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Shattering the glass ceiling: women progressing into leadership positions at secondary schools in South Africa

by
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Declaration

I declare that the mini-dissertation, which I hereby submit in partial fulfilment for the degree MEd (Educational Leadership) at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other institution.

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31 March 2020

Ethical Clearance Certificate

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Dedication

I dedicate this mini-dissertation to the five women I interviewed, who shattered the glass ceiling, and are making a difference as leaders in secondary schools in South Africa.

Acknowledgements

To have achieved this milestone in my life, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people:

- My Heavenly Father, who provided me the strength, knowledge and perseverance I needed to complete this study.

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- Last but not least, to my mom, Genevieve Alyson Göpper, my sister Jacqueline Alyson Göpper and my work colleague Desiree Turner for their love and continued support.

Abstract

This research report builds on the work already completed in the field of women in school leadership. Although a number of studies have examined female principals at work in primary schools in rural areas, there has not been a strong focus on female principals at work in secondary schools, in urban areas. The underrepresentation of women in school leadership is not unique to South Africa. It is a global phenomenon, which can be traced back to the patriarchal values, which exist in most societies. The purpose of my research report is to investigate how the capabilities approach can inform our understanding of women progressing into leadership positions at secondary schools in South Africa. A qualitative method was used based on an interpretivist research paradigm. The research design was a narrative inquiry. A purposive sampling method was used and data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews. The drive and determination to "make a difference" and "be a role model" enabled all five participants to convert their capability set into functionings thus "shattering the glass ceiling".

Key Terms:

Women, secondary school leadership, capabilities approach, qualitative, narrative inquiry

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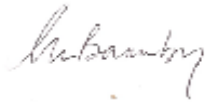Tel: 012 361 6347   alexabarnby@gmail.com

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To whom it may concern

This is to certify that I, Alexa Kirsten Barnby, an English editor accredited by the South African Translators' Institute, have edited the master's dissertation titled "Shattering the glass ceiling: women progressing to leadership positions at secondary schools in South Africa" by Janine Göpper.

The onus is on the author, however, to make the changes and address the comments made.

List of abbreviations

ADE	Advanced Diploma in Education
BA	Bachelor of Arts
DBE	Department of Basic Education
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDE	Higher Diploma in Education
HOD	Head of Department
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
PAM	Personnel Administration Measures
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
HDI	United Nations Human Development Index

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Background

Internationally, much research has been conducted on gender inequality in the workplace and the reasons for the underrepresentation of women in management positions (Dyrchs & Strack 2012; Johns 2013; Guterres 2017; Schwab 2017). Schwab (2017) notes that sourcing talent is essential for growth and competitiveness in the workplace and that everyone should have equal opportunities. When women are excluded from the economy, communities "lose out on skills, ideas and perspectives that are critical for addressing economic challenges and harnessing new opportunities" (Schwab 2017: 1). Dyrchs and Strack (2012) have identified several reasons for the underrepresentation of women in management positions. These include; a general lack of communication from senior management about promotion posts within an organisation and selection criteria that are male orientated and entrenched in old-boy networks in an organisation where position and influence are used to advance other men up the corporate ladder. A report released by the World Economic Forum has revealed that increased access to education in Sub-Saharan Africa has not resulted in equivalent gains for women in terms of "earning opportunity, economic independence and leadership" (Schwab 2017: 23).

In the field of educational leadership, little is known about women who have progressed to leadership positions in secondary schools. Smit (2013) draws our attention to the fact that research conducted on principalship tends to focus on men and is then generalised to all leaders. Moorosi (2007; 2010) notes that school leadership in South Africa is often associated with masculinity and school communities tend to reserve management and leadership positions for those who fit this description. The organisational culture of most schools is centred on masculine traits such as achievement, power and control, which are closely associated with the patriarchal values that exist in many societies (Moorosi 2007; 2010; Coronel, Moreno & Carrasco 2010; Msila 2013; Smit 2013; Diko 2014; Naidoo & Perumal 2014; Faulkner 2015; Schmidt & Mestry 2015; Gutierrez 2016; Mythili 2017). When research is conducted on women in school leadership, most researchers tend to focus on the barriers and obstacles that women have to overcome in order to reach principalship (Mathipa & Tsoka 2001; Moorosi 2007; 2010; Grogan & Shakeshaft 2011; Msila 2013). This is often referred to as the "glass ceiling"; a metaphor used

to describe the invisible barrier that blocks women from progressing into leadership positions in organisations (Johns 2013).

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 and the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 have gone to great lengths to ensure the prohibition of gender discrimination in the workplace (Moorosi 2010; Lumby & Azaola 2011; Diko 2014; Naidoo & Perumal 2014; Faulkner 2015; Schmidt & Mestry 2015). However, the prevalence of men in principalship posts still seems to suggest that women do not experience equal rights in practice. Davids (2018) notes that a mere 36% of school principals in South Africa are women.

1.2 Research problem

Most studies on women in school leadership ask; why there are so few women progressing to leadership positions at secondary schools in South Africa (Mathipa & Tsoka 2001; Moorosi 2007; 2010, Lumby & Azaola 2011). This line of questioning usually yields the same results and tends to focus on the barriers and obstacles that women have to overcome in order to reach principalship. Publications on women in school leadership are scant which often results in a situation where old, outdated information is used (Lumby, Azaola, De Wet, Skervin, Walsh & Williamson 2010; Grogan & Shakeshaft 2011).

The purpose of this mini dissertation is to contribute to knowledge on women in leadership positions and ask whether the capabilities approach as a theoretical framework can offer an alternative perspective for understanding women's success. The capabilities approach is a broad normative framework for the evaluation of individual well-being and quality of life (Robeyns 2003; 2013) which allows us to focus on what can be achieved by women (principalship) as opposed to what cannot (barriers and obstacles). The purpose of this study was therefore to investigate the way in which the capabilities approach can be used to inform our understanding of women progressing to leadership positions at secondary schools in South Africa, as reflected in the notion of "shattering the glass ceiling".

1.3 Research questions

1.3.1 Main research question

- How can the capabilities approach be applied to inform our understanding of women in school leadership positions?

1.3.2 Secondary research questions

- Which capabilities enable women to reach school leadership positions?
- What are the constraints on the advancement of women to school leadership positions?
- How do women convert available personal and institutional resources into capabilities for leadership?

1.4 Rationale

The purpose of this study was to expand knowledge on women in leadership positions and to ask whether the capabilities approach can offer an alternative perspective for understanding their success. A preliminary reading of the literature available on women in educational leadership suggests that the capabilities approach has not previously been used as a theoretical framework for women in school leadership. My research contributes to the body of knowledge that exists on women in educational leadership in general and the capabilities approach in particular. My personal rationale for this study lies in my aspiration to be a principal of a secondary school in South Africa. The topic is of particular interest to me because of the absence of role models in educational leadership for other women to look up to (Mathipa & Tsoka 2001; Moorosi 2007; 2010; Grogan & Shakeshaft 2011; Msila 2013). In order for women to succeed in educational leadership positions, professional socialisation, in the form of networks, support and mentorship, is necessary (Grogan & Shakeshaft 2011). My motivation for my focus on secondary schools is that much of the research conducted on female principals in South Africa tends to focus on women at the primary school level instead of the secondary school level (Lumby 2011; Smit 2013; Naidoo & Perumal 2014; Schmidt & Mestry 2015). When co-educational (male and female learners) high schools are researched, the focus is on rural areas, not urban (Lumby et al 2010; Moorosi 2010; Lumby & Azaola 2011; Diko 2014; Faulkner 2015). For these reasons, I chose to focus my research on five female principals working at co-educational secondary schools in urban areas in the West Rand; Johannesburg West (D12) and Gauteng West (D2) districts.

