, employing questionnaires and conducting observations at each of the participating primary schools as well as engaging in member checks, maintaining audit trails and in reflexivity (Marshall and Rossman 2011:40). Thus, the

credibility and trustworthiness of this study were established just as other procedures were used to ensure the rigor and usefulness of the study data, as discussed below.

3.13.2 Transferability of the data

The transferability of the study data refers to the degree to which the results or findings from one study can be applied to another or a similar study or the demonstration of how useful results can be to a similar study (Cope 2014:89; Anney 2014:277; Marshall and Rossman 2011:252; Kefting 1991:216). Shenton (2004:69) states that transferability refers to the applicability of a particular research study's findings to other contexts and to that of a wider population. To shed further light, Creswell (2007:204) argues that transferability is when an individual consults, compares, applies or transfers the findings of another research study to their own, and that this can only be achieved if the original document provides sufficient descriptive data which is compatible with the second study. Hence transferability was established by keeping vivid descriptions of the processes and transactions of the study.

3.13.3 Dependability of the data

Cope (2014:89) opines that dependability refers to the consistency of the data over similar results of a study. In relation to Cope's (2014) referral to dependability, Shenton (2004:71) states that dependability in qualitative research refers to a researcher conducting the same study in the same setting using the same research instruments and participants and arriving at similar results. The researcher therefore ensured the dependability of the research study by employing three different research instruments, which are interviews, questionnaires and observations as well as conducting a literature review. The dependability of the data was established through the maintenance and development of an audit trail as discussed below in section 3.13.4.3.

3.13.4 Confirmability of the data

The confirmability of data, which is also referred to as neutrality, refers to the researcher's ability to utilise the data gathered from the research participants in such a way that it reflects what it is intended to reflect or measure and not to reveal

information that is influenced by the researchers biases or viewpoints (Polit and Beck 2012; Tobin and Begley 2004 as cited in Cope 2014:89). The researcher ensured the confirmability of the data findings by fully describing the drawn conclusions and how data results were interpreted into themes. This was done, according to Creswell (2007:204), by providing direct quotes extracted from the research questionnaires and the conducted interviews.

3.13.4.1 Triangulation

Triangulation is used in qualitative research as a method of ensuring the trustworthiness of the research data. Du Plooy (1995:33) describes triangulation as involving multiple research instruments or methods to arrive similar results. In supporting this view, Onwuegbuzi and Leech (2007:239) as cited by Anney (2014:277) state that triangulation is the use of different methods during the research process to investigate or obtain results. According to Du Plooy (1995:33) and Anney (2013:277) triangulation helps the researcher compensate for the limitation of using a single method or research instrument and helps to reduce bias as it engages multiple sources and cross-examines the integrity of the research respondents. Nonetheless, as discussed above in this chapter, triangulation was administered to test the trustworthiness of the employed research instruments. The researcher ensured the credibility of the study data by employing three research instruments during the gathering of relevant data and in that way enhanced the quality of the obtained data.

3.13.4.2 Crystallisation as an alternative to triangulation

Triangulation in research is also known or referred to as "crystallisation" (Tobin and Begly 2004:309). The concept of crystallisation was introduced into the research methodology discourse by Richardson (1997) and is an alternative to triangulation. Crystallisation as an alternative, provides for the validity of the data and, according to Richardson (1997:92) as cited by Marshall and Rossman (2011:43), it offers a broader measurement as crystals are "prisms that reflect externalities and reflect within themselves" and offer multiple perspectives. Thus, the researcher engaged in crystallisation using direct quotes obtained from the three different research instruments and the keeping of a reflexive journal to avoid personal biases.

3.13.4.2 Member checks

The researcher employed the member checking technique (Lincoln and Guba (1985) in this study to establish the trustworthiness of the data (Marshall and Rossman 2011:40-42-221). According to Cope (2014:89) member checks involve the process whereby the researcher's data is checked by the members who participated in the research study as a means of checking whether they agree or not with the researcher's findings. In this study, the checking was done by the four women primary school principals and the twelve subordinate teachers from primary schools in the ZF Mgcawu District who had participated in the interviews and completed the research questionnaires. Marshall and Rossman (2011:40) contend that member checks and multiple theoretical frameworks triangulate data generated by multiple methods and from multiple sources. The data obtained from the conducted structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires and non-participative observations were, according to Flick (2007:95), transcribed by the researcher and coded into themes. These transcriptions were sent to all of the research participants for feedback. The emerging themes and findings were checked by the majority of the participating members to validate whether if the researcher had interpreted the data accurately.

3.13.4.3 Maintenance and development of an audit trail

According to Flick (2014:488) an audit trail is used to check the procedural dependability of raw data, its collection and that of any recordings including data summaries, theoretical notes, process notes, personal notes and information about the development of the instruments. The next section describes how the researcher established the confirmability and neutrality of the data by keeping a reflexive journal.

3.13.4.4 Engaging in reflexivity

Creswell (2013:47) describes reflexivity as the way researchers' personal experiences, such as their background, culture, gender and personal perceptions influence their interpretation of a phenomenon under study. Richards (2015:53) is also of the opinion that reflexivity refers to the manner in which the researcher relates and / or influences their research data. The researcher engaged in reflexivity by thinking about the phenomenon under study to avoid researcher bias. The

researcher also established credibility of the data by making use of direct quotes from the interview transcripts and research questionnaires as well as from the observation schedules. As a result, the interpretation of the study data was not solely influenced by the researcher's personal experiences or perceptions, rather the actual meanings, intentions and personal experiences of the research participants were examined. Furthermore, the researcher established reflexivity of the data by keeping a reflexive journal, also known as a vignette, during the duration of the study. This journal was kept by the researcher to reflect experiences, record ideas, thoughts, and feelings Richards (2015:53). According to Maree (2013:297) "this is done in order to track or log specific professional activities during the duration of the study and to prevent any personal perceptions by the researcher from resulting in unfair bias results".

The following section outlines the ethical considerations of the study.

3.14 Ethical Considerations

The researcher provides a brief overview for the term ethics and refers to Savin-Baden and Major (2013:319) description of ethics as being the moral principles that govern behaviour. This section describes how the ethical issues pertaining to the study were observed and addressed by the researcher. According to Becks-Moddy (2004:66) "ethics in qualitative research, describe the specific ethical protocols followed by the researcher and the traditional ethics concerned when researching human subjects and securing their anonymity". Savin-Baden and Major (2013:322) also point out that the ethical review process seeks answers to questions about whether lived experiences of others were better understood by gathering narratives of their life stories. As a result, this researcher sought to establish and understand the vast challenges and coping strategies employed and faced by women primary school principals in school leadership positions.

The researcher requested and obtained permission to conduct research from the perspective primary schools in the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape at the Education Department's Provincial and District offices. The researcher visited both the Provincial and District offices in Kimberley and Upington and hand delivered the letters requesting permission to conduct research (see appendix 1 and 3). The researcher received formal approval from the Provincial and District offices granting

permission to collect data relevant to the study (see appendix 2 and 4). A formal letter informing all participating principals and staff members about the study was sent to the participants prior to the research study. The letter requested permission to conduct the study and was distributed to each of the prospective primary school principals as study objects (see appendix 5). The study promised not to interfere with the normal school day activities. Although, the questionnaire will to some extent intrude on the lives of the study respondents (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011:377), the researcher suggested that respondents complete the questionnaire voluntarily and after school activities (see appendix 7 and 12). The researcher also assured all participants of their anonymity and other ethical rights. Furthermore, letter codes PA, PB, PC and PD were assigned to the women primary school principals participating in the study. Participant PA represented the Principal from school A, PB represented the principal from school B, PC represented the principal from school C and PD represented the principal of school D. Letter codes TA1, TA2, TA3, TB1, TB2, TB3, TC1, TC2, TC3, TD1, TD2 and TD3 were used to refer to the participating female subordinate teachers under each of the participating principals and schools in order to distinguish between the responses of the study participants and to protect their identities. Letter codes TA1 stood for the first subordinate teacher from school A, TA2 referred to the second subordinate teacher and TA3 refers to the third subordinate teacher from school A. Letter codes TB1 stood for the first subordinate teacher from school B, TB2 referred to the second subordinate teacher and TB3 refers to the third subordinate teacher from school B. Letter codes TC1 stood for the first subordinate teacher from school C, TC2 referred to the second subordinate teacher and TC3 refers to the third subordinate teacher from school C. Letter codes TD1 stood for the first subordinate teacher from school D, TD2 referred to the second subordinate teacher and TD3 refers to the third subordinate teacher from school D.

All study participants were also informed that their participation in the study would be voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. The participants were all assured that the information obtained would only be used for the purpose of the study. Finally, the researcher promised to provide each of the research participants with a copy of the study once completed.

3.15 Conclusion

Chapter 3 outlined the researcher's justification for employing the qualitative method as well as that of the research paradigm, research design, population and sample and the instruments employed while generating relevant data for the study. The chapter also explained the reasons for making use of the employed research instruments. These instruments were specifically employed as a method to generate relevant information and address each of the research questions on how women primary school principals cope with the perceived challenges. The chapter concluded with a discussion on how discourse analysis techniques were used to analyse the research questions, how credibility and trustworthiness of the data were achieved and also outlined the ethical considerations pertaining to the study.

The next chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis and discussion of the data.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the methodological approach, research design, research instruments, the population and sample used to obtain data. Chapter 4 provides an in-depth analysis and discussion on the data obtained from the research sample. The chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis and discussion of the research data. The purpose of the study was to identify and investigate the various challenges faced by women primary school principals in leadership positions. Hence, the researcher outlines, in this chapter, how data were captured using the identified research instruments and how they were analysed.

The analysis also involves the answering of four research questions using the deductive approach. Harding (2013:57) notes that the researcher implementing the deductive approach needs to consider how the different sections of the interview transcripts would contribute to answering the research questions. As a result, data is presented in accordance with the research questions as presented in chapter 1. The first research question set out to establish the challenges that women primary school principals perceive as barriers to attaining leadership positions in schools within the ZF Mgcawu District. The second research question sought to uncover the perceptions held by women subordinate teachers regarding gender specific leadership challenges faced by their school principals. The third research question focused on the way women primary school principals employ specific coping strategies to address the perceived challenges. The fourth research question set out to establish how effective the leadership styles that were displayed by women principals from the ZF Mgcawu District were in managing schools. Relevant data were captured using the research questionnaires completed by the participating school principals and female subordinate teachers. Notes were taken during observations and the interview sessions with the participating school principals were recorded on tape and transcribed. It is the data gathered from the responses to these questions that is analysed and discussed in this chapter.

It should be underscored that the researcher attempts at minimising any confusion by distinguishing between the researchers' words and that of the study respondents by providing embedded quotes from the study respondents in italics (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport, 2011:427). As previously mentioned under the ethical considerations of the study in chapter 3, the researcher used letter codes in order to protect and conceal the identities of the study sample. Letter codes PA, PB, PC and PD were assigned to the participating women primary school principals, while the participating female subordinate teachers were assigned letter codes TA1, TA2, TA3, TB1, TB2, TB3, TC1, TC2, TC3, TD1, TD2 and TD3.

4.2 Sample presentation

A total of sixteen women participated in the attempts to address the main research question about the challenges faced by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District. Creswell's (2003:190) observations on data analysis in qualitative research, state that data analysis begins with a detailed description of the settings and individuals. Thus, Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 below, present a brief description of the participating sample. The context of the study is outlined through presentations of the participating women primary school principals at each of the participating primary schools, total amount of subordinate teachers, additional staff members and that of the total number of learners at each of the participating schools. The tabulation of the contextual framework of the participating sample is presented below.

Table: 4.1 Context of the Participating Sample.

Summary of context						
School	Female manager	HoD's	Female teachers	Male teachers	Number of school Secretaries	Number of learners
A	1	2	31	2	1	1154
B	1	2	24	5	3	810
C	1	5	23	4	3	1971
D	1	1	7	1	1	241
TOTAL	4	10	85	12	8	4176

Department of Education ZFM District Office. Ms Monompumelelo Makgwagfi. Telephone communication. 23 August 2016. Upington.

Table 4.1 presents the total number of subordinate teachers, secretaries and learners per school. The information presented is of relevance to the study as it shows the total number of school-related responsibilities per participating school principal, which gives the reader a better understanding regarding the school load in relation to responsibilities per school principal. The researcher, therefore, concludes that two out of the four participating primary schools had more than one-thousand learners. In addition, the researcher is of the opinion that the greater the number of learners per school, the greater amount of school-related challenges per school principal.

Table 4.2: Profile of the Participating Principals

Sample profile						
	Age	Racial group	Highest Qualification	Number of own children	Employment experience (years)	Marital status
PA	51-60	Coloured	Post-Graduate degree	2 Adult children	Above 10 years	Married
PB	51-60	White	Diploma & ACE-management	2 Adult children	Above 10 years	Divorced
PC	51-60	Black	Post Graduate degree	3 Adult children	Above 10 years	Single
PD	46-50	Coloured	ACE	1 child (grade 6)	Above 10 years	Single

Participating women primary school principals' questionnaire: February–March 2016.

The information presented in Table 4.2 is paramount to the study as it provides information regarding the responsibilities of women school principals in their personal capacity as mothers. Table 4.2 outlines the number of children that each participant has, thus showing the value of domestic challenges per participating school principal. The researcher concludes, from the gathered data that a majority of the participating women primary school principals were not married during the time when the research

study was being conducted. It was also concluded that the majority of their own children were grown and older than 20 years.

The information suggests that all of the participating female school principals had more than 10 years experience in their current position as school principals. It was also noted that the majority of the participating women primary school principals were older than 50 years, leading to the conclusion that the participating school principals were appointed to the position of school principal in their late 40's. This suggests that women school teachers from the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province apply for and are appointment to school leadership positions at a much later stage in their careers. In addition, the findings in table 4.2 suggest that women at this "later stage" have less personal and domestic responsibilities.

Table 4.3: Profile of the Participating Female Subordinate Teachers

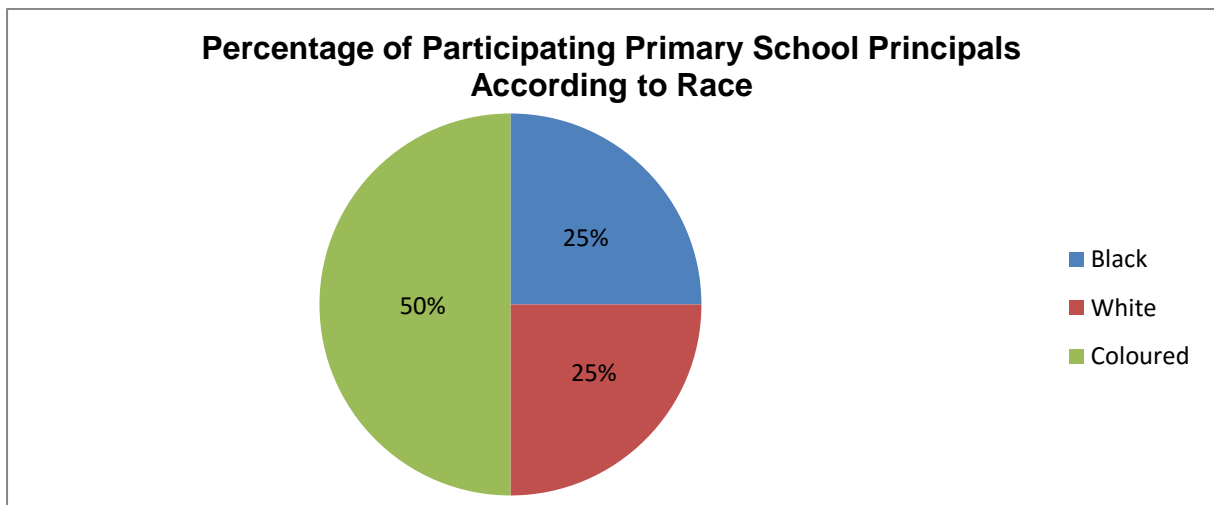
Profile of the participating female subordinate teachers				
	Aged between	Racial group	Children	Marital status
TA1	51-60	Coloured	Yes	Widowed
TA2	46-50	Coloured	Yes	Married
TA3	46-50	Black	Yes	Married
TB1	36-45	White	Yes	Married
TB2	46-50	White	Yes	Married
TB3	46-50	White	No	Divorced
TC1	36-45	Black	Yes	Married
TC2	25-35	Black	Yes	Single
TC3	46-50	Black	Yes	Divorced
TD1	25-35	Coloured	Yes	Married
TD2	46-50	Coloured	Yes	Divorced
TD3	25-35	White	No	Single

Participating subordinate teachers' questionnaire: February-March 2016.