1.5 Methodology

A qualitative research method was used based on an interpretivist research paradigm. My research design comprised an in-depth narrative inquiry into five female principals who have progressed to educational leadership positions at secondary schools in South Africa. A purposive sampling method was used to select five female principals currently working in co-educational urban secondary schools in two districts. The female principals selected are the first female principals to be appointed in each of the school's respective history and work at secondary schools in close proximity to where I work.

1.6 Theoretical framework

The capabilities approach is a broad normative framework for the evaluation of human well-being and quality of life (Robeyns 2003; 2013). It focuses on what people are able to achieve and be, that is, their capabilities (Robeyns 2003; 2013). For example, a good quality of life could include; being able to have a family, practise one's religion, have access to education, engage in various leisure activities and find a decent job (Robeyns 2013). Alexander Goerne (2010) has suggested that the capabilities approach is comprised of five conceptual building blocks: resources, conversion factors, a capability set, agency or choice and functionings which are used to evaluate human well-being and quality of life. The capabilities approach is useful for a study on women in educational leadership because it is an ethically individualistic theory, that allows us to track the sequence of events in the life of each female principal from aspiration to principalship while being cognisant of the social context in which an individual develops aspirations. For example, if a young woman aspires to be an educational leader and has the opportunity to acquire a tertiary qualification (resource), this resource can be converted into a set of capabilities for leadership (capability set). By choosing to act on the opportunities available to her at school level (agency/choice), this capability set can be converted into a position of leadership (functionings).

1.7 Outline of chapters

This research report is comprised of six chapters. Each chapter is briefly outlined below.

Chapter 1 provided the introduction and background to the study. The purpose of this study was discussed, that is, to contribute to knowledge on women in school leadership positions and ask

whether the capabilities approach as a theoretical framework can offer an alternative perspective for understanding women's success.

Chapter 2 provides the literature review for the study. A preliminary reading of the literature available on educational leadership reveals that the underrepresentation of women in principalship posts is not unique to South Africa. Indeed, it is a global phenomenon, which has been researched at length and which in many cases, can be traced back to the entrenched patriarchal values that exist in most societies. The underrepresentation of women in educational leadership positions is discussed according to the following themes identified from the literature reviewed; career progression, patriarchy, organisational culture and motivation.

Chapter 3 explains the capabilities approach, as a broad normative framework for the evaluation of human well-being and quality of life. This chapter focuses specifically on applying the capabilities approach to gender studies and women in educational leadership in particular. Alexander Goerne's (2010) five conceptual building blocks of the capabilities approach; resources, conversion factors, capability set, agency or choice and functionings- are subsequently used to discuss women in school leadership (Goerne 2010).

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology for the study. A qualitative research method was used based on an interpretivist research paradigm- while the research design applied was narrative inquiry. Sampling made use of a purposive method for selecting five women who have progressed to educational leadership positions at urban secondary schools in South Africa.

In chapter 5, the capabilities approach is used to analyse and discuss the data collected from the narrative inquiries into the five women who have progressed to educational leadership positions at secondary schools in South Africa. Goerne's (2010) five conceptual building blocks of the capabilities approach have been adapted to establish a capability set for educational leadership.

Chapter 6 outlines the identifying themes that emerged from the study, and discusses the way in which the main and secondary research questions were answered, as well as the limitations

of the research. Subsequently, recommendations are made for further study on women in school leadership.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

A preliminary reading of the literature available on educational leadership reveals that the underrepresentation of women in principalship posts is not unique to South Africa but is a global phenomenon. This topic has been researched at length and in many cases, can be traced back to the entrenched patriarchal values that exist in diverse societies such as Spain (Coronel et al 2010; Gutierrez 2016), India (Mythili 2017), Indonesia (Gaus 2011) and Zimbabwe (Makura 2009). *The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Report* reveals that gender inequality in the workplace persists and that women are still underrepresented in management positions (Guterres 2017). The report acknowledges that more needs to be done to ensure that women, who aspire to leadership positions, can break through the "glass ceiling". This must include "legal frameworks in order to counter deeply rooted gender-based discrimination often resulting from patriarchal attitudes and related social norms" (United Nations 2017: 5, 29). In cases where women do manage to break through the "glass ceiling" and assume educational leadership positions, the undertaking is often viewed as interfering with primary caregiver responsibilities at home (Gutierrez 2016).

In South Africa, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, and the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998 have gone to great lengths to ensure the prohibition of gender discrimination in the workplace (Moorosi 2010; Diko 2014; Naidoo & Perumal 2014; Faulkner 2015; Schmidt & Mestry 2015; Lumby & Azaola 2011). However, the prevalence of men in principalship posts still seems to suggest that women do not experience equal rights in practice. Davids (2018) notes that a mere 36% of public school principals in South Africa are women. Statistics garnered from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) have revealed that 8070 principals in public schools in South Africa are women in contrast to 13 551 men (Davids 2018). This seems to suggest that a gender imbalance still exists in school leadership positions in South Africa, despite the advancements, made in terms of South Africa's legislation (see TABLE 1).

TABLE 1: Gender imbalance in school leadership positions in South Africa: 2018

	EDUCATORS	PERCENTAGE	PRINCIPALS	PERCENTAGE
FEMALE	**265 179**	**72.5%**	**8070**	**37.3%**
MALE	**100 528**	**27.5%**	**13 551**	**62.7%**
TOTAL	**365 707**		**21 621**	

SOURCE: Department of Basic Education (June 2018)

Faulkner (2015) has noted that although legislation demands compliance, most policies are viewed with scepticism and are opposed by traditional communities where gender defined roles remain intact. Based on a preliminary reading of the literature available on women in educational leadership, the themes of career progression, patriarchy, organisational culture and leadership motivation provided some of the reasons why a gender imbalance still exists in school leadership positions.

2.2 Career progression of women into leadership position in schools

In the United States, Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011: 107) noted that women tend to obtain "more information, more education and more experience in the classroom" before applying for an educational leadership position. For a woman to be considered equal, "she must be better prepared than a man with whom she is competing for a job" (Grogan & Shakeshaft 2011). In South Africa, most female principals start out as educators and are promoted to principalship on the basis of a successful teaching record (Lumby et al 2010; Moorosi 2010). However, it has been noted that for many female principals, particularly in the rural areas, promotion happened almost by default when the principalship post became vacant at their school and was not filled by an outside applicant (Moorosi 2010; Faulkner 2015). After their appointment, the majority of female principals in South Africa, further their studies in education management, through the attainment of a formal qualification or by attending short courses and workshops offered by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) (Lumby 2010; Moorosi 2010).

Further education and training helps to build confidence in female principals who subsequently feel better equipped for the task (Moorosi 2010). Many female principals have either been a head of department or a deputy principal prior to their principalship appointment and cite this as

playing an integral part in their preparation (Lumby et al 2010; Moorosi 2010). However, it has also been noted that opportunities to act in a managerial capacity, are often reserved for men, which limits exposure to on-the-job training for women (Moorosi 2010). "Traditionally, women have had little support or encouragement from family, peers, subordinates or educational institutions to pursue a career in educational leadership" (Grogan & Shakeshaft 2011: 108). For this reason, many female principals in South Africa have mentioned the absence of role models for them to emulate (Moorosi 2010). Where mentorship by another principal (male or female) has taken place, female principals tend to perform their duties better because they have received the necessary advice and support (Lumby et al 2010; Grogan & Shakeshaft 2011).