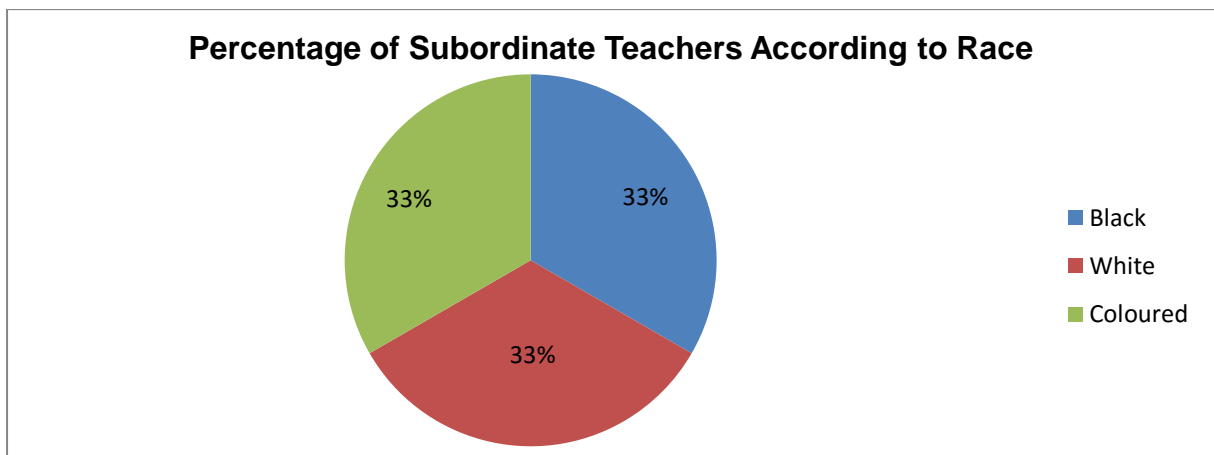
Table 4.3 shows how the overall total number of female subordinate teachers participating in the research study has been tabulated according to their racial groups

in order to indicate the equality of racial grouping among the subordinate female teachers participating in the study. Tables 4.2 and 4.3 outline the profile of the participating women principals and subordinate teachers on the basis of their age, years of experience, racial groupings, number of children and marital status. The researcher concludes, from the information displayed in table 4.3, that the majority of the participating female subordinate teachers were married.

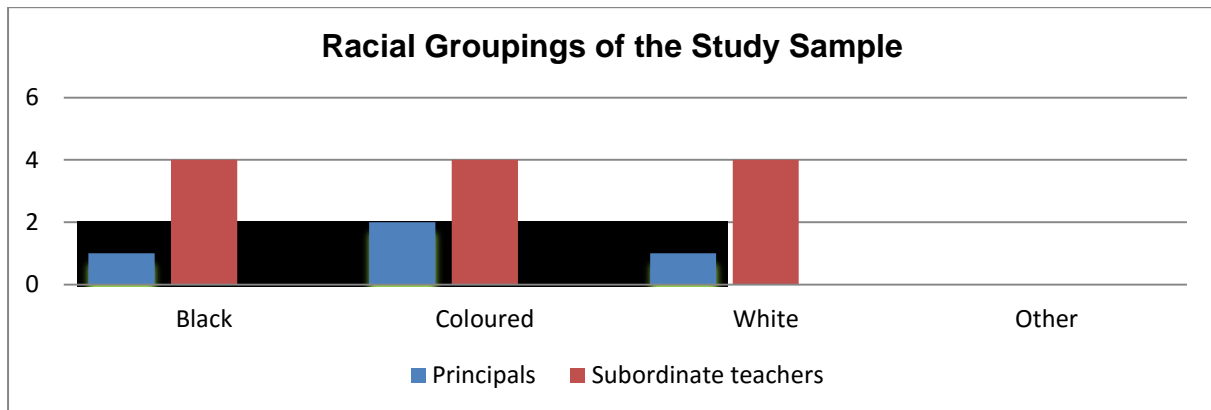
Pie-chart: 4.1



Pie-chart: 4.2



Graph 4.3: Racial Groupings of the Total Participating Women Principals and Subordinate Teachers



Graphs 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 illustrate the percentages of the total research participants in order to show the fair and equal participation of the dominating racial groups among the research participants. The researcher acknowledges that racial classification of the Apartheid order no longer carries any legal force, yet according to Chisholm (2001:388) the classification of racial groups "still carry social and political weight" and are therefore also enumerated in this study. Furthermore, data are presented without revealing the identities of the respondents, who willingly shared their stories and experiences with the researcher, in order to adhere to the ethical considerations of the current study. Finally, relevant data were categorised in accordance to the research questions.

Table 4.4 Summary of Women Principals' participants' Biographical Details

Participants' status	Number
Racial status	
Black	1
White	1
Coloured	2
Marital status	
Married with children	1
Single with children	3
Age status	

46-50 years	1
51-60 years	3

4.3 Data Presentation and analyses / interpretation

The study investigated some of the challenges revealed by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. The presentation and analyses of the data is organised under each of the study's four research questions.

4.3.1 Research question 1: What challenges are perceived by women primary school principals as barriers to leadership positions in schools within the ZF Mgcawu District?

The participating women principals were asked the above-noted. The researcher constructed themes, presented in this section, which emerged after coding and sorting the study data from the responses to the first research question. The researcher coded the data into relevant themes after reading through the interview transcripts of the tape recorded primary principals' interview sessions. The researcher sorted the data from the individual interviews and looked for similarities and distinctions in the generated study data. The following themes were identified under the first research question: personal / family related challenges, institutional challenges and a lack of support.

4.3.1.1 Personal / Family related challenges

The study notes that women in educational leadership positions need a regular balance between being primary caregivers, having domestic responsibilities and being a career woman. The different roles that women assume emerged as a challenge in relation to their careers. The study findings showed that women school principals encountered challenges balancing their professional and personal responsibilities as mothers and grandmothers. The findings also indicate that women aspiring to school leadership positions during the earlier years of their career lives presented having their own children as a challenge. It was a real challenge to find

and establish a balance between their personal and professional responsibilities (Moorosi 2007).

Participant PB stated: *“The fact that you had children. It is difficult to be a working mom and especially when I got divorced... I had to really make compromises with my children to make sure that I am there when I am needed and that I could do what I wanted to do”*.

Participant PB raised several challenges such as being a mother and having a fulltime job as a school principal. A study conducted by Lumby and Azaola (2011:76) states that one of the study respondents' pointed out that she knew about women who would not be considered for promotion because they had children and that women are seen as more nurturing and caring than men. The findings also show that women have to make sacrifices at home just as at work in order for them to successfully balance their personal and professional duties. participant PB's answer shows that working mothers sometimes have to make compromises with their own children and sacrifice time that they could have spent with their children, as a result of the added responsibilities and duties associated with being school principal. She raised the issue of divorce and how difficult it was living through that time of her life. It is assumed that the divorcee status provided her with more time to spend with her children as she no longer had wifely duties added or the responsibilities that go with being married. Participant PB mentioned the added stress of having to work for long hours, sometimes until five in the afternoon engaging in duties such as attending and holding additional meetings with staff and parents, in order to get all the school-related work done.

As a result, it is difficult for women to cope with the vast responsibilities that come with being in the school principal position. In addition, as indicated by Participant PB during the interview, women had to make attempts at finding a balance between their families and work. The data gathered from the participating principals reveal that that all had children of their own with three of the four participating school principals being single mothers and responsible for raising their children on their own or with a distant partner. Hence, a balance was needed in order for them to manage both their personal and professional work duties. The study also notes that women who are

mothers and have young children rarely apply or get appointed in school leadership positions such as that of school principal as the struggle to establish a balance. The findings from the current study indicate that a majority of the participating school principals are mothers to grown children who themselves are adults and have children and families of their own. It can, therefore, be assumed that not being a full time parent presents it-self with fewer challenges, yet participants PA, PB and PC still mentioned their personal responsibility towards their adult children. For instance, a majority of the study sample are grandmothers who have to provide additional support to and for their grandchildren. In addition, some of the participants still had to provide support to their own single parent children most of who moved back home as a result of their own personal challenges or problems. Participant PB further mentioned that:

"I am now in the position that my children are grown up. My one daughter stays with me so I do, now again have people who I have to be there for because she has got a little toddler of two years old, and she works full time... So I do fulfil the role of being her "partner" if you want to say that, in helping her with working her things out but yes it is very difficult I must say".

Participant PB mentioned in the interview that her daughter has moved back home and is now living with her as she is going through personal difficulties of her own. The study findings therefore suggest that participant PB is now faced with the challenge of providing additional support to her daughter as her daughter is raising her child on her own as a single parent, a situation adding to the many challenges that women in school leadership are faced with.

The women principals had their own problems but still managed to balance these with those arising from the professional and other conditions. For instance, the faced challenges associated with being a single parent themselves and having to care for their children who now find themselves in similar positions and facing similar challenges including divorce. While not being a parent to young children of their own may seem to be less challenging, the grandmother statuses that the women school principals faced presented challenges which they themselves had experienced as young mothers. However the majority of the participants were mothers to grown

children who do not demand as much attention from them as having a toddler or teenage children would. However participant PD was the only of the participants to have a daughter who is still in school and in grade 6. The interview conducted with participant PD seemed to suggest that she does not find it to be too much of a challenge as her daughter is well aware of her mother's responsibilities towards the school as principal.

Participant PD stated that her daughter is able to carry on with her homework on her own on days when she has to stay at school or have to attend parent meetings. As a single mother to her daughter participant PD does not have the added responsibility of caring for a husband as well, her daughter is able to go home in the afternoons prepare something for herself to eat and carry on with her homework on her own. These findings indicate that participant PD does have to make sacrifices towards her daughter as her job does not always allow her to be as flexible as she would like to be.

Thus the findings indicate that it is much easier for women to find a balance between their personal and work-related duties at a later stage in their lives and their children are at an age where they do not need as much attention from their mothers. The findings suggests that it is easier for women school leaders to cope with their family related responsibilities at a later stage in their careers as their children do not demand as much attention from them. The data also revealed that the majority of the participants were not married which suggests that they are able to establish a balance between their personal and professional responsibilities without them neglecting either of their duties.

4.3.1.2 Institutional challenges

The study findings reveal that challenges related to the school as an institution stem from various conditions and contexts. These challenges include gender-based-stereotypical perceptions held by fellow colleagues, being isolated or discarded by colleagues and subordinate staff members, and the non-acceptance of authority from women as school principals. The participants' responses to the interview questions confirmed these various challenges.

Participant PA mentioned that: *"Both male and female teachers are still struggling to accept your authority, especially the youngsters"*.

Based on the findings the study concludes that, women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District are faced with institutional challenges, which include gaining acceptance from their subordinate teachers and staff members. Participant PA made reference to the fact that the younger subordinate teachers are struggling with authority acceptance from female school principals. The study concludes that this *"struggle to accept authority"* is related to gender-based stereotypes imbedded in different cultures. This suggests that stereotypes formed against women is a persistent issue that needs to be confronted if the underrepresentation of women in education is to be addressed. Furthermore, the study findings raised several other institutional challenges.

Participant PC mentioned that: *"The obstacles sometimes you get them from different angles, sometimes you get challenges from your own colleagues and also the SGB's. I still remember when I was to become a principal... I was not aware of gender inequality... We were not empowered, we didn't know much. And that the policies have and that the laws have changed so that men and women should be equal now"*.

Participant PC mentioned a number of challenges during the interview session, such as those emanating from her work colleagues and the school governing body (SGB). She also mentioned challenges related to a lack of awareness of gender issues upon first appointment as school principal, which resulted in the gender-based discrimination that she encountered because of her status as a woman. Participant PC has been in the position of school principal for more than ten years. The data provided to the researcher during the interview session shows that women in education and educational leadership positions, specifically women in the position of school principal, are being gender discriminated 20 years into the post-apartheid dispensation. Participant PC also mentioned the challenge of feeling "isolated".

Participant PC statement that: *"The moment you are identified to fill in a post or a higher position that's when people start to now have some 'tricks' and say that 'I don't feel anymore to work with her'. They drift away from you and tell others 'we know better than her' and start to isolate you"*.

A challenge related to being isolated or excluded is shown here as posing a challenge to women entering in school leadership positions. The women principal's sense of self-confidence and ability as successful leaders is undermined by the exclusion and being "cursed aside" by their colleagues. It is evident that women in the school principals' position need support from their subordinate teachers, staff members and community members. Gaining support from subordinate staff members is vital to women functioning as school principals, as the success of any school is dependent on team work among all the stakeholders involved in managing the school.

4.3.1.3 Lack of support

The researcher further interviewed the study participants regarding the specific challenges they faced as women principals. The generated data revealed a lack of support from community members as the third most frequently raised challenge by the participating school principals.

The study findings indicate that the Northern Cape Province is South Africa's largest province and the ZF Mgcalu District is home to a number of communities that are relatively small in size. The study shows that the majority of women in the position of school principal are found in the smaller communities of the ZF Mgcalu District, Lumby and Azaola (2011). From the information provided by participant PA, PB and PC, the study findings conclude that, the amount of community support women school principals from schools within smaller communities received posed a challenge.

Participant PC mentioned: *"The obstacles sometimes you get them from different angles, sometimes you get challenges from the community and sometimes politically also..."*.

Findings from the study revealed that participant PC experienced challenges related to acceptance of her position as school. During the interview session participant PC mentioned that sometimes as a school principal people do not want to work with you because they question you as the school principal. From the findings it is also suggested that members from the community including parents are less obtuse to

participate in school related activities. The study findings found that women in school leadership positions need cooperation from the broader school community in order for them to successfully manage and further their schools. The study further revealed that participant PB experienced similar related challenges as she had mentioned that; *"In the beginning, I did sometimes feel that when you are a women principal, parents might say, 'ooh you will not be able to do this', so you have to work a bit harder than the men, to show that you can. Especially when it comes to sport and so forth, they always think that you don't know what you are doing"*.

The findings from the interview transcripts with participant PB suggests that when women are first appointed as school principal that members from the school community including parents form their own gender-based perceptions about women's ability to participate on all management levels as school principal. The study findings showed that this types of gender-based stereotyping of women's capabilities as school leaders contribute to a lack of support from community members adding to the challenges experienced by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District.

4.3.2 Research question 2: What perceptions are held by women subordinate teachers regarding gender specific leadership challenges faced by their school principal?

The challenges faced by women primary school principals were categorised into themes after the coding and sorting of the data retrieved from the teachers' questionnaire. The second research question aimed at revealing the perceptions of female subordinate teachers with regards to the challenges faced by their school principals. The data obtained from the teachers' questionnaire show that there were several challenges. These perceived challenges, as revealed by the subordinate teachers' questionnaire, are tabulated and arranged from the most challenging to the least challenging in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Challenges Faced by Women Primary School Principals in School Leadership Positions: Subordinate Teachers' Perceptions

The Problem (Challenges)	Frequency <i>N</i> = 12	Response percentage
Gender discrimination	11	92%
gender-based-Stereotypes	10	83%
Low Self-esteem/confidence	8	67%
Family related commitments	6	50%
Ethnicity	3	25%

The findings show that women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District face challenges such as gender discrimination and gender-based stereotypical perceptions held against women in school leadership positions. Women school principals are discriminated against on the basis of the gender and ability as female leaders. Furthermore, the information from the questionnaire revealed that women school principals are faced with other challenges, which vary among the participating school principals. These challenges are sorted into themes and are discussed in the next section.

4.3.2.1 Gender discrimination and gender-based-stereotypes

The findings obtained from the teachers' questionnaire suggest that women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District are faced with a number of challenges ranging from the personal to the professional. It is evident in Table 4.5 that, a majority of the participating women subordinate teachers raised the challenge of gender discrimination. The findings confirm that gender discrimination against women and specifically women in school leadership from the ZF Mgcawu District is a dominant challenge for women school principals from the smaller towns in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. The second most common issue that was raised by the participating female subordinate teachers was the challenge surrounding stereotypical perceptions on women's ability to effectively perform in the position of school principal. A majority (92%) of the participating women school principals faced

negative assumptions held against them and their ability to effectively lead their schools forward as school principals. Participating subordinate teacher, TA3 mentioned that the school principal's position used to be viewed as "*best suited for men*". Further findings suggest that some of the staff and community members still believed that women who are employed in the position of school principal were occupying a position which should be occupied by a male school principal.

The findings from the subordinate teachers' questionnaire indicate that women principals were discriminated against on the basis of their gender as females. This finding is of great concern as gender discrimination was among the most frequently raised challenges that women school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province faced. Participant TA1 wrote that, "*as a woman, the principal 'really had to work twice as hard in order for her to prove herself to her fellow colleagues, subordinate staff members and to the school community'*".

Participant TA3 mentioned that she had experienced that stereotypical challenges towards women's ability as school principals were common among community members from small towns and that "*men are usually the ones taking up school leadership positions as men are seen as being superior to their female counterparts*". Participant TA3 has seen this type of discrimination unfold in the school community and is of the opinion that women have to twice as hard to gain respect as school leaders from their staff and community members. Participants TB1, TB2 and TB3 also raised challenges concerning gender discrimination and stereotyping against participant PB when she was first appointed to the position of school principal. Participant TB1, TB2 and TB3 mentioned the stereotypical perceptions held by fellow colleagues from both male and females that the school principal's position had always been regarded as a man's job. Participant TB3 elaborated that some of the male colleagues felt that she had taken a position best suited for a man, she stated that "*some men felt, she took a man's job*". Participant TB3 further mentioned that some of the parents were "*not happy at first about the appointment of a female principal*".

Furthermore participant TC1 also perceived gender discrimination against women school principals to be a leading challenge as she mentioned the principals' authority

being undermined by staff members from both genders. Participant TC1 further mentioned *"personally seeing how women principals are judged by their fellow colleagues and the broader community upon being the first female principal of the school and exercising leadership styles that differ from the leadership approaches displayed by men"*.

The data, therefore, showed that although women appear to have been accepted as school principals, there still exists a need for women to prove themselves and work twice as hard as school principals in school leadership positions. For members of the school community, as stated by TD1 *"automatically have faith in men as the school principal"* within schools. The findings indicate that stereotyping against women in leadership positions leads to a negative mindset in women. Women also become less motivated to pursue school leadership positions. Hence, women who aspire to or are already occupying leadership positions get negatively affected by the lack of support from their fellow colleagues and communities and as a result undermines their vision and performance in school leadership roles.

4.3.2.3 Women's low self-esteem / confidence

The findings of the study indicate that women's self-confidence is undermined by the negative perceptions held by fellow colleagues, parents and other members of the school community. The participating women primary school principals are forced to prove themselves to their communities. Thus, the findings show that the lack of belief in their ability as leaders has a negative influence on the confidence levels of the women school principals under study. Ironically, being appointed to a new position with more responsibilities could be a daunting task without the added negative perceptions held by community members. The findings obtained from the teachers' questionnaire also indicate that members of the community from smaller and more rural towns in the Northern Cape Province hold firm beliefs and perceptions about the role that women should fulfil in society and those that men should play as the natural leaders (Chisholm 2001). Two of the women primary school principals participating in the study are currently the first women principals to occupy the position of school principal in their community. As a result, the study also shows that being the first in any professional position puts one under severe pressure to perform at one's best

and to prove one's capability as a leader to both oneself, the family, staff members and the broader school community.

4.3.2.4 Family-related commitments

Among the leading challenges that were raised by the teachers' questionnaire were those related to family commitments. These family commitments formed part of the personal barriers faced by women primary school principals. The subordinate teachers raised the issue that women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcalu District were mothers and even grandmothers who had to make sacrifices with their own families in order to be able to effectively manage their schools. All the managers agreed that maintaining a balance between their personal and professional lives were one of the biggest challenges they had faced. Findings from the teacher questionnaire suggest that, the time consuming nature of the school principal position presents itself as a challenge for the majority of the participating primary school principals. Family commitments and the responsibilities that come with having a family are not easily overcome. Participant TB4 noted that family related responsibilities and commitments required women school principals to consciously set aside time for their families and any other personal responsibilities that they might have. The findings obtained from the transcripts of the interview sessions with the participating school principals lead to the conclusion that commitments related to family were of utmost importance to the participating women school principals. The data reveals that it was very important for these women to spend quality time with their families. The overall study sample has to balance both the demands from their careers and families as mothers, teachers and school principals.

4.3.2.5 Ethnicity

Lamby and Alaola (2011) note that issues related to gender are only one of the challenges related to the inequitable representation of women in educational management and leadership positions within South African schools. Results from the study reveal two closely related challenges that are faced by women principals from the ZF Mgcalu District, as women's ethnicity and culture. The term ethnicity, as it is used in the study refers to the American Psychological Associations' (2012:10) definition as being a category reflecting a specific social group's shared or common

history, including national origin, language, geography, culture and traditions. The findings indicate that it seemed to be the perception among subordinate teachers that being from the same ethnic group as the majority of the school community favourably influences a women's chance of being appointed to the school principal position and the amount of support she receives from the school community. However, from the study data it may be viewed that women school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District work in multicultural environments. Findings from the teachers' questionnaire indicate that some subordinate teachers were of the opinion that aspiring women school principals in such circumstances should be aware of diverse cultures as it may assist their careers as school principals.

4.3.3 Research question 3: How do women primary school principals employ specific coping strategies to address the perceived challenges?

4.3.3.1 Gaining strength from spirituality and prayer

Findings from the study observations and the teachers' questionnaire underline the importance of religion, as mentioned by both subordinate teachers and the participating principals. The data from the teachers' questionnaire indicate that the school principal and subordinate staff members make a point of praying about any school related task including important decision before making decisions, which might have an impact on the future of the school. Participant TB2 supports this by stating that "*she (the principal) first prays over the decision*". Participant TB2 pointed out the importance of prayer at their school as she has witnessed the important role it plays in the success of the school.

The researcher made the observation when speaking to participant PB and PD that they placed significant value on their religion as Christian women in managing their schools and homes. The researcher also made the observation that participant PD in particular was actively involved in her community as a school principal and church leader. Participant PD was observed to gain significant strength and support as a school and community leader from the work she does in the church. The study results show that spirituality and prayer proved to be an excellent and powerful means of coping with the revealed challenges.

4.3.3.2 Establishing balance

The ability to establish a balance between one's personal and professional responsibilities has been viewed as a leading challenge for women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District. The relationship between personal and professional duties was perceived to be less challenging for the women principals participating in this study, as the majority of them were not married and had adult children with families of their own. Although this may seem to be true women are still faced with additional challenges later in their career lives. The study notes that participant PA was the only of the participating school principals who was married with two grown-up sons. Participants PB, PC and PD were all single mothers with grown-up children except for participant PD who has a twelve year old daughter in grade 6.

The results show that women who were of a more mature age and were married to someone who understands their wives' professional obligations such as participant PA offered the much needed support and contributed to her being able to establish and successfully balancing both her personal and professional duties. Participant PA could depend on the support from her spouse and children as reflected here:

"I have two grown up children, one is married the other one who is twenty-nine he is still at home but he and he's farther just have to accept that sometimes they have to see to themselves and he (husband) is an ex-principal so he knows. I am very lucky. It is not all men, especially when you are a female teacher and your husband is not in the same profession, they don't understand.

"The support that participant PA receives from her husband and son is what helps her to cope with the demands of her work as the school principal. Participant PA refers to her husband's status as an ex-school principal, suggesting that he understands the challenges that go along with being in the school principals' position. She also pointed out that her son is staying at home with herself and her husband, suggesting that her son and husband contribute towards the domestic responsibilities in the home. Her husband and son have accepted and learnt to cook and clean for themselves, which helps her to be able to focus on her work commitments. Participant PA refers to herself as '*lucky*' as she has seen how difficult it is to have a

spouse with cultural expectations regarding the role of a woman as wife and mother towards the family. The support from having a spouse and grown children who understand the obligations of a principal towards their school was seen to be a crucial coping mechanism for women school principals as was reflected by participant PA.

The perception is that women who are not married and have grown children are faced with less challenges as their children are grown and do not demand as much attention from their parents as having little children would. Although this may be true, women at a more mature age in their lives still face challenges balancing family and work related responsibilities. The majority of the female school principals under study were single mothers and assumed to face less challenges with regards to balancing their personal and professional responsibilities.

Participant PB mentioned: *"I'm not married anymore (laughs)... No, I must say I do think it is very difficult. I am in the position that my children are grown up now. My programme starts very early, I start at half past four in the morning, then we get everything ready, take the children to school and then I'm here (at school). I'm very focused... I try not to leave here before five but sometimes I can't do that because she (her daughter) can't come to pick up her child. Yes it is very difficult, I really try hard if I have meetings at night, which I do have quite often, luckily she is there otherwise, if she also has a meeting, we have to make another plan. It really is difficult to manage it but I put my work first and that is the main thing. I must say sometimes it happened that when my children were still in school (bell rings for first break) you could not watch all of their games, I had to really 'neglect' them in that sense but they always say 'mom you were not there but we are proud of you'. So that helps you and now I have two very driven children and they work very hard. We manage (laughs) but it is very difficult sometimes.*" It can be deduced that one of participant PBs' children is staying with her, like in the case of participant PA.

Participant PB mentioned that she was not married in a almost "cheerful" sense indicating that she had adjusted to being divorced and was comfortable with being single and independent. In finding a balance between work and family participant PB

mentioned her daily routine of waking up at half past four every morning and assisting her daughter and granddaughter with getting things settled for the day before going to work. The study findings suggesting that participant PB receives some additional support from her daughter when it comes to home related and domestic duties but in turn also has to assume the role of her daughter "*partner*" when her daughter is not able to cope with all her duties as a single parent of a two year old.

The findings indicate that it is difficult for participant PB to establish a balance between her different responsibilities as a school principal, mother and grandmother. Women with adult children may face less family related challenges than women who have small children (Moroosi 2007:515). The study noted that older women face additional challenges related to their children moving back home due to unforeseen circumstances, including divorce, unemployment or unplanned pregnancies. Women school principals who are mothers are faced with providing support to their adult children and grandchildren. These findings suggest that unmarried or single older women with grown-up children are sometimes faced with unforeseen challenges. Participant PB was observed as a very hard working, driven and career focused women, who loves her children and always does her best to put them first.

The above findings suggest that as a young mother pursuing a career in school management or leadership participant had to make sacrifices with her children because of her work related commitments. Furthermore it is suggested that now at a more mature age and stage of her career as school principal she had to make sacrifices in her professional capacity as a school principal in order to be there for her daughter and granddaughter supported by her statement of wanting to work until five o'clock in the afternoon and it not always being possible for her to do, as sometimes she has to take care of her granddaughter when her daughter is unable to because of her status as a working single parent. The study findings thus reveal that for participant PB to balance her personal / family and professional duties she has to establish a daily routine for herself and sometimes make compromises with both her personal and professional duties.

Participant PC mentioned: *"I differentiate between my personal and professional duties... So if you are at school do all your duties up to where you can and then when you say I stop here now, I draw the line here I'll continue from tomorrow then you leave everything in your office and then when you arrive at home you start giving your family attention. So in other words you must plan your work. If I want to put in extra time, say an hour just to get on track with my work and then you add that extra hour and you phone your family. You can make sacrifices sometimes if your family is not there (at home) or the children are still at crash. You look at the time and say 'okay I can do this piece of work very quickly before the family arrive at home' then I know the pots are on the stove."*

The information derived from participant PC is clearly stated and to the point, indicating that she has found a balance between coping with her personal and professional responsibilities. The findings also show that participant is a single working mother with her children still staying at home with her. The information provided by participant PC suggests that her daughters have come to understand and have grown used to respecting their mothers obligations as a school principal. It was indicated that participant PC relies on planning her work, scheduling meetings in advance and planning her day while accommodating her schedule. She mentioned differentiating between work and personal duties, leading to the conclusion that she is able to make time for and balance both her personal and professional roles without the one negatively impacting the other. It was observed that she had established a balance by organising herself and her daily tasks so that the one does not take time away from the other. Participant PC was also observed to be a hard worker, who prioritised her personal and professional responsibilities by keeping the lines of communication open with her family, informing them about certain unforeseen work related duties.

The findings further suggest that participant PC is able to balance her personal and professional responsibilities due to the fact that she is not married and has grown-up children who provide the necessary support required for her to successfully manage her school and home. The study findings suggest that in the case of participant PC it was somewhat easier for her to establish a balance and cope with her personal and

professional duties because she was not married and had children capable of seeing to themselves and not demanding too much attention from their mother. Participant PD like the majority of the female school principals under study was a single mother. The findings revealed that participant PD was the only one of the participating principals who only had one child younger than 18 years.

Participant PD mentioned that: *"When I am at school it is about my school work, when I am at home or wherever I never let it interfere with my work. The children are important to me, the parents are important to me and the teachers are important to me, personal things have to be put aside, you can always make time for it."*

Although it was not mentioned during the interview session the researcher observed that participant PD is able to balance and cope with her responsibilities as a mother, school principal, community and church leader because she is not married and does not share the added pressure of fulfilling wifely duties towards a spouse. The study findings further revealed that participant PD had one child only and although her daughter is still of school going age, she does not pose any challenge as she was observed to be the type of child that would carry on playing and doing her homework on her own.

The findings from the current study suggest that participant found it much easier to cope and balance her personal and professional duties due to the fact that she was not married and had only one child of her own. The study findings reveal that participant PD puts her work related duties as the school principal first reflecting the love that she has for what she does. Furthermore the results show that participant PD actively contributes to her community by involving herself and her daughter in the church. Her strong religious views and love for God and his church is what provides participant PD with the necessary support of managing and coping with her personal and professional duties.

4.3.3.3 Self-empowerment

The study findings indicate that women in the school principals' position have managed to cope with the revealed challenges. The findings are supported by what was revealed during the interview sessions.

Participant PB mentioned that: *"From when I started teaching I always set my goals to better myself and to go through all the steps, post level one teacher, Head of Department, vice principal and then principal, that was the goal and so that was what I wanted and I decided to do that. I went from post level one to a HoD and then to principal of the school. I think that was the best way to do it. I worked hard, I took every opportunity I could to learn and improve myself to get to where I am today"*.

Participant PC mentioned: *"I worked myself up in disciplining myself as a teacher, being dedicated, being on time. Reaching this step of being a principal I involved myself in team work here at school level and I was promoted at that time to be a HoD in decision making, discussions and also by empowering myself in studying further and choosing the right career"*.

Participant PD mentioned: *"I enjoy learning; I always wanted to know more. I was the Head of Department and I used to spend time in the office because I wanted to know how the registrations were done. That is the type of person I am"*.

From the statements provided by participants PB, PC and PD it seemed that the participating school principals empowered themselves and their positions as school principal by following specific steps. Participants PB, PC and PD mentioned first working towards becoming the Head of Department and then school principal. The participants empowered themselves by involving themselves in the administrative work of the school, empowering themselves with the necessary knowledge and skills to become school principal. From the findings it seemed the participating school principals had a plan as to how they were going to achieve their goals of becoming principal and in this way they proved themselves to be worthy school leaders. The present study found out that women placed significant value on empowering themselves as a coping strategy. It could be seen from the data that the participating school principals empowered themselves and their position as principal by setting strict career goals for themselves and remaining focused on achieving their goals of becoming leaders in education. The findings show that self empowerment such as developing ones teaching skills, management skills and learning more from engaging

in different post levels in school management positions, contribute to women empowering themselves and establishing their position as school principals.

Furthermore self-discipline was revealed as a key strategy in successfully coping and managing some of the challenges that were faced by women occupying school leadership positions. Thus the study findings suggest that it is paramount to empower oneself as a female school principal by taking additional steps that may contribute to successfully managing the school and all stakeholders involved and as a result gain security in the position as principal.

4.3.4 Research question 4: Which leadership styles are displayed by women principals from the ZF Mgcawu District?

The researcher set out to determine the leadership styles employed by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District and how effective the leadership approach was. The findings for the fourth research question were generated from the interview transcripts, teachers' questionnaire and observations. The study findings revealed that the women primary school principals under study all employed similar leadership styles in the management of their schools, its learners, parents and teachers. The study findings also reveal that the sample of women school principals all displayed leadership characteristics as noted in the way they motivated and encouraged their subordinate teachers to participate in important decision-making processes and with the implementation of the vision and mission of the school.

4.3.4.1 Leadership style

The term leadership has been defined differently by various scholars (Eagly and Karau 2002; de la Ray 2005 and Yukl 2010:19). The Department of Education (2008:42) makes reference to Cuban (1988) in Bush's (2008) definition of the term leadership as "influencing the actions of others in achieving desirable ends. Leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others. They initiate change to reach existing and new goals". In the current study, the term leadership style relates to the manner in which leaders provide direction and motivation to subordinate teachers, fellow staff members, the schools' learners and their parents. The findings reveal the specific leadership styles employed by the women primary

school principals under study. The findings reflect that the sample under study implemented a balanced approach of leadership styles ranging from democratic and participative to transformational leadership styles. The study found out that women primary school principals are sympathetic, empathetic and considerate of the feelings and views of their subordinate teachers, the learners and learners' parents. The study also found out that women primary school principals aim to involve all education stakeholders including SGB's and SMT's, and invested in the future of the schools on important school-related decisions.