In South Africa, career progression to principalship is usually based on a successful teaching record (Moorosi 2010; Faulkner 2015). The *Policy on the South African Standard for Principalship* (South Africa 2015) is a policy that was introduced by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in order to provide a clear job description for those entrusted with the leadership and management of schools. Prior to this policy, there were limited definitions for school principals in the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document, section 16 of the South African Schools Act (SASA) (No. 84 of 1996) and the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) appraisal system. According to the *Policy on the South African Standard for Principalship* (South Africa 2015), principals must monitor the school's curriculum and ensure that quality teaching and learning is taking place. In addition, principals must be committed to the schools vision and mission, be strategic thinkers who can make decisions and solve problems, be effective communicators who can adapt to change, and encourage participative decision-making, teamwork and team building (South Africa 2015). However, the policy does not offer a clear description of career progression from post level one (educator) to post level four (principal). In fact, the most helpful description offered is found in the educator promotion posts Vacancy Circular 2 of 2018. To be eligible to apply for a principalship post the applicant must; meet the requirements for educators as stated in the Revised Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document and have seven years of appropriate experience and be registered with the South African Council for Educators (SACE) (2018). This seems to suggest that any form of tertiary education in education management is not a requirement for promotion to principalship, in public schools in South Africa. This is in stark contrast to countries like Australia,

Canada, Singapore, Hong Kong and the United States, where a specialised pathway to principalship is offered by means of a university degree (Walker, Bryant & Lee 2013).

2.3 Patriarchal values

Patriarchal values which exist in diverse societies such as Spain, India, Indonesia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, for example, may influence the progression of women into leadership positions in schools. Johnson (2014: 5) defines a patriarchal society as one that "promotes male privilege by being male dominated, male identified and male centred". In a male dominated society positions of authority (domestic, religious, educational, legal, economic, political) are generally reserved for men. Under patriarchy, heads of state, religious leaders and school principals all tend to be male. In a patriarchal society, cultural descriptions of masculinity and manhood are valued (Johnson 2014). Qualities such as control, strength, competitiveness, toughness, rationality and autonomy are generally upheld, and are associated with leadership (Johnson 2014). In Spain, India, Indonesia and Zimbabwe, for example, few educational leadership positions are occupied by women because of the patriarchal practices that are ingrained in these societies (Makura 2009; Coronel et al 2010; Gaus 2011; Gutierrez 2016; Mythili 2017).

In South Africa, several researchers have identified entrenched patriarchal values and practices as the primary reason for gender discrimination in the workplace (Moorosi 2007; 2010; Lumby et al 2010; Diko 2014; Naidoo & Perumal 2014; Faulkner 2015; Schmidt & Mestry 2015). In a patriarchal society, there is a clear division of labour; "a women's place is in the home, concerned with domestic matters and child rearing", which is more often than not influenced by the religious and cultural values embraced by the community (Faulkner 2015: 420). Female stereotypes are reinforced by means of social conditioning, which "traditionally begins in the home, is continued through the schooling process, and into the workplace and society" (Faulkner 2015: 419). Many women in patriarchal societies are accustomed to being subservient, which can make it difficult for them to aim for an educational leadership position (Faulkner 2015). Members of the community often view women who choose principalship as a career path in a negative light because they are deviating from the gender defined roles, that exist in a patriarchal society (Makura 2009; Gaus 2011; Faulkner 2015; Mythili 2017).

2.4 Organisational culture

The organisational culture that exists in many schools can be a hindrance to the progression of women to leadership positions (Moorosi 2007; Faulkner 2015; Schmidt & Mestry 2015). Organisational culture may be broadly defined as "the way things are done around here", embodying behaviour which is considered to be acceptable or unacceptable and the actions that are encouraged or discouraged (Kruger 2003). Organisational culture is often reinforced by a system of rites, rituals and patterns of communication in the workplace (Kruger 2003). At an organisational level, the concept of the "ideal manager" is someone who is able to put family obligations second to work obligations (Moorosi 2007). Women are often seen as less suitable candidates for leadership positions because they have to balance work and family responsibilities (Moorosi 2007; Schmidt & Mestry 2015) being expected to fulfil family obligations at home which include child-rearing and domestic chores (Moorosi 2007). Most organisations prefer a "culture of presence" in the workplace which can make it difficult for women to attend all work-related functions, especially if they have young children and/or elderly parents to attend to at home (Dyrchs & Strack 2012). The organisational culture, that exists in many schools, may be a hindrance in terms of the short listing of candidates for the principalship position. Women have also noted that there is a general lack of communication from senior management about promotion posts in an organisation. Furthermore, the selection criteria are often male orientated and entrenched old-boy networks within an organisation are frequently used to help other men advance up the corporate ladder (Dyrchs & Strack 2012).

2.5 Motivation

What motivates or drives some women in spite of the obstacles mentioned above to aspire to an educational leadership position in a secondary school; a position traditionally occupied by men? Studies have found that many female principals actively sought promotion in order to make a difference, and are motivated by a strong sense of duty and service to those learners whose education they are responsible for (Lumby et al 2010; Faulkner 2015). "The desire to be a role model, to mentor female students, and to set a good example of best leadership practice" has also been suggested (Faulkner 2015: 429). Many women in educational leadership positions also acknowledged their religious beliefs as being a powerful motivator and cited that by aiming

for an educational leadership position, they were "fulfilling God's purpose for their lives" (Faulkner 2015; Schmidt & Mestry 2015).

As indicated by the preliminary literature reviewed, career progression, patriarchy, organisational culture and leadership motivation are some of the reasons why a gender imbalance still exists in school leadership positions. The "glass ceiling" (a metaphor often used to describe the invisible barrier that blocks women from progressing into leadership positions in organisations), is not an isolated feature of organisations but rather the direct result of prevailing attitudes that exist in most societies. In traditional communities, for example, a woman's primary caregiver responsibilities include taking care children and/or elderly parents at home. Although legislation has been introduced, to ensure the prohibition of gender discrimination in the workplace, the prevalence of men in principalship posts still seems to suggest that women do not experience equal rights in practice. Traditional communities view most policies with scepticism, which could serve to explain why a mere 36% of school principals in South Africa are women (Faulkner 2015; Davids 2018).

Most of the literature reviewed points to the absence of reliable and comparable data about women in educational leadership positions. This often results in a situation where the sparse data, that is available, has to be used (Lumby et al 2010; Grogan & Shakeshaft 2011). In South Africa, there are few publications, that have added to the existing body of knowledge, on women in educational leadership (Mathipa & Tsoka 2001; Moorosi 2007; 2010; Lumby et al 2010; 2011; Msila 2013; Smit 2013; Diko 2014; Naidoo & Perumal 2014; Faulkner 2015; Schmidt & Mestry 2015; Davids 2018). Most of these publications draw attention to the fact that the gender imbalance, that exists in school leadership positions in South Africa, first came to the fore after the advent of democracy (Mathipa & Tsoka 2001; Diko 2014; Naidoo & Perumal 2014; Schmidt & Mestry 2015). At the time, policies were drawn up to address the gender imbalance in educational leadership in the hopes that the situation would improve (DBE 2003). The statistics provided by the Department of Basic Education (DBE 2003) indicate that although transformation has taken place, it has been slow (see TABLE 1). Most of the South African publications have focused on women in educational leadership positions in rural areas and tend to focus on the personal and professional pathways to principalship (Moorosi 2007; 2010; Lumby

et al 2010; 2011; Smit 2013; Diko 2014; Naidoo & Perumal 2014; Faulkner 2015; Schmidt & Mestry 2015). The research conducted tends to focus on "multiple deprivation" in schools in rural contexts which includes issues surrounding; "poverty, HIV and Aids, orphans, vulnerable children and child headed families, poor school infrastructure, illiteracy levels amongst parents/ guardians, poorly educated and demotivated teaching staff" (Faulkner 2015: 419). Far fewer studies have been conducted on women in educational leadership in secondary schools in urban areas (Moorosi 2007; 2010; Naidoo & Perumal 2014). The research conducted in urban areas tends to focus on schools in disadvantaged communities. By disadvantaged, Naidoo and Perumal (2014) are referring specifically to economic factors such as lack of resources, unemployment and low income.

Moorosi's (2010) study on the gender gap in secondary school management is perhaps the most noteworthy, as it inadvertently links to the capabilities approach. Moorosi (2010) uses Van Eck's (1996) 'management route model' to discuss the career path to principalship. The model identifies three phases that determine this career path namely; anticipation, acquisition and performance. The first phase is the anticipation phase, which prepares women for educational leadership. The focus here is on acquiring the skills, knowledge, training and qualifications needed for an educational leadership position. Participation in informal networks and opportunities to act in management positions at an organisational level play an important role in this phase. The second phase is the acquisition phase, which focuses on access and entry to an educational leadership position. In this phase, women are actively seeking principalship. Moorosi (2010) notes that most discrimination against women takes place in this phase because of the male normative model of school management. Principal posts at secondary school level are usually reserved for men: moreover members of the school governing body (SGB) and district officials play an instrumental role in determining who will be appointed. Moorosi (2010) notes that women need to be familiar with the interview procedure and selection criteria in order to improve their chances. The third phase is the performance phase, which is where the management function of the educational leadership position is performed. Moorosi (2010) notes that in each phase of the career path to principalship women encounter more obstacles than men.

Van Eck's (1996) 'management route model' is similar to Alexander Goerne's (2010) five conceptual building blocks of the capabilities approach: resources, conversion factors, capability set, agency or choice and functionings (see FIGURE 1). A more in-depth discussion of the capabilities approach is offered in Chapter 3.

Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011: 106) noted although there has been a steady increase in the amount of research conducted on women in educational leadership positions in recent years, "qualitative, feminist research is often trivialised, and viewed as a threat" because "it challenges the status quo by offering an alternative perspective". The gap in the literature reviewed is where I decided to focus my research, namely, women in educational leadership positions, in secondary schools, in urban areas. My research adds to the existing body of knowledge on women in educational leadership. In my study, I attempted to move away from some of the reasons given for the gender imbalance, in school leadership positions that still exists, and rather offer a narrative inquiry concerning five women who have managed to break through the "glass ceiling". The capabilities approach will provide a useful normative framework for this exploration and will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

Theoretical Framework

3.1 The capabilities approach

The capabilities approach is a broad normative framework for the evaluation of human well-being and quality of life (Robeyns 2003; 2013). It focuses on what people are able to achieve and be, that is, their capabilities (Robeyns 2003; 2013). For example, a good quality of life could include; being able to have a family, practise one's religion, have access to education, engage in various leisure activities and find a decent job (Robeyns 2013). Amartya Sen first introduced the capabilities approach during the 1980s; as an alternative to the wealth and the basic needs approach used in welfare economics. It was intended as a measurement for evaluating human well-being and quality of life (Sen 2003). Conceptually, the capabilities approach can be traced back to the works of Aristotle, Karl Marx and Adam Smith, who also highlighted the importance of functionings and the ability to function as determinants of well-being (Sen 2003).

Sen criticised economic wealth as a metric for evaluating quality of life because it could not necessarily guarantee happiness or long life (Cowen & Tabarrok 2015). Sen also criticised the basic needs approach because he argued that this approach focuses on the resources people receive and not on what they can actually do with those resources (Cowen & Tabarrok 2015). Sen suggested that we measure human well-being and quality of life in the space of capabilities (Alkire 2017). We should evaluate the freedom that human beings have to pursue the kind of life they have reason to value (Alkire 2017). The formulation of capabilities can be distinguished by a set of "beings and doings", which Sen (2003) referred to as "functionings". Initially, Sen (2003: 44, 47) identified five broad "functionings" necessary to sustain quality of life; freedom of movement, taking part in the life of a community, balancing material and non-material goods, the transformation of resources into accomplishments and the pursuit of happiness through various activities. However, Sen was reluctant to introduce an exact list of capabilities for determining human well-being and quality of life, and felt that each country or region should develop its own list, because lists are open to interpretation (Walker 2005; Cowen & Tabarrok 2015; Lambert 2016). Walker (2005) has noted that by leaving the capabilities framework open-

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ended, collective participation within communities is encouraged in determining which capabilities are relevant for them.

Alexander Goerne (2010) has suggested that the capabilities approach is comprised of five conceptual building blocks: resources, conversion factors, capability set, agency or choice and functionings, which are used to evaluate human well-being and quality of life (see FIGURE 1). I discuss each of these building blocks below:
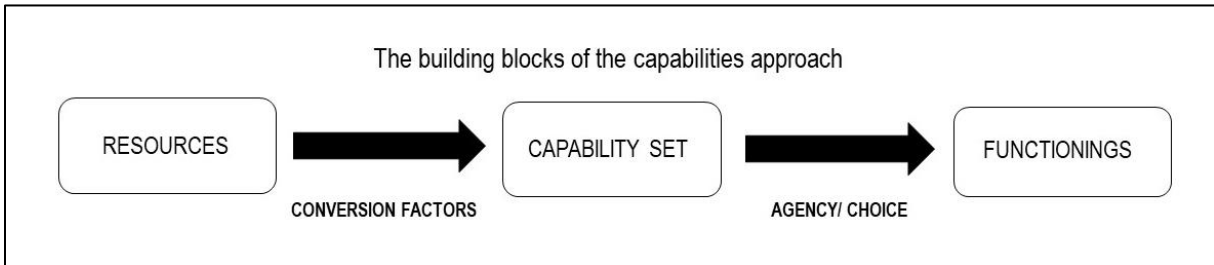
FIGURE 1: The building blocks of the capabilities approach (Goerne 2010:7)

a) Resources

Resources refers to the wealth, materials and other assets used by human beings in order to function effectively in society. In welfare economics, the possession or non-possession of resources determines the poverty levels in a country, society or community (Goerne 2010). In education, resources could include stationery, books, teaching material and computer software. In addition, human resources such as educators and administrative staff play an important role in determining the success or failure of school management.

b) Conversion factors

Conversion factors signify the extent to which human beings are able to convert available resources into functionings. External factors such as social structures (personal, social and environmental) influence the ability of human beings to convert available resources into functionings (Goerne 2010). Accordingly, the social relationships established between educators, the (SGB) and teacher unions often determines whether aspiring educators reach education leadership positions (functionings).

c) Capability set

A capability set refers to an individual's capabilities, what a person is able "to do or be". In other words, what options or life chances does each individual have to convert the available resources into functionings? (Goerne 2010). Opportunities for educators to learn through on-the-job-training, to attend workshops, or to study education management courses often determines their capability to convert available resources into functionings.

d) Agency/ choice

Agency is about choice. Does the individual choose to act on the opportunities given to him or her? The ability to overcome internal constraints (fears, insecurities etc.) plays an important role in achieving functionings. Does an individual have the capacity to act in a situation, system or environment, despite internal limitations? (Goerne 2010). The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has gone to great lengths to ensure that women who aspire to educational leadership positions can reach principalship. However, one limitation may be that women often do not believe in themselves and do not always act on the opportunities available to them (Mathipa & Tsoka 2001).

e) Functionings

Functionings refers to those capabilities that are actually realised. Human beings are fundamentally diverse and require different resources in order to achieve the same functionings. Hence, the achievement of functionings is influenced by personal, environmental and social conditions (Goerne 2010). Women with drive, determination and tenacity are able to convert the resources available to them in order to achieve functionings.