4.3.4.2 Democratic / participative leadership

The findings reveal that democratic and participative leadership styles were employed by the sample under study. Participant PA mentioned that: *"Yes, I allow everybody to participate. I encourage everybody to give input I even tell some of the parents to come to the school. The principal does not make any decisions alone"*. This indicates that all of the participating subordinate teachers and the school principal, agreed on the importance of democratic and participative decision making, where all education stakeholders and teachers have a say on important decisions. The findings from the teachers' questionnaire are significant in showing the existence of this democratic leadership style. The data reveals that participant PA collaborates with all the relevant school stakeholders namely, teachers, other relevant staff members, the SGB and SMT's, in making important decisions. Suggesting that decisions are made wherein everybody had a equal say about issues that impact the school.

Participant PB: *"I don't make any decisions or anything I just listen and then we sit together around the table and then we discuss the problem"*. Similar findings were found at school C.

Participant PC mentioned: *"Yes I encourage them very much... I call a staff meeting, for instance where we have got an agenda of all the points which should be discussed and whereby we should reach a conclusion..."*.

Thus the findings from the interview and teacher questionnaires indicate that participant PC is democratic in her leadership style. One of the participant

subordinate staff members noted that the principal first consults with the SMT's and the SGB, and then she consults her subordinate teachers during the decision-making process. Findings from the interview transcripts with participant PD indicate that participant PD also consulted her subordinate staff before making important decisions.

Participant PD mentioned that: *" I never make a decision on my own, we would always come together and we would discuss it together. I do not say to them listen people "we are going to do this or that" I would always ask them, uh "we have to do this; what do you say?" In most cases they take the lead and I would just agree".*

The findings indicate that participant PD consults everyone involved and even lets her subordinate staff make some decisions on their own. The study found that at times when it is not always possible or time does not allow for discussions between teachers and the school principal, participant PD would make decisions independently. In such situations, participant PD would consult her subordinate staff at a later stage, at which she would inform them that a decision had to be made.

4.3.4.3 Transformational leadership

According to Santamaria and Santamaria (2012:03) transformational leadership encompasses the act of empowering individuals. Transformational leadership is also further described by Santamaria and Santamaria (2012:03), as the act whereby leaders motivate, encourage, support and inspire their subordinate staff to develop and improve themselves, their skills and the organisation or institution for the better (Yukl 2010:43).

This study's findings indicate that the participating school principals employed transformational leadership styles in the management of their schools.

Participant PB stated that: *"I am a girl power lady (laughs)... Especially when I speak to lady teachers I always tell them, what do you want and where do you want to go? We only have five male teachers here, the rest are women and so they really work hard and one or two do have the ambition to become HoD's, which some of them are now and who would like to become principal someday. So I try with what I do to motivate them. If there are any opportunities for them and if they can go on a course*

or whatever, I show them and encourage them to go do that. If you want to study further... I also make sure that they do. We do also see that they come with their personal problems, more than they would if it was a male principal, they will come and say 'I am fed up' or whatever and they feel they can come sit here and we work it out. The fact that you are a woman seems to ease peoples' minds leaving them to feel like they can come to you and talk about anything".

All of the participating subordinate school teachers agreed that participant PB never makes decisions on her own or without consulting everyone involved in a particular situation. All of the participating subordinate teachers from school B agreed that participant PB consults her subordinate teachers, SGB and SMT's before and during the decision-making process. As a school principal who successfully employs a combination of leadership styles participant PB motivates her female subordinate teachers as well as other women in education to pursue school management and leadership positions by making the following statement; *"Your role as school principal is enriching and the main thing is that you can make a difference. I think that's the one thing that I learnt from my religion as a Christian woman is that you must make a difference. If you are blessed with talents you must use it to better the people around you not only yourself. I think education needs well driven women who are career driven and who, yes despite everything (the challenges) it just shows how strong you are if you can manage your home, manage your kids and manage a school"*.

The findings suggest that women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape Province incorporate a combination of leadership styles in the management of their schools. It was also revealed that a majority of the participating subordinate teachers seemed to be content with this style of leadership and is comfortable under the leadership of women school principals. Based on study findings and the above statement from participant PB and the majority of the study participants the study implores that more women in education from the ZF Mgcawu District pursue school management and school leadership positions as the studyfindings show that women are underrepresented in school headship positions in primary schools within the ZF Mgcawu District.

The next section of the study outlines the data discussion of the study results.

4.4 Data Discussion

The findings reflect on the different challenges faced by women primary school principals, the coping strategies implemented in order to address these challenges and the leadership styles utilised by women school principals. The findings were drawn from the interviewees' profiles, teachers' questionnaire, researcher's observations and the researcher's own point of view. The ensuing discussion on the study findings is based on the following research questions:

4.4.1 Research question 1: What challenges are perceived by women primary school principals as barriers to leadership positions in schools within the ZF Mgcawu District?

The study was conducted in order to establish the challenges faced by women as school principals of primary schools from the ZF Mgcawu District. Challenges such as establishing a successful balance between their personal and professional lives, institutional challenges, gender-based discrimination, stereotypes, isolation, acceptance of authority, lack of self-confidence and lack of support from school communities, were among the challenges that were identified by the participating female principals.

4.4.1.1 Personal challenges related to women's responsibility towards their families were identified as a challenge for women in school leadership positions from the ZF Mgcawu District. The study revealed that the participating women principals initially, when first appointed to the principals position found it challenging to establish a balance between their personal and professional demands. Yet at present the study findings indicate that balancing work and family has become more manageable at this stage of their lives. The study found that balancing work and family demands became easier as the majority of the participants do not have high demands towards their families. The study findings revealed that the participating principals had less family related demands as the majority of them have adult children, thus providing them more time to focus on their professional duties (Moroosi 2007:514).

4.4.3.2 Challenges, which include Institutional challenges generated from within the school as an organisation. The study findings revealed that these challenges ranged

from gender discrimination and gender-based stereotypes, acceptance of authority and lack of support from subordinate staff members (Mathipa and Tsoka 2000:130). These challenges were among the institutional challenges faced by the women school principals in their professional capacity as school principals. The study notes that challenges related gender discrimination and gender-based stereotypes have been barriers from the earlier years in the beginning of their careers and that some have learned how to identify and cope with challenges surrounding the gender gap in educational leadership positions (Chisholm 2001:390; Moroosi 2010:14-16).

4.4.1.3 The third perceived barrier included community related challenges as one of the more persistent challenges. The challenges related to the negative perception of community members often result in a lack of support from the members of the school community. However, as school leaders, the women school principals have learned how to address and cope with such challenges and in that way prevent community related challenges from manifesting as a barrier to their professional success as school principals. The study findings revealed that women involve themselves in communal activities and try to involve community members, parents and local businesses in school activities as members on the School Governing Body (SGB's), School Management Team's and as sponsors.

4.4.2 Research question 2: What perceptions are held by women subordinate teachers regarding gender specific leadership challenges faced by their school principals?

4.4.2.1 Low self-esteem / confidence

The researcher draws on the interview transcripts and the administered teachers' questionnaire in making the conclusion that the low self-confidence levels in women school leaders contributed to the challenges women school principals face as school principals. The study findings show that 67% of the participating subordinate teachers perceived that issues related to a lack or low self-confidence presented themselves as one of the challenges faced by the participating school principals. Moreover, the study findings and literature review suggest that negative perceptions, stereotypes, lack of support from the school community and subordinate staff, resulted in women's low self-esteem and lack of confidence as school leaders (Chabaya, Rembe and

Wadesango 2009:240). These findings support Young (2016:10) regarding the assertion that areas related to women's self-confidence and emotional self-control are among the areas which women of the 21st century need to remain focused on, if they are to succeed as future leaders of South African schools.

Discrimination against women, gender-based attitudes and society's perception of women as mothers and wives has led many women to develop low self-confidence. A study conducted in the USA noted that women displaying behaviour that can be considered as a polite gesture are perceived as weak, lacking in self-confidence and unable to exercise authority (Oakley 2000:325). Similar to the current study is the idea that women in school leadership positions are perceived as lacking self-confidence as school leaders because they display behaviour such as empathising with others, offering emotional support, showing compassion towards parents and children who are less fortunate and making democratic decision as school managers. Thus, the results from the study indicate that the negative perceptions formed by society hinder women in school leadership positions from advancing their careers and undermine future female school leaders' aspirations to become school principals (Oakley 2000). The study, therefore, reflects that a lack of self-confidence poses a challenge for aspiring women school principals and those currently occupying the principals' position as their self-confidence directly impacts their belief in their own ability to run schools effectively and successfully.

4.4.3 Research question 3: How do women primary school principals employ specific coping strategies to address the perceived challenges?

4.4.3.1 Gaining strength from prayer and spirituality

The study found out that a majority of the participating women school principals relied on religion, prayer and spirituality as a primary coping strategy (Grogan and Shakeshaft 2011). The study noted that all the participating principals relied on the strength gained from God and from going to church. It was also established that most of the participating subordinate teachers were of the opinion that most female school principals turn to religion and prayer and seek God's intervention through putting their trust in God more than any of the other coping strategy in order to manage the demands of their school related responsibilities (Juma and Simatwa 2016:126). The

sample under study entrusted their success as school leaders in their faith and belief in God and view this as the key to managing their personal and professional lives and schools. It was evident from the study that that participating women school principals relied on their religion and spirituality to maintain their self-confidence and to cope with the challenges they faced as primary school principals. The participating school principals demonstrate their trust and faith in God by starting each school day with a prayer, praying for the school and guidance from the Lord. In this way their belief in spirituality and prayer guides them and gives them the strength to perform in their professional roles as school principals.

4.4.3.2 Support structures

Although the study found personal or family related responsibilities as one of the challenges facing women in school leadership positions, the women all felt that family and friends were also a useful coping mechanism. The study found out that support came from parents, husbands, children and extended family members. The participating women school principals would not have been as successful in their present school leadership positions without the support and encouragement given to them by their families. Furthermore, the study found out that a majority of the study participants were actively involved in church and the school community. The commitment to the community and church did however result in more responsibilities but also served as a support system and a coping mechanism. The study revealed that support from family; the church and community members served as reinforcements and assisted women school leaders to move forward with their personal and professional lives. Some of the participating school principals also mentioned that receiving personal and professional support from their subordinate teachers and staff members reduced work related stress.

4.4.3.3 Balancing personal and professional responsibilities

The study found out that women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District established a balance between their personal and professional lives by planning, organising, establishing routines and differentiating between their family and school related duties. They agreed that maintaining a balance between their personal and professional lives was one of the biggest challenges they faced at the

beginning and throughout their careers. The results suggest that the time consuming nature of their job as school principals was a challenge for all of the school principals under study as they have had to make sacrifices with their families because time would not allow them to do everything. The findings from the interview transcripts reveal that a conscious decision is required from female principals to set aside time for their families and school work. Therefore, it is noted that the lack or absence of a strong support system at home and at work undermines their ability to manage their dual roles as mothers and school principals.

4.4.3.4 Self-empowerment

The findings demonstrate that women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District earned and advanced to their current school leadership position by empowering themselves with education at tertiary level. All participating school principals held a post graduate qualification or Advanced Certificate in Education, which empowered them to function well as leaders and principals of their schools. Women striving for, and women already occupying school leadership positions, are often overlooked during considerations for managerial positions, regardless of their academic qualifications, because of the general perception that women in their personal capacity face challenges that most than their male colleagues do not (Long, Kahn and Schutz 1992:235-237; Ozga 1993; Gupton and Slick 1996). This information is still quite relevant today as this type perception is often linked to gender-based-stereotypes against women's ability to function effectively on both personal and professional planes, as noted by Gupton (2009:05-06). Thus, further study findings disclose that although empowerment by tertiary education is important, it has a limited impact on women's advancement to school headship and that it is often necessary for women in education to go beyond the traditional forms of qualification. Moreover the study findings revealed that although women school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District have many challenges to overcome, there is no substantial reason why more women in school management should not be considered for promotion to school leadership positions or assigned school leadership related tasks.

4.4.4 Research question 4: Which leadership styles are displayed by women principals from the ZF Mgcawu District?

4.4.4.1 Women's leadership

The study found out that a majority of the participating primary school principals displayed a combination of democratic, participative and transformational leadership attributes in the management of their schools and subordinate staff. It is evident from the data supplied by the study participants that working together with female school principals provided additional support, freedom and flexibility. It can be concluded, from the findings, that women school principals provide their subordinate staff with the much needed support toward furthering their careers as school teachers, future school managers and leaders. A majority of the participating school principals acknowledged that they offer support and motivate their subordinate teachers, both male and female, to develop their careers as teachers and to further their education in order for them to be the best teachers and leaders in education (Chiliwniak 1997; Grove and Montgomery 2000; de la Ray 2005; Eagly and Carli 2007). The findings show that female school principals display feminine qualities such as sitting down and actively listening to their subordinate staff members, parents and learners be it about something personal, work or school related and try to work together to find a solution to any problems that might arise during the conversation. The researcher observed the participating principals displaying genuine affection towards their subordinate staff teachers, the learners and their parents. Therefore, the researcher concludes that a combination of transformational, participatory and democratic leadership styles is what contributes to the success of female primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District. This combination of leadership approaches was found to be the most empowering way of leadership. The study thus implores that more women in the position of school principal continue to practice transformational leadership in the management of schools.

4.5 Conclusion

The chapter concludes that women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape Province face various challenges in their professional capacity as school principals. The chapter examined some of the challenges and

barriers that exist for women aspiring to senior school leadership positions. It also examined the challenges faced by women who are currently positioned as principals of primary schools within the ZF Mgcawu District.

The chapter highlighted some of the challenges faced by women primary school principals and revealed some of the coping strategies administered by the participating school principals. The data revealed in this section aimed to create awareness about the vast challenges facing women school principals and to provide suggestions on how to effectively employ good coping strategies to assist women in their professional responsibilities as female school principals and aspiring female school principals. The data analysis, drawing on the feminist theoretical framework, showed that gender discrimination and stereotypical views were among the highlighted challenges that are faced by women primary school principals from the ZF Magcwu District in the Northern Cape Province.

The next chapter outlines the summaries, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the presentation, analyses and discussion of the study data. This chapter outlines the summary of the study and that of its conclusions and makes recommendations for future research studies. The chapter discussed the revealed challenges faced by women primary school principals with the view to empower women in education to pursue school leadership positions. Chapter 5 begins by summarising the key findings of the study, in line with the research questions. It also presented a set of conclusions based on the study findings. The study findings are made in relation to the research questions and are presented in line with the constructed study themes. The researcher also considers the study's findings in relation to the gathered data and recommendations for future research studies are made in the field of women's leadership.

The research study was guided by four research questions hereunder:

1. What challenges are perceived by women primary school principals as barriers to leadership positions in schools within the ZF Mgcawu District?
2. What perceptions are held by women subordinate teachers regarding gender specific leadership challenges faced by their school principals?
3. How do women primary school principals employ specific coping strategies to address the perceived challenges?
4. Which leadership styles were displayed by women principals from the ZF Mgcawu District?

5.2 Summary of the findings

The overall objective of the study was to determine the challenges that women from the ZF Mgcawu District Municipality are faced with in school leadership positions. The researcher set out to answer this question by gathering relevant data from women currently in the position of primary school principal within the ZF Mgcawu District. Data were generated by means of structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires and non-participative observations. The data was coded into themes,

analysed and interpreted into findings. The key findings from this study are summarised below.

5.2.1 Research question 1: What challenges are perceived by women primary school principals as barriers to leadership positions in schools within the ZF Mgcawu District?

The researcher made conclusions following an analysis of the interview responses from the participating primary school principals. The three main themes emerging from the conducted interview schedule namely are family related commitments, institutional barriers and a lack of confidence in women's ability to lead. These are summarised below.

5.2.1.1 Personal / Family related commitments

The majority of the participating women primary school principals identified challenges related to family commitments, their roles as mothers and grandmothers and their commitment to their families. During one of the conducted interviews, participant PB mentioned the challenge that came with having young or little children which proved to be a major challenge for women pursuing school leadership positions. The generated data show that the challenge of raising a family and occupying the role of school principal only becomes a reality for most women once they had raised their own children. The advancement of women into leadership positions such as school principal seemed only to be a reality for women at a later stage in their lives and careers. This is despite the fact that majority of the research respondents participating in this study were mothers to adult children and the majority (3 out of the 4) of the women being single or not married at the time the research study was conducted.

5.2.1.2 Institutional challenges

Three forms of institutional challenges were raised during the interview sessions conducted with the participating primary school principals and these form part of the challenges experienced within the school as an organisation. The challenges within the school institution included negative perceptions of women in school leadership roles which were held by some of the colleagues, subordinate teachers and SGB's.

During the interviews sessions, participant PC mentioned "*feeling isolated*" or discarded as a team member by her fellow colleagues, once appointed as a principal. Hence, the fear of isolation and rejection from one's colleagues was one of the challenges hindering women from pursuing and assuming school leadership positions within schools in the ZF Mgcawu District.

The second challenge was related to gender-based-stereotypes formed by both fellow male and female colleagues (Oakley 2000:321). The third challenge raised by the study participants pointed out that women primary school principals were viewed as less capable leaders or as lacking the skills expected of "good" school leaders. They revealed that women school principals are constantly compared to the person who previously occupied the principal's position. Therefore, the data shows that the above mentioned negative perceptions and stereotypes held against women proved to be one of the leading causes for the underrepresentation of women in school leadership positions within the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province.

5.2.1.3 Lack of community support

Data from the research study show that women in school leadership positions such as school principal lack support from their school's community members. Community members included fellow colleagues, parents and fellow school principals and teachers from neighbouring schools. Lack of support may result in further challenges, especially the constitution of a low self-esteem and less self-confidence. A lack of community support leads women school principals to development low self-esteem as school principals. Hence, it was revealed that women in leadership need the extra support that comes from their school community if they are to successfully lead and contribute to the transformation of South African schools.

5.2.2 Research question 2: What perceptions are held by women subordinate teachers regarding gender specific leadership challenges faced by their school principals?

In this section the researcher provides a brief summary of the perceived challenges. It focuses on the perceptions of female subordinate teachers regarding the challenges faced by their school principals. Three distinct themes emerged from the

data obtained from the participants' response to this second research question on what perceptions were held by women subordinate teachers regarding gender specific leadership challenges faced by their school principal. The following three distinct themes emerged from the data obtained by the questionnaire. The themes were *gender discrimination; gender-based-stereotypes and women's ethnicities*. The perceived challenges were addressed using the liberal feminist theory in which the study was framed.

The research study was framed within the liberal feminist theory which is particularly suitable towards addressing the second research question on the perceptions held by female subordinate teachers regarding the challenges faced by their school principals. The liberal feminist theory employed in the study aims at ensuring that everyone is treated equally, have equal opportunities and is not discriminated against (Becks-Moody 2004:51, Hesse-Bieber 2012:265). The incorporation of the study's theoretical framework enabled the researcher to explore, interpret the behaviour or view points of the participating subordinate teachers and explain why they consider the above mentioned challenges as barriers against women primary school principals.

The responses show the various perceptions which undermined women that existed in the area under study. The first challenge faced by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District as mentioned by eleven out of the twelve participating subordinate teachers' were gender discrimination against women's abilities to lead as school principal. Secondly, ten of the participating subordinate teachers stated that women's capability to lead was based upon stereotypical perceptions held by members from the surrounding school community and educational stakeholders such as subordinate teachers and fellow male principals from other schools in their school communities. The information generated from the subordinate teachers questionnaire revealed the subordinate teachers' concerns about the way women's leadership abilities were being undermined by fellow male colleagues, as noted in the subordinate teachers' response to the teachers' questionnaire that, "*at first men did not want to engage with them during meetings*". The third theme was the discrimination of women on the basis of their ethnicity as detected from some of the

subordinate teachers' responses. Ethnicity here refers to the different cultures and heritage instilled within the participating school principals (Gunaratnam 2003:28). Women's ethnicity was raised as one of the perceived challenge by only 25% of the participating subordinate teachers, yet it is still relevant to the current study as the liberal feminist theory specifically demands that all women receive equal consideration and opportunities. In this way, liberal feminism aims at improving women's lives and freeing them from sexist and or racist discrimination.

5.2.3 Research question 3: How do women primary school principals employ specific coping strategies to address the perceived challenges?

The three themes, gaining strength from spirituality and prayer, establishing balance and self-empowerment, emerged from the data as coping strategies. The researcher summarises issues stemming from each of the above mentioned themes.

5.2.3.1 Gaining strength from spirituality and prayer

Findings from the study reveal that all the participating women primary school principals sought guidance and strength from their firm religious belief in religion and prayer. The findings reveal that all of the participating women principals relied on their religious beliefs in the management of their schools. All of the participating women principals stated that they started each day with prayer in the staff room and their classrooms. Principals PA, PB, PC and PD indicated that they had a strong alliance with their faith and God. Participant PB and PD in particular mentioned the paramount role which spirituality and prayer plays in their lives; they both referred to their faith and spirituality in a number of the interview questions (Appendix 10). Principals PA, PB, PC and PD felt that the strong Christian beliefs they instilled within their schools and subordinate teachers made them achieve success in both their personal and professional roles as mothers and school principals.

5.2.3.3 Balancing personal and professional responsibilities

Data from the study showed that the establishment of a balance between personal and professional responsibilities or duties was key to the success of women in school leadership positions. The fact that the participating women principals were both mothers and career women suggests that women need to differentiate between their

professional and personal lives. The women principals that participated in the study actively scheduled their daily activities in a way that set aside and made equal time for their work related responsibilities as school principals and their personal responsibilities as parents to their own children, grandchildren and other extended family members.

5.2.3.4 Self-empowerment

In summary, women school principals aspiring to and women in school leadership positions need to empower themselves in order for them to better themselves as school leaders. The women primary school principals participating in the research study were all adequately qualified for their current position as school principal. The sample of female school principals under study had all obtained the Postgraduate Degree's and / or an Advanced Certificate in Education making them qualified for the position of school principal. By furthering their education at tertiary level women are able to adequately empower themselves and in this way add to the number of South African women in school leadership positions. The study further disclose that although empowerment by tertiary education is important it was also found to have limited impact to women's advancement to school headship (Gupton 2009:06). The study revealed that women who empower themselves with the necessary qualifications and who establish good working relationships with relevant education stakeholders namely the Department of Education and the school community are on their way to advancing their careers. The study summary revealed that the number of women currently successfully running schools within the ZF Mgcawu District proves that women have found ways of dealing with the perceived challenges that act as barriers to developing their careers in school management and leadership positions.

5.2.4 Research question 4: What leadership styles are displayed by women principals from the ZF Mgcawu District?

The responses to the fourth research question indicated that women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa preferred a combination of leadership styles in the management of their schools. The use of a combined approach is grounded in the fact that it favours women school

principals' feminine attributes such as gentleness, affection, loyalty, understanding and warmth as primary school principals and leaders in their school communities.

5.2.4.1 Combined leadership

Women's approach to leadership and their leadership styles were among the themes under study. The approach to leadership included the way in which the participating female principals managed their respective schools. The leadership styles, conceptualised as the manner and approach by which school principals empower staff by fostering participation in decisions made about the school provides intellectual stimulation and personal growth, offers support that empowers staff, encourages high performance, as well as establish a productive school culture and creating a school vision and mission of the school. Findings from the current study reveal that the participating women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District utilised a combination of democratic, participatory and transformational leadership styles in the management of their schools. The implementation of a transformational approach favours women's feminine values such as their nurturing and caring nature (de la Ray 2005:04) thus the participating school principals implemented a combined leadership approach as it revolves around the idea of bettering their schools.

5.3 Conclusions

In light of the study findings, it can be concluded that women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District have the potential and the ability to effectively lead schools despite the vast personal and professional challenges that they are faced with as females. The study revealed challenges which included both internal and external factors, personal and family related challenges, institutional and community challenges. Further challenges; include discrimination and stereotypical perceptions against women and that of their ability to successfully manage schools in the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province as female school principals. The following conclusions were drawn in relation to the research questions:

5.3.1 A majority of the women primary school principals who participated in the research study were older than 40 years according to the completed research questionnaire. Therefore, the study concludes that a majority of the participating

women school principals entered the position of school principal at a later stage in their lives after raising their families. The researcher concludes further that the participating women school principals had achieved or progressed in their professional roles after successfully raising their own children. The research findings suggest that a majority of the participants had made sacrifices in their personal relationships and lives as evidenced by the research findings' conclusion that the majority of the research participants were single. The first theme to emerge from the first research question reveals that women from the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa entered or chose to pursue school leadership positions at a much later stage in their career lives. The researcher concludes this to be a result of women's obligation or responsibility as mothers and wives in raising their children and families, resulting in their inability to pursue school leadership positions until they have reached a more mature age.

The study concludes, with regard to the institutional challenges that, institutional challenges in any organisation and in particular the school, are bound to rise in places where people from different backgrounds and culture are working together. The study findings reveal that women in school leadership positions felt excluded and isolated from their colleagues in the beginning of their careers as school principals. Furthermore, negative perceptions and stereotypical views regarding women's efficacy as school principals were among the challenges that presented themselves as barriers for women striving to and women already occupying the school principals' position. The study concludes that, in relation to the third raised challenge, there was a lack of support from the school community which was fueled by biased views held against women's ability to succeed in the school principal's position, which was never the case in if a man, was appointed as school principal.

5.3.2 The study findings from the second research question indicate that the perceptions of the participating female subordinate teachers regarding women as school principals have positively changed over the years. Most of the participating female subordinate teachers have come to accept women's authority as their school principal. Despite these positive changes and acceptance of authority, further findings from the study suggest that there are still those who find it difficult to accept

the authority of women assuming school leadership positions such as the school principal (Chisholm 2001:390). Even though the challenge of authority acceptance relates to a minority of participants in this study, the study concludes that the acceptance of women's authority will always be a challenge for women in school leadership positions.

5.3.3 the study concludes, in relation to the third research question that, women from the ZF Mgcawu District devise their own coping strategies as there are little to no formal coping mechanisms in place to assist them. The study reveals that the participants shared similar challenges as primary school principals in both their personal and professional capacities. The study concludes that women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District share similar coping strategies such as seeking comfort and guidance from their religion as Christians by engaging in prayer, finding a balance by differentiating between their personal and professional responsibilities, and by furthering their education.

5.3.4 The final conclusion stems from the fourth research question. The conclusion is that the participating women school principals' implementation of the transformational leadership style or approach to leadership favours their feminine values of nurturing and caring (de la Ray 2005:04). The study concludes that it is therefore imperative to enhance women's empowerment by aiming to change institutional and corporate structures and procedures, as well as transforming the attitudes of both men and women towards women in school leadership positions. In this way, a more "women-friendly" working environment will be created and their potential as leaders made fully aware of and appreciated.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 The findings emerging from the study data indicate that women primary school principals are faced with a variety of challenges in their positions as school principals. In this section the researcher made recommendations based on the data that emerged from the research questions. The following recommendations were made from the first research question on the challenges that women primary school principals perceived as barriers to leadership positions in schools within the ZF Mgcawu District:

5.4.1.1 Implementing support structures

The study data reveals that women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District faced personal and family related challenges. These challenges manifested from successfully raising a family and fulfilling the role of a devoted spouse. Women principals found it challenging to balance personal and professional responsibilities that came with being mothers and / or wives, while also assuming the position of school principal and the added responsibilities that come with managing a school. Women often think that it is possible to do it all. The researcher recommends further that women primary school principals surround themselves with supportive people, by connecting with people who find themselves in the same or similar school leadership positions and who are able to realise and understand the challenges that come with assuming a position such as school principal and all the responsibilities accompanying the position.

5.4.1.2 Reducing isolation

The research findings suggest that institutional challenges encountered by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District include including feeling isolated during the early stages of the post-appointment to school principal era. Therefore, it is recommended that some strategies be put in place to help reduce the feeling of isolation for those walking into the school as the new school principal. The researcher also recommends the making of links between the new principal and key people, including the school secretaries, subordinate staff and parents. It is essential to form relationships and find allies in the immediate environment. These allies may include additional staff members, such as the school secretary, who may have been at the school for some time and have worked with the principal who previously occupied the school principals' position. It is possible that the school already has committees and additional task teams in place and as the new school principal it is important to spend time and develop working relationships with the members of these groups. Formulating trusted and close professional relationships with others in the work environment may take some time, yet it is important, as the leader, to continuously encourage and support one's subordinate teachers and all other additional staff members as the new principal to show that you value them and are

determined to invest your time and energy in working on and building lasting relationships with them.

5.4.1.3 Community development programmes: Involving the school community

The data indicated that women in school leadership positions, such as school principal, face challenges owing to a lack of support from their surrounding school community. These challenges are linked to the stereotypical perceptions held against the women primary school principals under study. As a result, the researcher recommends that communities such as the participating school community to establish community development programmes where the broader school community is able to interact with their child or children's class teachers and the school principal, outside their formal school environment. These development programmes should be aimed at developing and formulating better relationships between community members with common interest, in this particular case the future of their children. On these findings, the study suggests that the school principal solicit parent and community involvement as a coping strategy. The study suggests that women school principals call for parent and community involvement as soon as they are appointed as the new school principal of a particular school. It is paramount that all women school principals receive the necessary support from their school community members. The necessary support equips women better and assists them to succeed in their respective school leadership positions. The study recommends immediately establishing relationships with parents and the community by communication initiated by the school principal. In this way, the school principal is able to build and sustain alliances with the school community. Secondly, physical participation of parents and community members are recommended as guest teachers and tutors so that the community is able to be part of the daily school activities. The study acknowledges that in smaller communities, some members including parents may be reluctant to participate in additional school activities yet the study prompts female school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District to continue implementing parent involvement activities in their schools on a regular basis (Marzano 2003; Young 2004 in Glanz 2006:32). Recommendations were also made regarding the second research question on the perceptions held by women subordinate teachers regarding gender

specific leadership challenges faced by their school principals. The study findings' depiction the way women in school leadership roles often lack the support of their fellow female colleagues, calls for the need to establish female-based networks, such as networking events in order for women to support and promote each other.

5.4.1.4 Developing women's self-esteem / confidence levels

The study found out that women subordinate teachers have the perceptions that women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape Province have a low self-esteem and low self-confidence in themselves as school leaders in their communities. The study recommends that women from the ZF Mgcawu District come together on a regular basis and establish networks that develop and improve their self-confidence. The networking sessions should enable the women to interact and share their experiences as well as challenges with each other. The implementation of such programmes is necessary to build women's confidence levels and for them to believe in themselves as this is the first step towards getting the community and the immediate school communities to believe in the ability of women school principals to develop and contribute to schools in South Africa. The study further commends going beyond the traditional forms of qualification. Women's self-empowerment needs to include psychological readiness and political awareness. Women in educational leadership and women aspiring to school leadership positions in education should take the initiative to form professional relationships with education stakeholders, involved in making promotions. Establishing good relationships with educational organisations such as the Department of Education and the broader school community might empower women's advancement to school leadership positions within schools from the ZF Mgcawu District. The study's addressing of the third research question, reveals several coping strategies that were implemented by women primary school principals. Some of these include the implementation of spirituality and prayer, engaging in exercises and recreational activities, and the implementation of regular team building sessions with staff members and subordinate teachers.

Furthermore, the findings from the current study reveal the coping strategies employed by women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District, which suggests that there is room for the implementation of additional coping mechanisms. The researcher's conclusions aid to existing research theories by providing practical implications and additional coping strategies.

5.4.1.5 Establishing a balance

The study findings and the reviewed literature indicate that women who occupy demanding school leadership positions, such as school principals, need to find a balance in their responsibilities as school leaders. The researcher recommends that women in school leadership positions need to find a balance between their personal and professional responsibilities by engaging coping strategies. These coping strategies include the delegation of school-related tasks among subordinate teachers and other school staff members, engaging in collaborative leadership, integrating leadership styles and forming collaborations with subordinate teachers in order to work together as a team.

5.4.1.6 Delegating workload

The study found that delegating professional tasks with assistant principals, department heads, subordinate teachers and school secretaries serves as an imperative coping strategy. Findings from the empirical study suggest that delegating the workload or work-related duties assists in reducing the women primary school principals work stressors. Therefore, the researcher recommends that women in school leadership positions delegate work tasks such, as the teaching load assigned to them among subordinate teachers which might serve as an effective coping strategy for women school principals.