To explain how the conceptual building blocks of the capabilities approach intersect to determine human well-being and quality of life, Sen used the example of a bicycle (Sen 2003). If an individual is given a bicycle (resource), it can become part of their capability set (what a person is able to do or be). The bicycle could enable the individual to move around, assuming that they know how to ride a bicycle (conversion factors). The individual chooses to use the bicycle in order to increase their mobility (agency). When the person rides the bicycle successfully to reach their valued destination, the capability set is fully realised and converted into a functioning. An individual's mobility can result in a greater sense of independence, which can lead to an increased sense of well-being (Sen 2003; Goerne 2010; Alkire 2017; Robeyns 2013).

Critics of the capabilities approach have argued that it is hard to operationalise because it is quite broad and lacks detail (Robeyns 2003; Goerne 2010; Cowen & Tabarrok 2015). However, the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) is a good example of how the capabilities approach has been used (Stanton 2007; Goerne 2010; Cowen & Tabarrok 2015; Alkire 2017). First introduced by Amartya Sen and Mahbub ul Haq in 1990, the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) looks not only at wealth or the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of a country as an indicator of human well-being and quality of life, but also at life expectancy, health, education, employment and participation in the life of the community (Stanton 2007). Later on, in the 1990s, Martha Nussbaum developed Sen's five broad "functionings" into a list of ten capabilities that can be used to evaluate human well-being and quality of life; life, bodily health, bodily integrity, senses, the imagination and thought, emotions, practical reason, affiliation, other species, play and control over one's environment (1999). The purpose of Nussbaum's list was to provide a focus for an evaluation of human well-being and quality of life. Nussbaum (1999) claimed that her list of capabilities could be adapted and used in any context (Robeyns 2003). It should however be noted that some capability scholars disagree with the use of an actual list because it can become a metric in itself, which is self-defeating (Robeyns 2003; Walker 2005; Lambert 2016).

3.2 Applying the capabilities approach to gender studies

Ingrid Robeyns (2003) used the capabilities approach to study gender inequality in European society. Robeyns (2003: 70, 71) does not subscribe to the idea of using a list of capabilities, preferring to defend a procedural approach and the selection of relevant capabilities based on the following criteria: explicit formulation, methodological justification, sensitivity to context, different levels of generality, exhaustion and non-reduction. Robeyns (2003) asserts that the selection of relevant capabilities should take place in two stages. Firstly, an ideal list of capabilities should be drawn up and secondly, a more pragmatic list of capabilities should be compiled that considers empirical research findings. In her discussion on gender inequality in European society, Robeyns (2003: 71, 72) proposed a list of fourteen ideal capabilities (see TABLE 2). I applied the same two-stage methodology as Robeyns to my own research study. Firstly, I used Robeyns (2003) ideal list of fourteen capabilities as my starting point for drawing up semi-structured interview questions. Secondly, I drew up a more pragmatic list of seven

capabilities for educational leadership based on commonalities I identified from the semi-structured interviews conducted with all five participants (see TABLE 3). Although Robeyns used this methodology to study gender inequality in European society, I found it to be applicable to the South African context as well.

TABLE 2: Robeyns list of fourteen ideal capabilities

Robeyns' list of fourteen ideal capabilities	
1) Life and physical health	To live a life of normal length and to be in good health. To maintain a healthy weight, be physically active and to eat healthily is critical for one's overall sense of well-being.
2) Mental well-being	The ability to cope with stress in life, work productively and to contribute to society. The absence of negative mental states of mind such as loneliness, restlessness, depression, worry or anxiety are important to one's mental well-being.
3) Bodily integrity and safety	The personal autonomy and self-determination of one's own body. Each individual should be free from domestic violence, rape and sexual assault or stalking.
4) Social relations	Involves social networks and social support. Social networks refers to a network of social interactions and personal relationships, the number of people in one's network, frequency of contact and group membership. Social support refers to the type and amount of support received.
5) Political empowerment	Refers to the opportunities created for women to participate in government and politics. In most countries, men hold more political power than women do.
6) Education and knowledge	Refers to the opportunities created for women to complete primary and secondary schooling and acquire a tertiary qualification. In most developing countries, it is important for boys to obtain a good education because it will enable them to secure employment and take care of the family. Social norms and expectations make it difficult for girls to complete schooling and advance to higher education.
7) Domestic work and non-market care	Refers to raising children and taking care of dependents such as the elderly, frail and sick. It also refers to domestic work in the home. In most developing countries, girls and women must fulfil their domestic responsibilities at home.
8) Paid work and other projects	Refers to the extent to which women participate in the labour market. In most developing countries, women are less active in the labour market than men are.
9) Shelter and environment	Refers to a safe and pleasant living environment. A pleasant living environment has a positive effect of one's physical health and mental well-being.
10) Mobility	Refers to the ability to move around freely and easily. Mobility has a gendered dimension because it can be difficult for women to use public transport, especially if they have small children.
11) Leisure activities	Refers to the opportunities created within society to relax, create and enjoy pleasure, which have a positive effect on one's mental well-being. Leisure activities may include outdoor activities, physical exercise, and reading, walking, playing games, going to the theatre or an art exhibition.
12) Time autonomy	Refers to the way in which people allocate their time to domestic work and non-market care, leisure activities and paid work and other projects. Women who have a career and responsibilities at home often struggle to balance their time between these. Social norms expect women to focus on their responsibilities at home, which includes spending more time with elderly, frail or sick family members.
13) Respect	Refers to the individual and public recognition that women receive in society. In developing countries, women are treated with less dignity by society.
14) Religion	Refers to the extent to which people have the freedom to live according to a chosen religion or not to.

SOURCE: Robeyns, I (2003)

TABLE 3: Pragmatic list of seven capabilities applied to this research

Pragmatic list of seven capabilities applied to this research	
1) Physical health and mental well-being	To be physically and mentally healthy
2) Social relations	Being able to be part of social networks, to give and receive support
3) Education and knowledge	To be educated and to use and produce knowledge
4) Domestic work and non-market care	To raise children and take care of them
5) Paid work and other projects	To work in the labour market and undertake projects
6) Time autonomy	To exercise autonomy in terms of allocating ones time
7) Respect	To be respected and treated with dignity

SOURCE: Robeyns, I (2003)

3.3 Advantages and disadvantages of using the capabilities approach

There are several advantages to using a broad normative framework like the capabilities approach for gender studies. Firstly, the capabilities approach is an ethically individualistic theory (Robeyns 2003; Walker 2005). When we make normative evaluations of human well-being and quality of life, the focus is on the individual and not communities or households (Robeyns 2003). However, this does not mean that our analysis excludes social and environmental factors. In any analysis of gender inequality, the community, the household, the welfare of other human beings, social norms and discriminatory practices in society are considered. Thus, the capabilities approach is not ontologically individualistic but ethically individualistic (Robeyns 2003). Secondly, as a measure for evaluating human well-being and quality of life, the capabilities approach offers an alternative response to wealth and the basic needs approach used in welfare economics, as the approach considers both market and non-market economies (Robeyns 2003; 2013). In gender studies, market economy considerations include differences in terms of income, earnings and job opportunities between men and women (Robeyns 2003; 2013). Non-market economy considerations are also important because most women spend more time outside the market economy than men (Robeyns 2003). Thirdly, the capabilities approach promotes human diversity in terms of race, age, ethnicity, gender and sexuality and a return to core values and ethics in policymaking in society (Robeyns 2013). This is in stark contrast to the tendency in

welfare economics to evaluate equality from a male perspective (Robeyns 2003). Fourthly, the capabilities approach is an inspirational language and encourages people with different ideological viewpoints to come together and engage in discussions (Robeyns 2013). One weakness of the capabilities approach is that it does not give us explanations, only values (Robeyns 2013). Furthermore, there is also the danger that we downplay the importance of economic inequalities in society in our analysis of human well-being and quality of life (Robeyns 2013).