5.4.1.7 Formulating networking programmes

The study and the review of related literature confirm that the formation of networking programmes is an essential coping mechanism for women in school leadership positions. Evidence from the study show that there is a lack of school and social networking programmes available for women in educational leadership positions, particularly to women primary school principals in the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province. The researcher thus recommends the formulation of various

networking programmes for women primary school principals, where these women will make informal decisions and discuss any pressing school-related concerns. These networking programmes are recommended to assist, encourage, provide emotional support and foster mutual support structures between women school principals facing similar challenges in their respective school leadership positions. Mthembu (2013:66), notes that networking programmes provide women in school leadership positions with the opportunity of developing good work relationships with subordinate staff as networking programmes offer the much needed emotional support and work or career related opportunities. The researcher suggests that women school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District involve themselves in various networks in their community and familiarise themselves with any available support network programmes. Furthermore the researcher recommends the implementation of networking systems as an effective coping mechanism for women in similar school leadership positions as these enable the women leaders to interact with one another, talk about their experiences and challenges, and share coping strategies with one another.

5.4.1.8 Gaining strength through prayer and spirituality

The researcher recommends the continuation of the implementation of spirituality and prayer as a coping mechanism for both the men and women who are in school leadership positions. All the participating women primary school principals emphasised the paramount role that their faith played in their daily lives as school principals. Their belief in a higher power is what helps these women to cope and successfully lead their schools. Furthermore, their belief and religious views have positively contributed to the success in managing the schools, staff members and learners to success. Therefore, the study recommends the implementation of spirituality and prayer on a daily basis and for this to be implemented within all aspects of the school. The researcher also suggests that, in relation to the fourth research question, women primary school principals continue implementing the democratic leadership style as the research findings show that it is the most successfully employed leadership style.

5.4.1.9 Feminist leadership values

The research findings lead to the recommendation that women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape Province should adopt and sustain feminine leadership values. The position of school principals stereotypically labeled as "a man's job", or as noted by Holtkamp (2002) in Panigrahi (2013:28) the role of leadership in general and more particular to the study's school leadership roles have been held by men. The researcher draws on the historic phenomena of men assuming the leadership role in most organisations to recommend that women school principals embrace their unique feministic attributes in the way they lead their respective schools.

5.4.1.10 Mothering / domestic leadership

Evidence from the study suggests that women principals who have children adopt the same techniques and principles they use in raising their own children to the way they manage their schools, its learners and their subordinate staff members. The research interviews and observations show that participants PA, PB and PD employed their experiences as mothers to their advantage to gain respect from their subordinate teachers and school learners. This resonates with the literature review as noted in Lumby and Azaola's (2011:83) view that women principals in small schools are now embracing the stereotypical role of women as mothers, and incorporating their maternal nature in the way they manage their schools. Lumby and Azaola's (2013) study found that female principals used their mothering skills to try to overcome societal challenges in schools and communities and also to overcome gender-based-stereotypical challenges within their schools.

In conclusion, the study recommends that women employ both formal and informal coping strategies in their professional capacity as school principals. It is concluded that women school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District have fewer formal coping resources available to them. The study recommends, in light of this finding, that women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District in the Northern Cape Province continue to devise their own coping strategies. It is recommended further that women share coping strategies during networking sessions with fellow primary school principals and subordinate colleagues aspiring subordinate to be

school leadership positions. Finally, the study recommends the implementation of certain feminine attributes including, women's caring and nurturing attributes as mothers as an effective coping strategy.

5.4.2. Further Recommendations

Further recommendations, based on the study findings, are made to education stakeholders who include the Northern Cape Department of Education, policy makers and the Government.

5.4.2.1 Recommendations to administrators at Provincial, District and school levels

The researcher recommends that members from the Provincial and District Education Departments in the Northern Cape Province as well as subordinate teachers and school staff members continuously provide support to all who strive to progress to the next level of their career trajectories within school leadership positions. Chabaya, Rembe and Wadesango (2009:248) report on the persistence of gender inequality in Zimbabwe and opine that the encouragement and support from respective education stakeholders, including the Department of Education and subordinate teachers and additional staff members might "spark an interest that moves a potential leader to apply for an administrative position". Thus, the study recommends that all women and specifically potential women school leaders from schools within the ZF Mgcawu District should advance their careers in school leadership and in this way address issues concerning the underrepresentation of women in school leadership positions within South African schools.

5.4.2.2 Recommendations to the Northern Cape Department of Education

This section makes further recommendations to the Northern Cape Education Department, the South African government and policy makers. The study suggests that more women should be appointed in school leadership positions irrespective of the challenges that women in school leadership positions face. A review of the related literature and what is evident from the research findings shows that there seems to be a large amount of women appointed in the position of school principal within the smaller, rural or more remote farm schools within the ZF Mgcawu District.

The study suggests that the Northern Cape Education Department look into the underrepresentation of women school principals both in the primary and high school phases and strive to appoint more women school principals in the larger schools within the more established towns in the ZF Mgcawu District. Secondly, the study recommends that the Department of Education assist women in broadening their education qualifications by making the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) (offered at UNISA, Northwest University and University of Johannesburg) readily available to all aspiring women school principals. Thirdly, it is recommended that the Northern Cape Department of Education consider providing funding for the implementation of additional training and networking programmes. In this way, women in educational leadership positions end up empowered and encouraged to share their unique experiences. Fourth, the research study recommends that the Government and policy makers review the current gender policies. The researcher suggests a regular implementation of additional programmes such as meetings and or workshops aimed at making education stakeholders more aware of the gender policies aimed at women in education. These programmes should seek to make the current policies more effective while addressing any of the issues raised by women during the networking programmes.

5.4.2.3 Suggestions for future studies

This section makes reference to future research studies. The following suggestions for future studies are made:

The researcher suggests that similar studies be conducted in more than one district of the Northern Cape Province. The future research studies should be carried out in different geographical locations to the ones covered in this study, as cultures and conditions in those respective locations can make a difference to women in school leadership position experiences. Furthermore the researcher recommends conducting a comparative quantitative or mixed method study that includes a larger number of respondents, while also including focus group interviews as a research instrument.

The researcher recommends that future studies in the field of women in educational management and leadership be conducted on some of the reasons contributing to

the low aspiration levels of young women from the ZF Mgcawu District (and elsewhere) towards assuming the role of school principal. The researcher suggests conducting a study to determine and establish some of the underlying reasons impeding senior female educators from advancing into school leadership positions.

5.5 Chapter conclusion

The study revealed that women primary school principals from the ZF Mgcawu District share and face similar challenges in their professional capacity as school principals. The study findings show that despite changes made in South Africa post-1994, South African women and particularly women from the ZF Mgcawu District still face various challenges in their work. The study revealed challenges such as gender discrimination, sexist stereotyping and lack of support. The researcher suggests the employment of coping strategies such as, adopting the transformational leadership styles, gaining strength from spirituality and prayer and getting involved in support networks where women school principals are able to meet and share their experiences. The study ends with a provision of recommendations for further research and the possible implementation of additional policies by the Government and the Northern Cape Education Department. The researcher is hopeful that the study would aid and facilitate to future studies conducted on women in school leadership positions in South Africa and elsewhere.

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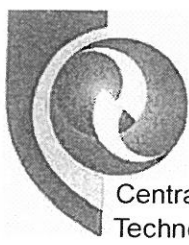
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APPENDICES 1-13



Central University of
Technology, Free State



Appendix 1

Request for permission to conduct Research: NC Education Provincial Office

Central University of Technology
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Postgraduate Studies: Education
Bloemfontein
9301
15 February 2016

IK Nkoane Education House,
156 Barkly Road,
Homestead,
Kimberley,
8301

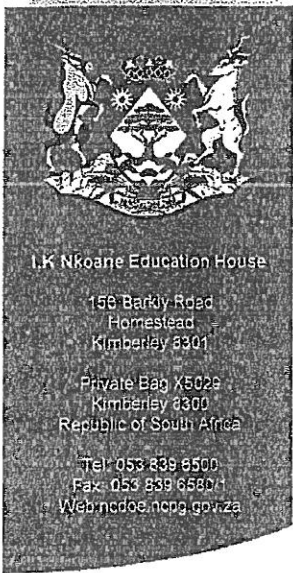
Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at schools in the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province: Yolande M. May (St No: 209030135)
I am currently enrolled as a student at the Central University of Technology, Free State and pursuing my master's degree in educational management. The focus of my dissertation is on the challenges experienced by women as primary school principal in the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province. I aim to collect relevant data through interviews, observations and open-ended questionnaires. The study hopes to reveal coping strategies and to encourage women to become leaders as they walk their career trajectories. The four schools that have been identified as possible participants are all under the management of female principals in the ZF Mgcawu District. The research findings will be disseminated to the Department of Education and the participating schools. I hereby kindly request your office to grant me permission to collect data from the said district between 17 February and 18 March 2016. I promise to uphold all research ethical protocols and any such conditions your office may require of me. Your assistance in this regard will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely
Ms. Yolande May

Contact details: 082 783 5310 (MTN Cell)
Email address: yolandemay9@gmail.com

Add Unit here • Private Bag X20539 • Bloemfontein • SOUTH AFRICA • 9300
Tel: +27 51-507 0000 • Fax: +27 51-507 0000 • E-mail: email@cut.ac.za • Website: www.cut.ac.za



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Enquiries: **MR HH ESAU/MS B NTULI**
Reference:
Date: **3 May 2016**

Ms Yolande May
14 Goddard Street
Goddard Height Flat 704
Bloemfontein
9300

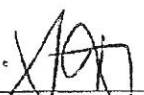
Dear Madam

Your letter dated 20 April 2016 refers:-

Permission is hereby granted for you to conduct Research on Dissertation on Challenges faced by woman primary schools principals in ZF Mgcawu District.

This approval is granted with the proviso that the normal school program is not compromised in any way, and that the research results will be shared with the Northern Cape Department of Education after completion and publication.

Kind Regards



MR HH ESAU
CHIEF DIRECTOR: DISTRICT OPERATIONS



Central University of
Technology, Free State



Appendix 3

Request for permission to conduct Research: NC Education District Office

Central University of Technology
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Postgraduate Studies: Education
Bloemfontein
9301
9 March 2016

ZF Mgcawu (Siyanda) District
2 JG Smith Street
Progress
Upington
8800

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Request for permission to conduct research at schools in the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province: Yolande M. May (St No: 209030135)

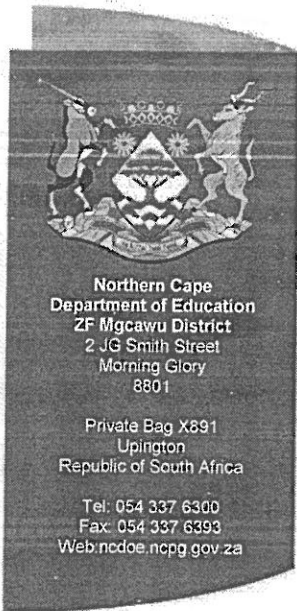
I am currently enrolled as a student at the Central University of Technology, Free State and pursuing my master's degree in educational management. The focus of my dissertation is on the challenges experienced by women as primary school principal in the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province. I aim to collect relevant data through interviews, open-ended questionnaires and observations. The study hopes to reveal coping strategies and to encourage women to become leaders as they walk their career trajectories.

The four schools that have been identified as possible participants are all under the management of female principals in the ZF Mgcawu District. The research findings will be disseminated to the Department of Education and the participating schools. I hereby kindly request your office to grant me permission to collect the necessary data. Your assistance in this regard will be appreciated.

Yours faithfully
Ms. Yolande May

Contact details: 082 783 5310 (MTN Cell)
Email address: yolandemay9@gmail.com

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Tel: +27 51-507 0000 • Fax: +27 51-507 0000 • E-mail: email@cut.ac.za • Website: www.cut.ac.za



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Enquiries: **E.J.S. VAN DER WESTHUIZEN**
Reference:
Date: **11 AUGUST 2016**

Central University of Technology
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Postgraduate Studies: Education
Bloemfontein
9301

Dear Sir / Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SCHOOLS IN THE ZF MGCAWU DISTRICT OF THE NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE: YOLANDE M. MAY (STUDENT NO: 209030135)

Permission was granted to Ms. Y.M. May, by the Northern Cape Department of Education, to collect data from Vela Langa Primary, Wilgenhoudtdrift Primary, Assmang Primary and Postmasburg Primary in the Z.F. Mgcawu District in order to complete her dissertation to comply with the requirements of the Master's Degree in Education Management.

Attached also find a letter from the Chief Director: District Operations in this regard.

Kind regards



**E.J.S. VAN DERWESTHUIZEN
ACTIN DISTRICT DIRECTOR**



Appendix 5

**Request for permission to conduct research at schools from the ZF Mgcawu
District of the Northern Cape Province**

Central University of Technology
Bloemfontein
9301
15 February 2016

The Principal
_____ Primary School,
.....,
Postal code

Dear Sir / Madam

I, Yolande Meryl May am currently enrolled at the Central University of Technology where I am pursuing Master of Education degree by research on the challenges faced by women as primary school principals in the ZF Mgcawu District of the Northern Cape Province. The research conducted forms part of the research methodology and aims to collect relevant data in order to produce a quality study which may contribute to school leadership debate. This is a formal request for permission to conduct the research at your school. I wish to interview you, and make other observations as part of data collection. I shall also request three of your subordinate staff to complete a questaview. The study also hopes to reveal coping strategies and to encourage women to become school leaders as they walk their career trajectories. I promise to uphold all ethical protocols: not to interfere with your normal school day activities; requesting educators to complete my questaview after school hours at their own time or convenience. All responses from you and other participants shall remain anonymous and shall be held with strict confidentiality.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully

Ms Yolande May

Contact details: 082 783 5310 (MTN Cell)
Email address: yolandemay9@gmail.

Add Unit here • Private Bag X20539 • Bloemfontein • SOUTH AFRICA • 9300 •
Tel: +27 51-507 0000 • Fax: +27 51-507 0000 • E-mail: email@cut.ac.za • Website: www.cut.ac.za

The Principal
.....Primary,
Postmasburg,
8420
19 February 2016

Y.M. May
14 Goddard Street
Goddard Heights
Bloemfontein
9301

Dear: Yolande May

This letter formally severs as a go ahead for your request to do your research at our school.

Please be informed that you should feel free to consult any person(s) atPrimary, in the effort to carry on with your research dissertation. We look forward to working with you as you pursue your Master's degree in Education Management.

Yours sincerely

.....
The Principal

The Principal
.....Postmasburg,
Postmasburg,
8420
4 March 2016

Y.M. May
14 Goddard Street
Goddard Heights
Bloemfontein
9301

Dear: Yolande May

This letter formally severs as a go ahead for your request to do your research at our school.

Please be informed that you should feel free to consult any person(s) atPostmasburg, in the effort to carry on with your research dissertation. We look forward to working with you as you pursue your Master's degree in Education Management.

Yours sincerely

.....

The Principal

The Principal
.....Primary
Upington
8800
10 March 2016

Y.M. May
14 Goddard Street
Goddard Heights
Bloemfontein
9301

Dear: Yolande May

This letter formally severs as a go ahead for your request to do your research at our school.

Please be informed that you should feel free to consult any person(s) at our school in the effort to carry on with your research dissertation. We look forward to working with you as you pursue your Master's degree in Education Management.

Yours sincerely

.....

The Principal

The Principal
.....Primary
Upington
8800
09 March 2016

Y.M. May
14 Goddard Street
Goddard Heights
Bloemfontein
9301

Dear: Yolande May

This letter formally severs as a go ahead for your request to do your research at our school.

Please be informed that you should feel free to consult any person(s) at our school in the effort to carry on with your research dissertation. We look forward to working with you as you pursue your Master's degree in Education Management.

Yours sincerely

.....

The Principal



Central University of
Technology, Free State

Appendix 7

CONSENT FORM

1. I, (Respondent) do hereby grant *Ms Yolande M. May* (researcher) permission: to interview me* / interview and tape record/video tape me*/administer a questionnaire to me*/ *observe activities at my school*(**tick applicable*).
2. I am aware that *Ms M. Yolande May* requires the data for his studies at The Central University of Technology, Free State.
3. In consenting to this request, it is my understanding that *Ms Yolande M. May*
 - (i) has been granted official permission by the *Northern Cape Provincial Education Office and her University* to approach me with the request at my work place.
 - (ii) will use the information for academic research purposes only hence,
 - (iii) shall not disclose any data relating to the interview/questionnaire to anyone or to any organisation.
4. My identity shall remain anonymous unless I personally ascent to this herein.
5. In the event that *Ms Yolande M. May* violates the provisions of this agreement, she shall be liable for disciplinary action under the applicable legal sections of the university's/ country's disciplinary codes.
6. I undertake not to make any claim or action prejudicial to *Ms Yolande M. May* stated intentions.

Signed: Respondent.
Researcher.....
Supervisor.

NB: This document shall remain in the custody of the Supervisor, Prof. A.H. Makura of Central University of Technology, Free State



Appendix 8

Principal's questionnaire

This questionnaire seeks your thoughts regarding your role as a primary school principal at your current and other stations (if any). Instructions regarding the completion of this questionnaire are as follows:

The questionnaire consists of a series of questions requiring accurate and honest answers as far as possible. Participants are requested to complete section A and B by ticking the appropriate box under each question, best describing your opinion on the matter. Section C requires participants to complete the section by writing and explaining their views on the issue.

Thank you for your willingness to participate.

I humbly request that you complete the questionnaire as truthfully as possible.

Section A: Bio-data (Please tick the appropriate box)

1. Gender

Male	
Female	

2. Age (years)

25-35	36-45	46-50	51-60

3. Race

Black	Coloured	White	Indian	Other
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4. Marital status

Single	Married	Widowed	Divorced

5. Do you have children?

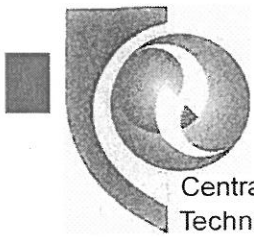
Yes	
No	

6. Highest qualification

Matric	Certificate	Diploma	Post Graduate degree	Other please specify

7. Experience in management position

1-4 years	5-7 years	8-10 years	Above 10 years



Appendix 9

Principal's Interview Schedule.

Principal's Individual interview questions.

1. Tell me about the decision you made to become a school principal and could you elaborate on the steps you took in order to become a school principal?
2. Have you experienced or encountered any barriers getting to the position you are currently occupying?
3. Do you think women are faced with more challenges than their male colleagues?
4. Would you say that women and men are treated equally in this profession, specifically in this position as school principal? Please elaborate.
5. How do you think other women colleagues or subordinate female teachers perceive leadership from a women principal? Do you think they are comfortable with your level of power?
6. Do you as principal encourage your subordinate teachers to participate in important decision making?
7. How would you handle a situation of disagreement between subordinate teachers?
8. How do you manage both your personal and professional duties?
9. Would you encourage or motivate other women to pursue this career path, why?
10. Would you do it all over again if you had a choice? If not, what would you have preferred to do?

Thank you for participating in the interview!

Appendix 10

Interview transcripts

Principal's individual interview questions: series of structured interview questions.

1. Tell me about the decision you made to become a school principal and could you elaborate on the steps you took in order to become a school principal?

Principal A: I didn't take any steps to become a school principal. I was nominated by the school committee, those days. That's when I was called to act as principal, when the previous principal took a severance package. I almost fell from the chair when I heard; you have to act and fortunately as I said my husband was the principal and I just felt its big boots to fill, I cried, I cried that evening. Yes that was on the 28th of February. The 1st of March I had to start as the acting principal. I was thrown into the deep-end, it was sink or swim (*laughs*).

Principal B: Okay, uh... As a young child I decided to become a teacher one day and my dream was to work for the department of education as an inspector of schools, so I was always driven by the need to make a difference somewhere and education for me is the place that you really can make a difference. So from when I started teaching I always set my goals to better myself and to go through all the steps, post level one teacher, HoD, vice principal and then principal, that was the goal and so that was what I wanted and I decided to do that and I really worked like that... I can say that I have not taught grade one yet in the primary school, but I have taught all the other grades and I've climbed all the stairs. I went from post level one to a HoD and then to principal of the school, so uh that was really... I think that was the best way to do it, to jump from post level one to... Which is not the best way to do it, but then uh that's the steps I took, I worked hard, I, I honestly uh, took every opportunity I could to learn and improve myself to get to where I am today.

Principal C: Okay... I can say, first I was an ordinary teacher ne, yes. I taught from 1982. I've been a teacher and I worked myself up although I didn't mention it here (*refers to notes*). I worked myself up in disciplining myself as a teacher, being

dedicated, being on time, yes and uh, reaching this step of being a principal I involved myself in team work here at school level and I was promoted at time to be a HoD in decision making, discussions and empowering myself in studying further and choosing the right career because, that is how I became a principal.

Principal D: *(Laughs)* Right uh, the reason why I became a principal, a school principal of this school was... I was in Grootdrink and we were about three department heads visiting the school... It was a white school, so one of the three HoD's had to come to this school and for me it was a challenge. I enjoy learning; I always wanted to know more. I was the head of department and always wanted to learn more. I used to spend time in the office because I wanted to know how the registrations were done and that was the type of person I was and that is why I felt ... Nobody wanted to come because they were all married and had families and I was not married, it really was challenging for me. I was the only coloured teacher when I got here, everyone was white but soon I adapted because I am a person who loves to learn especially about administrations so when I arrived at this school it was not as if I was thrown into the deep-end because I already knew what was waiting for me and that is why I'm here.

2. Have you experienced or encountered any barriers getting to the position you are currently occupying?

Principal A: No challenges, no barriers as I said... Two of the neighbouring schools principals; they encouraged me to apply and said that you'll always wonder whether you would have been appointed to the post. I applied, they supplied the testimonies. I went through the process ... It was easy those days *(laughs)*. Yes we had the interviews; there were short listing interviews as I said.

Principal B: Well if you... *(Interruption; the interviewer repeats the question)*. Okay, I started teaching in 1984 and then in those years men got more salary than women and it was so that the gender thing... If there was any promotional posts...women did not get that, so yes in the beginning, but after 1994 I must say it changed, so uh, you were seen as an equal, uh and well I do think, well hopefully they didn't advantage you because you are a women, but yes one of the barriers was the gender thing which played a role and uh, the fact that you had children that you had to care for ... It is difficult to be a working mom and especially when I got divorced in 2002, the challenges were, I had to really make

compromises with my children to make sure that I'm there when I am needed and that I could do what I wanted to do, so yes those were the barriers that I encountered but the gender thing wasn't, was not like that anymore.

Principal C: Very much yes. The obstacles sometimes you get them from both sides or from different angles, sometimes you get uh challenges from the community... sometimes politically and uh, sometimes from your own colleagues and also the SGB's, they count a lot in our schools because I can say about the SGB's since they recommend me because the SGB's... Then I still remember when I was to become a principal... I was not aware of gender inequality, you see... they were not empowered, they didn't know much. And that the policies have, and that the laws have changed so that men and women should be equal now and they were not also sensitized to the progress made in the post-apartheid South Africa to advance the interest of women and they degraded women as weak performers so they thought that men always outshine women and women has got no potential of leading and managing (*Interruption-keys slide across the table*).

Principal D: No, no, no there were none, the principal who was here was on his way overseas and also for the first time it was discovered that this school was not a private school but that it was a government school and it had been a government school all along and nobody knew it. So there were no barriers.

3. Do you think women are faced with more challenges than their male colleagues?

Principal A: I don't think so, I don't think so. When we are at meetings you ... When we listen to each other, this one is complaining about that problem, you realize all of us have the same problems. At this school sometimes you realize that, *'okay I'm not so bad'*.

Principal B: It is not a yes or no answer but I would say being a mother, being the care giver or being the care giver or the natural care giver of the children that does put you in a disposition, especially if you children are sick or whatever. It's expected of you as a mother to be there. You know you are seen as not a good mother if you are not there, that is a challenge but I do not think on a professional level, I mean to attend meetings and your brain power, I don't think there is a difference there but I think it's the other things, the personal thing outside, the things you cannot control sometimes. I do think nowadays where you have so

many single parents, perhaps men also I have got one male teacher who also has the same problem, so it's not a yes and no. Uh, mostly it is about the personal things. I don't think what your work wants from you, I think we can all do, I don't think we need to feel that we cannot do something because you are a woman then it's your background that tells you that.

Principal C: Yes, I think uh... We have... Not now, now we, we, we, we... I can say there are few. I said here yes because we women had battle to assert ourselves due to uh... merit of factors that include the legacy of apartheid as well as cultural factors, that encourage uh, docility (*sic*) on the part of women you see? Those were the challenges because women were always looked down upon and that we could not perform as well as men. Now what also maybe makes it seem as if men are performing better is that they talk too much, they talk too much, they like to argue but at the end of the day when you listen to their conclusion, he should have just taken the shortcut, or it is what is said by the facilitator who was training us there, so they just want to argue and have their say the way they want.

Principal D: I would not say that. We as women we know what we want, we know how we want thing to be done. As a woman principal for me in the beginning, I had to do everything because when I arrived the secretary had left so I had to do the admin, I had to manage the school, where a man is sometimes not able to do all these things. Men believe that there should always be someone a teacher who should help him with these things, things like financial statements, things that need to be submitted at the end of the month, they would not be able to do it on their own. So as a woman I would say we know better, maybe not better but we know what we want and we know how we want things to work. Men always need someone to write things for them, there must simply always be someone there with them.

4. Would you say that women and men are treated equally in this profession, specifically in this position as school principal? Please elaborate.

Principal A: uh... I think we are treated equally by the employer but some staff members, both male and female are still struggling to accept your authority, especially the youngsters.

Principal B: I would like to say so. I feel, in the beginning when I became a principal in Postmasburg (*cellphone rings in the background*). I was one of the ... I

think we were three or four women principals and nobody spoke to us, our male colleagues did not speak to us at all if he wanted to know something they were like guarded and they would not speak to you and now after a few years they saw that, *"no man we can"* and they will even phone you now to say what do you think in the beginning they would not do that , now they ask you what do you think and now they value your opinion as principal because they don't really see you as a lady anymore they see you as you are a principal and they are faced with exactly the same problems that we are and I must say they always think that you are emotional, because you are a women you are emotional about that and it is not, well I'm not like that. I am focused on what I need to do, so they do see you as an equal but it took time. In the beginning it was not like that. ...uh, I do sometimes feel that parents sometimes...when you are a women principal they might say, *"ooh you will not be able to do this"*, so you have to work a bit harder than the males, to show that you can. Especially when it comes to sport and whatnot, they always think that you don't know what you are doing but when they see oh she also knows the rugby rules then they value your opinion.

Principal C: Yes, I would say that because now the Department of Education has tried to bring everyone on board about gender equality ne? Ah, so it was also able to sensitize all education departments , in all provinces training women in leadership positions uh, saying to women you must stand up for our rights as women , we should not be shy we have got that potential of doing things like men we are equal we are all on path because even the inhumation, all those which were challenges prior, they were brought on path and benefits brought on path, there was no, like if I am a principal and the principal of the high school is a man, it's a male and I am a female, I know exactly what he knows because when we discuss and we discuss in the same level, ne? Then they... Men leadership are not overlooking us, that women are weak and that they cannot act or perform or whatever, uh in short let me say, yes because the Department of Education was able to or train women in leadership positions and even sensitize their male counterparts about the rights of women as workers .

Principal D: Yes, yes I would say we are treated on the same level as principals. I have not noticed anything that says; no you are treated differently, so we are all equal.

5. How do you think other women colleagues or subordinate female teachers perceive leadership from a women principal? Do you think they are comfortable with your level of power?

Principal A: Most of the subordinate female teachers have accepted it and have become use to it. I know that not all of them are comfortable and I know why. It is because I expect everybody just to do their job and to do the right things no shortcuts, especially the kids from this community I'll fight, I'll fight for them. Uh, when this school was at Beeshoek previously, uh we were still there when I became principal and we were only 6 teachers and one male teacher. Then we moved here in 2007, 1st of October. The next year, at that stage we had one class per grade and the next year we had four grade one classes and so the school grew and this year we are one-thousand one hundred and fifty four learners and thirty three teachers including the two grade R classes and most of the teachers at this school have qualified while they started teaching, since they've started teaching here at this school. So they have become used to it over the years but I'm the principal of the school and what I expect from them.

Principal B: I was appointed out of the staff so in the beginning I do think also, you had to prove yourself because in the beginning they also weary can you do it...will we be covered. Now we also see that they come with their personal problems, more than they would if it was a male principal, they will come and say I am fed up or whatever and they feel they can come sit here and we work it out and that is what we do but yes in the beginning I think they were a bit guarded, you know and said that will she know but they knew me, but for the first time we are going through a terrible time in the schools ...politics and whatnot and they will always come and say; *"wow we did not think that you would be able to do this"* but they respect you now and they will come and say *"now I do see why you are the principal and I am not"*. So yes I must say yes it was difficult in the beginning because this school had only male principals and I was the first female principal... Yes they had their doubts but as soon as you start proving yourself then, yes but it took time, it really took time. I think if you were appointed from outside it would have been easier but no I must say it took time but they are comfortable and they will come to me with anything, the more that you show them that you can assist them the more they trust you.

Principal C: Some of them are comfortable but some are not comfortable, because we did undergo, prior before I became the principal. I was that time a head of department. They said to us that it was the... uh, Roman Catholic Institute of Education and Leadership ne? They told us when we were at the workshop of leadership ne that, they told us that usually we have... When you are a teacher on post level one, you are an ordinary teacher, ne... You work with others, it's nice and so on, but now the moment you are identified ne, uh...then to become to, to, to fill in a post, a higher position that's when now people start to now have some "tricks" to now say that "mm I don't feel any more to work with her" even if you are in their team *"no she will tell us the answers because she knows better than us"*, but not knowing that you are there as a leader amongst them, you want also to share ideas with them and you want to listen to them also, it is not that you are superior in so much that you cannot listen to their ideas so in a nutshell I said; some of them are not comfortable, some are comfortable because as their principal I try to show them team work, that you want to belong in their team, sharing information with them which you have so that you can hear also their information and involving them in decision-making, decision-making matters of the school but some refuse sometimes, they argue with you, ne. They drift away from you and tell others *"we know better than her"* and start to isolate you. So at the end of the day you are left on an island but if you allow that also it's bad. You must try always to bring them back, to motivate them, to encourage them to show them. Like for instance now recently, I was watching (*staffroom door is closed*) the teachers, the National Teachers Award, it was a good work to reward educators who have gone that extra mile and who has put effort in the education at their schools ne. Now you as a principal as you are sitting there you have that picture, you get that picture of... the product picture of your school ne and then you ask yourself now where am I with my school because maybe on my vision and my mission statement I said, in five years to come I want my school to be a quality school but you still find there are still some challenges which are in the way not to excel and get where you wanted your school to be, so I always motivate minds, like have you watched the media have you seen how the other schools excel, it's not that we cannot do it, we can do it but it depends from an individual, it depends on the school management and the staff, the team it's team work, you see. Now

when you try as a principal to clarify why you can't do this a colleague teachers just feel that *"mm it must be just her work"* but they don't want to look around them, what are the reasons which make you to say that.

Principal D: I would say so. Here at this school yes because uh, we can talk about anything. I am not here only as the principal but I must be here because uh, I am a born again child of God and even during break time we are able to sit and talk. In a social context they would always ask me for advice and tell me if there are any other problems, they always inform me because they know as a women I would understand. When it comes to school work if I see that this teacher is not doing things the way it should be done, I would not interrupt on her work. We would come together and I would say let us rather do it this way. Initially this school was only a foundation phase school but since 2012 there are now also grade 4 classes. In any case back then there were only ladies at this school and even now there is only one male teacher at this school so we all work well together and we do not know what it is to fight amongst each other. Each person knows what needs to be done and they know if there is something that needs to be done, they won't wait they would handle it on their own.

6. Do you as principal encourage your subordinate teachers to participate in important decision making?

Principal A: Yes, I allow everybody to participate. Off-cause some people would never say a word. That is why at some stage I 'v decided to leave the staffroom so that they can feel free to discuss the matters then the school management team comes back and reports and then we work from there. But I encourage everybody to give input I even tell some of the parents to come to the school. The arms of the principal are cut off; the principal does not make any decisions alone.

Principal B: Yes, I'm a girl power lady (*laughs*). When I speak to my... Especially my lady teachers I always tell them, what do you want and where do you want to go. If you decide you want to be a post level one teacher for the rest of your life that's fine. I mean your situation will dictate what you do but if you have ambition to go where you want you must really do everything in your power to empower yourself. So yes I do and there are some of them that don't want to and who just wants to teach and that's that but I speak to them normally when we have SMT. There are three guys on the SMT and four women. Okay so this is the situation we

find ourselves in. We only have five male teachers here, the rest are women and so they really work hard and one or two do have the ambition to become HOD's which some of them are now and who would like to become principal someday, so I try with what I do to motivate them, if there are any opportunities for them and if they can go on a course or whatever I show them and encourage them to go do that or if you want to study further make sure that you do.