3.4 The capabilities approach and women in educational leadership

The capabilities approach is useful for a study on women in educational leadership because firstly, it is an ethically individualistic theory that allows us to track the sequence of events in the life of each female principal from aspiration to principalship. For example, if a young woman aspires to become an educational leader and has the opportunity to acquire a tertiary qualification (resource), this resource can be converted into a set of capabilities for leadership (capability set). By choosing to act on the opportunities available to her at school level (agency/choice), this capability set can be converted into a position of leadership (functionings). Secondly, the capabilities approach offers us an alternative perspective on the discourse on barriers and obstacles by allowing us to focus on what can be achieved (principalship), as opposed to what cannot. Thirdly, the capabilities approach gives the female voice an opportunity to be heard which is important because research conducted on principalship tends to focus on men (Smit 2013).

I used the capabilities approach in my study to track the sequence of events in the life of each female principal from aspiration to principalship. I adapted Goerne's (2010) five conceptual building blocks for the capabilities approach by moving agency or choice to the beginning of the diagram. I also added constraints after the capability set (see FIGURE 2). My motivation for doing so was based on empirical research findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted with all five participants. Each of the conceptual building blocks will be discussed in Chapter 5. It is interesting to note that Goerne's (2010) five conceptual building blocks of the capabilities approach: resources, conversion factors, capability set, agency or choice and functionings (see FIGURE 2) are similar to Van Eck's 'management route model' (1996). Van

Eck's (1996) anticipation phase focuses on acquiring the skills, knowledge, training and qualifications needed for an educational leadership position. This is similar to the accumulation of resources, conversion factors and the establishment of a capability set (Goerne 2010). Van Eck's (1996) acquisition phase focuses on access and entry to an educational leadership position which is similar to agency or choice (Goerne 2010). Van Eck's (1996) performance phase focuses on the actual management function of an educational leadership position which is similar to functionings (Goerne 2010).
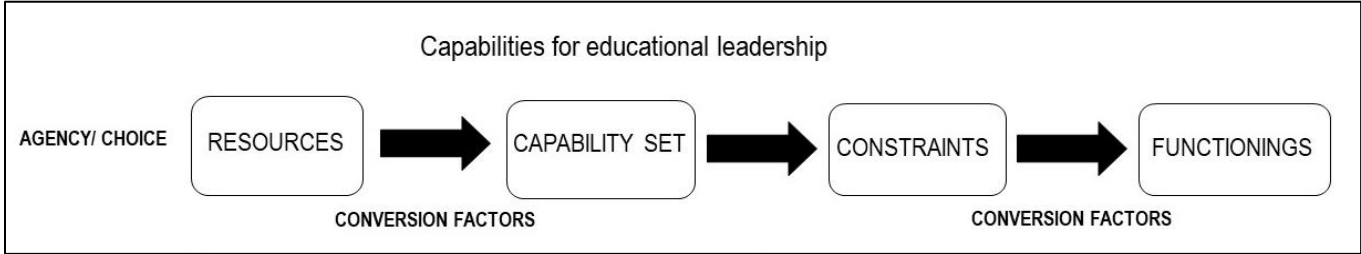

FIGURE 2: The capabilities approach for educational leadership (adapted from Goerne 2010)

CHAPTER 4

Research Methodology

A qualitative research method was used based on an interpretivist research paradigm. Interpretivist research aims to give insight into the way in which a particular group of people (women) makes sense of a situation they have experienced or encountered (educational leadership). One of the greatest strengths of a qualitative research method, is the richness and depth of the descriptions it yields (Nieuwenhuis 2007). It should however be noted that the interpretivist research paradigm has often been criticised for its subjectivity and its failure to generalise research findings beyond the situation studied (Nieuwenhuis 2007). In other words, the research findings obtained from the purposive sample of the five women interviewed for the purposes of this study may not be applicable to all women in secondary school leadership in South Africa. It should be noted however that generalising the findings to other populations is not the purpose of the study.

4.1 Research design

My research design entailed a narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is the study of the lived experiences of people (Smit 2013). Clandinin, Menon and Saleh (2014) define narrative inquiry as the autobiographical telling and retelling of stories. The purpose of such an inquiry is to "track the sequences, chronology or stories" of each participant (Nieuwenhuis 2007: 103). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) have noted that the role of the narrative researcher is to describe the lives of participants, collect and tell stories and write narratives of experience. Narrative inquiry has become increasingly popular in studies of educational experience; first and second hand accounts of "teachers stories" and "stories of teachers", written by teachers (Connelly & Clandinin 1990: 3).

An important aspect of narrative inquiry is the concept of negotiated entry (Connelly & Clandinin 1990). Negotiated entry is an ethical matter and refers to the responsibilities established at the outset between the researcher and the participant (Connelly & Clandinin 1990). Narrative inquiry is a collaborative effort between the researcher and the participant who tell stories together. In order for this process to work, a relationship built on trust is first established. The research

relationship must be characterised by reciprocity. The researcher must be prepared to first listen first to the participant's story; hence the participant must be given time and space to tell her story. The researcher must allow him or herself to be taught through the narrative and become a willing student who is eager to learn. Only then can the researcher begin the process of retelling the participant's story, in which both voices are heard (Connelly & Clandinin 1990). I chose narrative inquiry for my study because it allows for a deeper and richer understanding of the subject matter to emerge, namely women in school leadership.

4.2 Advantages and disadvantages of narrative inquiry

Smit (2013) notes that narrative inquiry has become more prevalent in leadership studies because it provides the researcher with an opportunity to explore the topic of educational leadership in significant depth. Narrative inquiry provides a way of opening up dialogue between the researcher and the participant (Smit 2013) because participants share information about themselves and their personal experience of educational leadership. This helps to establish a relationship built on trust between the researcher and the participant and provides the researcher with a relational way of knowing (Smit 2013). Connelly and Clandinin (1990: 10) have noted that narrative inquiry is a "double-edged sword"; on the one hand, narrative inquiry has the capacity to yield rich personal descriptions, based on the participant's own personal experience, while on the other hand, the participant may present falsehood as truth. There is also the danger that the researcher could "fake the data" and write fiction or use the data to tell a deceptive story which could easily masquerade as truth. Connelly and Clandinin (1990: 10) also warn narrative inquirers against the temptation to write a story with a "happy ending" for each participant. They suggest that researchers should look for the stories not told by participants. In other words, researchers should look for or discover a meaning that is implied rather than explicitly stated. For narrative inquiry to "ring true", the researcher must discuss "all the selections made, the possible alternative stories and other limitations seen from the vantage point of the critic" (Connelly & Clandinin 1990: 10).

Smit (2013: 89) notes that studies on leadership tend to focus on men and are generalised to all leaders. Furthermore, these studies are largely conducted from Eurocentric and patriarchal perspectives, using a quantitative research methodology grounded in an objectivist research

paradigm (Smit 2013: 89, 91). Narrative inquiry is a more suitable research design for my study because it gives women in educational leadership positions the opportunity to tell their stories, creating a platform for the female voice to be heard, which is often silenced by patriarchal views on leadership. Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research methodology grounded in a subjective research paradigm, which Smit (2013: 91) notes is "slowly edging its way into leadership studies".

4.3 Selection of participants (sampling)

I used a purposive and convenient sampling method to select five women who have progressed into educational leadership positions in secondary schools in South Africa. Purposive sampling refers to the selection of participants "according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question" (Nieuwenhuis 2007: 79). The selection criteria I used were the following:

1) A female principal, working in a co-educational secondary school, in an urban area or in close proximity to an urban area

2) In the West Rand; Johannesburg West (D12) or Gauteng West (D2) districts (for the purposes of convenient sampling)

Furthermore, I sought a purposive and convenient sample with generational and racial diversity so that I could hear a more diverse selection of narratives. Participants comprised three white women principals (two Afrikaans and one English speaking), one coloured woman principal (English speaking) and one black woman principal (Tswana speaking).

4.4 Data collection strategy

The data collection method I used was semi-structured interviews. In preparing for these interviews, firstly I used the themes identified from the literature review (career progression, patriarchy, organisational culture and motivation) and Robeyns (2003) list of fourteen ideal capabilities to draw up questions for the interview schedule. After conducting the semi-structured interviews, I then drew up a more pragmatic list of seven capabilities for educational leadership based on the commonalities identified from the interviews with all five participants. The table illustrated in TABLE 3 demonstrates how the semi-structured interview questions were

formulated based on the literature review and the theoretical framework. For example, Question 2: "Tell me about your journey to educational leadership" links to the themes of career progression and motivation identified from the literature review (see ANNEXURE A). Furthermore, the data obtained from the first interview informed the design of my follow-up interview questions (see ANNEXURE B) and the selection of relevant capabilities for leadership (see TABLE 3).

Data collection strategy		
1) Literature review	**Career progression** - Patriarchy - Organisational culture **Motivation**	**Interview question** Tell me about your journey to education leadership.
2) List of 14 ideal capabilities	**Life and physical health** **Mental well-being** - Bodily integrity and safety - Social relations - Political empowerment **Education and knowledge** - Domestic work and non-market care - Paid work and other projects **Shelter and environment** - Mobility - Leisure activities - Time autonomy - Respect **Religion**	**Interview question** Tell me about yourself: your age, where you are from and your educational background.
3) Pragmatic list of 7 capabilities	- Physical health and mental well-being - Social relations - Education and knowledge **Domestic work and non-market care** - Paid work and other projects - Time autonomy - Respect	**Interview question** What is your marital status? Do you have any children?

FIGURE 3: Data collection strategy for drawing up semi-structured interview questions

In order to establish and maintain rapport, I kept in contact with each participant over a period of four months, interviewing each participant twice, emailing her and contacting her telephonically. The initial interview with each participant lasted an hour and the follow-up meeting an additional hour. I read each semi-structured interview question and allowed the participant to answer trying not to interrupt her while she was speaking. All the interviews were audio recorded. The narrative inquiry, that is the interview, was conducted after school hours at the secondary

school where each participant works. This was important for me because I wanted to see where they worked in order to understand their school context better. The semi-structured interview questions enabled me to gain background information on each participant, track the sequence of their journey to educational leadership, identify any obstacles they encountered in seeking a promotion post and identify some of the demands placed upon them as an educational leader. It should be noted that the interviews were very informal, to allow participants to speak freely, as is the nature of narrative inquiry with the interview questions leading the narrative inquiry in a particular direction. On completion of each interview, I transcribed it, then emailed the interview transcript to the respective participant for member checking and arranged a follow-up meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to clarify any unclear information regarding the initial interview and to ask additional questions. This iterative process of data collection played an important role in establishing a trust relationship between each participant and myself, and gave me the opportunity to probe deeper into the phenomenon being studied, namely women in educational leadership.

4.5 Rethinking validity and reliability

Webster and Mertova (2007: 89) noted that narrative-based research and storytelling research "seeks to elaborate and investigate individual interpretations and worldviews of complex and human-centred events". For this reason, some researchers have suggested that narrative inquiry cannot be judged by the same criteria as those applied to more traditional research methods (Connelly & Clandinin 1990; Smythe & Murray 2000; Webster & Mertova 2007). "It is important not to squeeze the language of narrative inquiry into a language created for other forms of research" (Connelly & Clandinin 1990:7). The concepts of validity and reliability thus require reconsideration and redefinition.

4.5.1 Validity

Webster and Mertova (2007: 89) suggest that validity in narrative inquiry refers to the "strength of the analysis, the trustworthiness and ease of access to the data". It is more concerned with research grounded and supported by the data collected. However, narrative inquiry does not provide results that produce generalisable research findings, hence, the real test of validity rests with the reader; is each participant's account plausible, does it ring true?

4.5.2 Reliability

Webster and Mertova (2007: 89) maintain that reliability in narrative inquiry refers to the "dependability of the data collected". Accordingly, the trustworthiness of the records of the stories by each participant enhances the reliability of the research findings.

It is clear from the definitions of both validity and reliability that the demands narrative inquiry place upon the researcher increases dramatically in terms of collecting, recording and making the data accessible to the reader (Webster & Mertova 2007). Access to reliable and trustworthy records of the stories told by each participant helps to establish an audit trail, which confirms the research findings presented. In terms of constructing a more narrative-orientated framework for narrative inquiry, Webster and Mertova (2007: 94) suggest the following criteria be used: honesty, verisimilitude, authenticity and transferability.

4.5.3 Honesty, verisimilitude and authenticity

Honesty, verisimilitude and authenticity support the claim for trustworthiness in narrative inquiry. Does the story told by each participant have the appearance of being honest, true or real (verisimilitude)? Is each participant's account plausible, does it ring true (authenticity)? Webster and Mertova (2007: 98) suggest that the researcher evaluate the trustworthiness of their research by asking the following questions. (1) Is the narrative inquiry free from any biased interests or motivations of the researcher? (2) Could the research findings of the narrative inquiry be applicable elsewhere? (3) Do any patterns emerge from the narrative inquiry? Cohen and Crabtree (2006) suggest that trustworthiness is also established when the researcher spends enough time in the field to learn about the phenomena being studied. A rapport between the researcher and the participant is established which helps to facilitate understanding, as meaning of the phenomena is constructed. The trustworthiness of the narrative inquiry lies in the confirmation of the stories told by each participant (Webster & Mertova 2007). Cohen and Crabtree (2006) maintain that member checking, whereby participants check the data against the researcher's analysis and interpretation, forms an important part of confirmation and also gives participants the opportunity to check for errors, provide additional information and question any incorrect interpretations (Cohen & Crabtree 2006).

One of the most controversial aspects of member checking is that participants might not agree with the researcher's interpretations (Cohen & Crabtree 2006). Thus, the question of whose interpretation stands could become a problem. Cohen and Crabtree (2006) noted that the participants may tell stories in an interview that they later regret or see differently and may ask the researcher to change or remove some of the information they have given. This is why a relationship built on trust between the researcher and the participant becomes so important. Building a relationship of trust with proved to be difficult because each participant was extremely busy.

4.5.4 Transferability

Webster and Mertova (2007:101) suggest that narrative inquiry, which is rich in detail and accessible to the reader, should be able to make applications to other settings (transferability). In other words, the researcher's findings could be applicable to other contexts, situations and/or populations. One way to ensure the transferability of the research findings is through a purposive sample with generational and racial diversity. In terms of my own study, three of the participants are from the Baby Boom generation (1946 – 1964) and two of the participants are from Generation X (1965 – 1976). Three of the participants are white (two Afrikaans speaking and one English speaking), one participant is coloured and one participant is black.