Principal C: Yes I encourage them very much because I call... How do I, how is this done. I call a staff meeting, for instance where we have got an agenda of all the points which should be discussed and whereby we should reach a conclusion, taking resolutions, yes you see, so that the broader house should know what was discussed what is going on in school because if you don't do that you'll find out teachers will isolate you and say no. If the officials are at your school asking you or them interviewing them do you know what is happening in your school? "No we don't know what is happening in our school because we are never called to a meeting. So and consultation is also the other way we do it sending out circulars of the DOE whereby they should read and know the policies of the DOE, you see... So this method, how effective is this method it is effective in this way, you should not forget that you must, you must have a plan or a strategy plan, so that strategy plan it shows you direction with your school where to now, on Tuesday or next month I must have a staff meeting it's too long now that I am not having a meeting. You feel that guilt, you didn't meet with you staff and after the meeting you feel relieved because you know that, oh what was sent by the DOE to communicate with the educators is sent through to them and all what is happening in the school is also sent through to them through a communication channel book, where you notify them on certain events that on such a day we have a meeting for on Saturday this and this will happen ne, so that's how that is evidence so when the officials arrive at your school that how do you communicate effectively with your staff, then you put out the book and you show them ne and the agendas are also there and the staff minutes are also there and the agendas, curriculum wise, whatever which is their mandate they have given you so it is communicated so they sign you keep also record of signing they must have an attendance register, those who are not attending will never know because when they are asked of interviewed they will say no, they won't know or they will lie and when those

people come to me I'll say no for that person to give you such an answer, he or she is not attending.

Principal D: Always, always I never make a decision on my own, we would always come together and we would discuss it together. I do not say to them listen people "*we are going to do this or that*" I would always ask them, uh "*we have to do this; what do you say?*" In most cases they take the lead and I would just agree and say yes, as I'm simply listening to them but when it comes to bigger issues, then I would say; No, we cannot do things that way and I would suggest another way but in general we would always make decisions together. Sometimes there are times where I have to make a quick decision without them being there but then I always get back to them and I'll say listen this decision had to be made, even with the SGB I would never do something without their knowledge of what is being done.

7. How would you handle a situation of disagreement between subordinate teachers?

Principal A: I only have the final say if I know that this is required by law (*bell rings for first break*). I allow them time to discuss, come to common ground and reach a compromise. Yes, and then if necessary I'll say but this is the way that we have to walk the line.

Principal B: Don't we have that every day (*laughs*). No, not every day luckily. Well I listen to them both. First of all I see them separately and I listen to each of them (*telephone starts to rings in the background*). I don't make any decisions or anything I just listen and then we sit together around the table and then we discuss the problem. I will sometimes say look; "I heard you saying this, is it really how you feel? You were saying this; "*is that how you feel*". Normally we can work it out. I must say I have a special talent in that department. I can calm people down and make them focus on the real issue. Sometimes the disagreement is because you don't listen to one another, so most of the time I can mediate and that's the way I do it. We sit and we..., until we are satisfied that we've reached an agreement and everybody is happy, that is the main thing.

Principal C: I think if there is an agreement (*sic*), disagreement (*corrects herself*) is just like a conflict ne? Yes, so if there is a, a, a disagreement, you have to listen both sides. So what I do always I call a meeting with my SMT ne, we discuss the

thing and after that it doesn't end there because if it ends with us it means we have got the final say, we have not involved others (*slight interruption*). Then what I do, I communicate to the..., all staff, that notice book (*previously mentioned during the interview*) and I call a meeting for the parties, we sit here, we discuss that point thoroughly up to their satisfaction but at the end of the day, it's me if I see they drag because I look at the majority, where the majority is going if I see the majority is going this side then I'll also be for that side, you see and at the end of the day you reach conclusion.

Principal D: Mm, yes at the end of the day if there is someone disagrees or does not agree with something then I'll have to say, look this is what we have to do, whether you agree or not, you would just have to fall in with the decision. At the end of the day when everyone is together, you would have to have a good reason why you do not agree and you would have to come up with something better in order to take the matter further, yes.

8. How do you manage both your personal and professional duties?

Principal A: Grandmother (*laughs*). No, as I said I am lucky that I have two grown up children, one is married the other one who is twenty-nine he is still at home but he and he's father just have to accept that sometimes they have to see to themselves and he is an ex-principal so he knows... I am very lucky. It is not all men, especially when you are a female teacher and your husband is not in the same profession, they don't understand. Certain times of the year, there are other duties that you have to fulfil.

Principal B: I'm not married anymore ... I lost that battle (*laughs*). No, I must say I do think it is very difficult. I am in the position that my children are grown up now. My one daughter stays with me she's getting divorced now so I do, now again have people who I have to be there for because she has got a little toddler of two years old, and she works full time at the mine, she's got a full time job. So I do fulfil the role of being her partner if you want to say that in helping her with working her things out but it is very difficult I must say uh, I'm very focused on my work. My programme starts very early, I start at half past four in the morning, then we settle and get everything ready, take the children to school and then I'm here I'm very focused and then, let's say I try not to leave here before five but sometimes I can't do that because of..., she can't come to pick up her child, so yes. Yes it is very

difficult, I really try hard if I have meetings at night, which I do quite often, luckily she's there and otherwise I have to make another plan, if she has got meetings as well, she's a nail technician so she works at night as well, but it really difficult to uh manage it but I put my work first, that is the main thing. Uh, I do say it happens then that sometimes you cannot be where the sports are, that happened when my children were in school still (bell rings for first break) I mean you could not watch all of their games, I had to really uh, neglect them in that sense but they always say mom you were not there but we are proud of you..., so that helps you so now I have two very driven children and they work very hard. We manage (*laughs*) but it is very difficult sometimes.

Principal C: It's a little bit difficult, for instance a person at my age, not your age you are too young I don't think you have got stress (*laughs*). I differentiate between my personal and professional duties that's what I preach to my educators ne, because you'll always hear from the educators, educators will tell you I've got this reason, I couldn't do this. So if you take all those things and you just say yes, yes, yes you are a principal then there will be chaos at that school ne at the end of the day, so you have to tell that person, you must differentiate between your work and your house/family, not saying you must neglect you family or whatever. So if you are at school do all your duties up to where you can and then when you say I stop here now, I draw the line here I'll continue from tomorrow then you leave everything in your office and then when you arrive at home you start giving your family attention, not stressing on them and saying "*hey you see I have to do this and that and that*" so in other words you did not plan your work, you must plan it. You must say school starts at half-past seven, half-past seven my duty is of..., my professional duty starts up to half-past one. If I want to put extra time in I will say an hour just to get on track with my work and then you add that extra hour and you phone your family to let them know because they know that my duties have stopped at half-past one, now "*where is mama?*" So I have to tell them okay I'll be a little bit late with an hour due to this reasons and then after that you come and pick me up at this time and you don't take any piece of that duty home, you can sacrifice sometimes if your family, you husband is not there and the children are still at crash you can sacrifice you look at the time okay I can do this piece of work

very quickly before my children and my husband arrive at home then I know the pots are on the stove.

Principal D: On a, on an equal level. When I am at school it is about my school work, when I am at home or wherever I never let it interfere with my work. My work is my work and it has to be done it would never be like I cannot be there because I have to somewhere else. The children are important to me, the parents are important to me and the teachers are important to me, personal things have to be put aside, you can always make time for it.

9. Would you encourage or motivate other women to pursue this career path, why?

Principal A: Defiantly yes, defiantly yes...

Principal B: For sure, for sure (*laughs*). Yes I would because it's enriching for yourself and the main thing you can make a difference. I think that's the one thing that I learnt out of religion is you must make a difference. If you are blessed with talents you must use it to better the people around you not only yourself but I think education needs well driven women who are career driven and who, yes despite everything it just shows how strong you are if you can manage your home, manage your kids and manage a school where you have an influence on children and a positive one. The day that I have a negative, I'll leave; I won't stay if I have a negative... Because education is so important I always say nobody can become a doctor or professor he had to go through his grade one and grade R teacher. The role you are playing is so important. So I would. Today people get divorced every five minutes, women should look after themselves. You should be able, if you have a dream, pursue it even if you are married pursue it, uh that's, that's how you should, you shouldn't let yourself down.

Principal C: Oh my dear... I won't... Ah but here I said yes (*refers to notes on the interview questions*) because I am already in the career. I'd say yes, if someone has a passion for it I would say yes but if you don't have a passion I'll advise you otherwise, to pursue other careers because along the way there are pitfalls... Yes.

Principal D: Yes, yes for me, I always say... I always tease and tell the kids that to be a teacher is the best career, you are free every afternoon after school (*laughs*), you are off every weekend and when it is holiday you do not even have to apply for leave you get it and uh, to encourage or motivate other women to

become teachers or principals rather uh, one can motivate them but if it is not a calling for that person then they'll only do it to earn money, they don't do it because they have a love for children and their parents as it is these components that work together; the child, the parent, the teacher and the principal you must be able to live and work with these people. You must be able to work with the community you must be able to form human relationships with the people. Education for me is something else; it's not simply about teaching it does not end here it goes beyond teaching. You saw now they would come and call me because one of the learners fainted, there is someone with the learner but they'll call me to. See you are a social worker, you're a minister, and you must do it all. I've had to do funeral ceremonies, I've had to help save marriages, and I've had to involve myself wherever there are parents and children. So it does not end here, to the community you live in you are a community leader, so really to become a teacher you must have a love for it, not only for that child but also for the wider community. Like for us here its hard work but I enjoy it, I enjoy it and that is why I always say to people "*I don't know about you but I enjoy what I do, I enjoy my job*" because it is the calling on my life.

10. Would you do it all over again if you had a choice? If not, what would you have preferred to do?

Principal A: Yes, when we started out we only had the choice between becoming a teacher or a nurse (*laughs*). So it is difficult to say. I think I would do it again, becoming a teacher, becoming a principal. .. I've never dreamed or aspired that one day I want to be a principal. I never thought that this school would grow so much...I thought that we would be in Beeshoek all the time, six people were okay... luckily we grew, gradually. Becoming a teacher again, yes... Apply for the post of the principal, maybe... I did not know what, what (*laughs*) was waiting for me on this path but in hindsight, with all the challenges, I think I'll do it again. Yes, you grow as a person. I am very shy by nature, if I don't have to speak I won't, I'll do the work. I'm not a stage person but for the children and the children of this community I'll do it again.

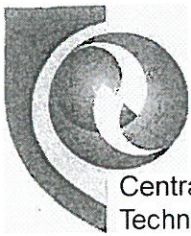
Principal B: I'll do it again and again and again (*laughs*). Yes, I think this was my dream from a very young age, when I was a little girl that was the thing that I wanted to become, a teacher. I come out of a family of teachers so perhaps that

played a role but yes it was always and it's not a power thing, not at all. I see teaching as a service for others and the day when I was appointed as principal someone said; "*Ah now your there*" so I said; "*now the work starts*". It's not that you get into a position and think there is nothing after that. I would say that I would not like to go to the Department of Education anymore (*laughs*). I think this is where I... I'm 53 this year so I think this is where I would like to end off my career as a principal of a school. Our vision is to deliver children, star pupils who will make a difference and that is my dream for myself and this school, to leave this school at a high, where we really make a difference in the community and society.

Principal C: No I said no I would not do it over again (*laughs*). No I would have taken another career choice in the Department of Education maybe if I was still interested in the Department of Education. Maybe I should choose a wellness path or a social worker in the Department of Education because as I'm looking, teachers have got many problems you see. Sometimes as a principal it's difficult just to say to a teacher no you don't go there and a person is telling you my child is sick or I've got this problem one, two, three at my house... Now you ignore that and do you think that person will, he will start the day normal, she or he won't, you see. So at least to advise people to look after the people's wellness also. That's why now in education, so many educators resign, okay the youngsters are still eager to come, you know. If you come in education with a passion then it's a good career choice for you but if you don't get into the department of education for saying I've got a passion... I want to uh, I want to see our countries learners in future excelling, then you feel proud you see me myself I didn't start education here..., teaching, I started in Namibia in 1982 due to those post-apartheid era, laws..., you see. I started in a foreign country, foreign language and I had to push ne and then I learnt a lot I don't want to lie I did have a passion that time for teaching because my belief is if you say to me you are my senior you say to me do one, two, three and four ne and you show me how to do one, two, three, four and I do it I expect you tomorrow to come to my school and say let me see what I have given you, have you done it and how did you do it did you do it the way I said and if you look through it and it is correct then I feel pleased when you applause me and say it's correct and you sign you've done it well. Then I grow, I learn and I know okay I've done it right but if I didn't do it right you must tell me also and say;

you didn't do it right here "one you must do it like this, do it now in front of me let me see whether you can and do it here also over and then Friday you come back and say now you have done it, its correct put it in you file...

Principal D: No; I would not do anything else (*laughs*). I don't even want to go to any other place because I just believe that uh, I was placed here and uh, the people here really need me because I believe in forming human relationships. I can walk into anyone's house, at any time even if people are fighting when I get there and I start talking, the respect that we have for each other. I always tell people; *"if I don't have respect for my parents and I don't have respect for my learners, will they respect have respect for me?"* If I have to do anything else then I'd have to become a missionary (*laughs out load*) but I don't think that I would want to go into any other career.



Appendix 11

Subordinate teacher's questionnaire

This questionnaire seeks your thoughts regarding the role of the primary school principal at your current and other stations (if any).

Instructions regarding the completion of this questionnaire are as follows:

The questionnaire consists of a series of questions requiring accurate and honest answers as far as possible. Participants are requested to complete section A by ticking the appropriate box under each question, best describing your opinion on the matter. Section B requires participants to complete the section by writing and explaining their views on the issue. I humbly request that you complete the questionnaire as truthfully as possible.

Thank you for your willingness to participate.

Teacher's questionnaire

Section A: Bio-data (tick the appropriate box)

1. Gender

Male
Female

2. Age (years)

25-35	36-45	46-50	51-60
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3. Race

<u>Black</u>	<u>Coloured</u>	White	<u>Indian</u>	<u>Other</u>
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4. Marital status

Single	Married	Widowed	Divorced
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5. Do you have children?

Yes

No

Section B: Teachers questionnaire

Research question: What perceptions are held by women primary school principals and their subordinate teachers regarding gender specific leadership challenges?

1. Tell me about any barriers/ obstacles your school principal may have had to overcome before assuming the role of school principal.

2. Would you say as a woman she had to face more challenges than men occupying the same position? Would you elaborate on some of these challenges?

3. How does your principal implement the vision and mission of the school?

4. It has been said that men are more capable when it comes to fulfilling the role of school principal? Do you agree with this statement? Please elaborate.

5. Order and discipline is very important in education. Could you elaborate on how discipline is enforced by the principal in your school?

.....
.....
6. How does the school principal go about making important decisions?
.....
.....

Thank you for your participation.



Central University of
Technology, Free State

Appendix 12

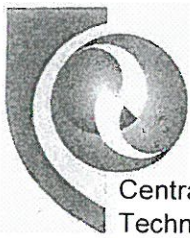
CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATING SUBORDINATE TEACHERS

1. I, (Respondent.) do hereby grant *Ms Yolande M. May* (researcher) permission: to interview me* / interview and tape record/video tape me*/administer a questionnaire to me*/ *observe activities at my school*(*tick applicable).
2. I am aware that *Ms M. Yolande May* requires the data for his studies at The Central University of Technology, Free State.
3. In consenting to this request, it is my understanding that *Ms Yolande M. May*
 - (i) has been granted official permission by the *Northern Cape Provincial Education Office and her University* to approach me with the request at my work place.
 - (ii) will use the information for academic research purposes only hence,
 - (iii) shall not disclose any data relating to the interview/questionnaire to anyone or to any organisation.
4. My identity shall remain anonymous unless I personally ascent to this herein.
5. In the event that *Ms Yolande M. May* violates the provisions of this agreement, she shall be liable for disciplinary action under the applicable legal sections of the university's/country's disciplinary codes.
6. I undertake not to make any claim or action prejudicial to *Ms Yolande M. May* stated intentions.
7. This is being done and said at _____ school on this _____ day of _____ 2016.

Signed: Respondent.....

Researcher.....

Supervisor.....



Appendix 13 Observation Schedule

To be completed by the researcher during observations and after the scheduled interviews with the school principals.

Observation schedule

Principals Leadership/ Management tasks	
Category	Researcher's remarks
1. Principal's professional duties	
2. Collaborative management	
3. Staff management	
4. Interacting with the learner	
5. Principals leadership style	