4.6 Ethical considerations

In addition to obtaining ethical clearance and informed consent from participants, there are certain ethical issues particular to narrative inquiry. Concealing the identity of each participant becomes extremely difficult with narrative inquiry because the information gathered is so detailed and individually specific. To ensure the privacy and anonymity of the participants in this research, I have used a pseudonym for each participant and have not named the secondary school where they work. I have also taken precautions to protect the dignity of each participants' reputation and their ongoing relationships with individuals, by not naming any specific teacher's union or colleagues.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) noted that there are potential risks, dangers and abuses of narrative inquiry, which the researcher must guard against. These include: (1) presenting falsehood as truth and (2) "faking the data" and writing fiction to ensure a successful conclusion.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990: 10) refer to this as "the Hollywood plot" where everything works out in the end while Webster and Mertova (2007: 96) refer to this as "narrative smoothing", that is, the tendency to invoke a positive result regardless of the findings from the data.

A central ethical problem of narrative inquiry is the question of ownership. Who owns the narrative? Is it the researcher or the participant? Who has the final authority in terms of analysis and interpretation? Smythe and Murray (2000: 324) note that participants might feel that the researcher has "undermined their authority to speak for themselves about their own experiences" or that the researcher has "failed to capture their own personal uniqueness and individuality". However, it is important to note that the purpose of narrative research is to interpret the underlying meaning behind each participant's story and to link it to a broader theoretical framework (Smythe & Murray 2000). With this in mind, at the outset I explained the purpose of my research study to each participant. I explained that I would be investigating how women have progressed into leadership positions at secondary schools in South Africa. Furthermore, I explained that the broader theoretical framework of my investigation was the capabilities approach. All five participants understood what I meant when I spoke to them about the concept of the "glass ceiling" and were very willing to share their experiences with me. Furthermore, I explained to each participant that the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews would be for research purposes only and that the transcripts of the interview would be stored on my laptop's hard drive and would be password protected. The transcripts are only accessible to me, my supervisor, and my co-supervisor.

CHAPTER 5

Data Presentation and Analysis

5.1 Data presentation

The data presented below were obtained from a narrative inquiry into the careers of five participants who have progressed to leadership positions at secondary schools in South Africa. The pseudonyms used for each participant are Anne, Eve, Mary, Susan and Katlego. Four of the five participants are currently principals while the other was an acting principal for a year but chose not to apply for the permanent post when it became available. All five participants work in co-educational secondary schools in an urban area on the West Rand. The West Rand is the name of the urban western part of the Witwatersrand in Gauteng, South Africa. Each narrative inquiry tracks the sequence of events in the life of each female principal from aspiration to principalship focusing on what each participant did on completion of secondary schooling through to tertiary education, to career progression and balancing work and family responsibilities.

5.2.1 Anne's journey to educational leadership

Anne is an Afrikaans-speaking white South African. She is fifty-nine years old and has been the principal of a co-educational secondary school for eight years. The school is located in an urban area and originated from the amalgamation of two former high schools. The school is a dual-medium, with the language of instruction being both Afrikaans and English. Anne is the first female principal of the school, which serves a predominantly Afrikaans community. She has been married for thirty-six years and has two adult children. After matriculating from high school, Anne went to university where she completed a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree majoring in Afrikaans and Geography. She started teaching Geography at her alma mater and completed an honours degree in Geography whilst working full time. After teaching Geography as a post level one educator for many years, Anne and her husband decided to start a family. Anne went on maternity leave in order to have both of her children, and returned to work soon afterwards. Anne's family and the school where she worked were supportive of her decision to start a family. Her mother and mother-in-law lived in close proximity to the school where she worked, and were always willing to look after her children when necessary. Anne never felt that her decision to

start a family affected her career negatively. In fact, Anne felt that being a teacher was advantageous because she could bring her children to school when necessary. She recalls how her children were often with her at extra-mural activities:

"My children grew up next to the hockey field whilst I was coaching or at choir practice. Where I was, they were. I think I adapted well, and I think they adapted well. I am sure that this experience made my children very independent."

Anne was able to balance work and family responsibilities because of her support structure. Her husband was also a teacher at the time, which helped a great deal because he understood the school dynamics. For many years, Anne was acting head of department (HOD) for Geography at her school because a promotion post was not available. Nevertheless, Anne took on a leadership role in her subject as a cluster leader for the district, chairperson of the Geography district teachers group and examiner for the province:

"During this time, I had a leadership role in Geography in the district and province. I know that many teachers admired me for my knowledge and the way in which I approached the subject. This made me believe in myself because I realised that other teachers looked up to me. Other teachers asked me questions and this gave me confidence."

After several years, Anne started looking for a (HOD) post at another school but was unsuccessful. Eventually, the (HOD) post for Geography became available at her school and she applied and got the job. Soon after her appointment, she also became the acting deputy principal of the school when the post became vacant unexpectedly. The principal of the school at the time saw Anne's potential and encouraged her to apply for the deputy principal post once it became available:

"The principal before me always said that I should be a deputy principal. He put the thought in my head - maybe I could be a deputy principal. When the deputy principal post became available, I applied for the position and I got the job."

Anne enjoyed being a deputy principal because it helped her to develop her decision-making skills and adequately prepared her for the role of principalship.

"I enjoyed being a deputy principal. As a deputy principal, you have a lot of authority in the school and you develop your decision-making skills. However, the final decision always

rests with the principal. If there is trouble, you can go to the principal. If I look back now, I would say that the job of a deputy principal adequately prepared me for principalship."

After many years, the principal's post became available. Initially, Anne did not want to apply for the post but her father, her husband, other principals and staff members at the school encouraged her to do so. After serious consideration, Anne decided to apply for the post:

"So I prayed about it. I did not pray for the post but rather if I got the post that God would help me to do the job. I left the matter in God's hands and then I got the post. In preparation for the interview, I did some research and read up about leadership. I went into the interview prepared."

From the outset, Anne was self-motivated. She was excited about being in a leadership position and being able to make a difference. Anne believes that her journey to educational leadership started with Geography, as it gave her the platform to believe in herself and to become a leader:

"Geography gave me the platform otherwise I would not have believed that I could do the job of a principal. Other people actually motivated me. For the HOD and deputy principal posts, it was self-motivation. When each post became available, I was thinking about it and excited about the prospect of being in a leadership position. However, for the principal post, it was motivation from outside."

Anne acknowledged that since becoming a principal she has struggled to maintain a good work-life balance. She spends most of her time at school. This is, however, easier for her now because she no longer has small children and her husband works late:

"I work late and it is fine for me. I go home and prepare food for my husband and me. Sometimes we eat out because it is only the two of us. Well, it is actually a bad work-life balance because I focus primarily on work. I do not have much time for myself. I would say that I spend 80% of my time on schoolwork."

Anne spends most of her time completing administrative work and uses her deputy principals to assist her with class visits and to keep abreast of what is going on in the school:

"I am sitting in my office completing documents, calling people, answering emails, seeing teachers and seeing parents. Many teachers request to see me about stuff. The teachers know that I want to know what is going on in the school. I do not really find the time to get out of the office, although I want to visit the classes to see what is going on. The deputy

principals assist me with classroom visits but I also want to see what is going on. I want to be visible in the school."

As a woman actively seeking promotion, Anne did not feel that she had experienced difficulties in this regard and felt that opportunities exist for both men and women, if they aspire to educational leadership positions. Anne highlighted the interview with the (SGB) as being the only obstacle she had to overcome in order to reach principalship. In this interview, Anne had to convince the parents on the selection panel that she was the right person for the job, as the (SGB) questioned her knowledge, understanding and implementation of policies:

> *"The implementation of policies. To stick to policy, to know the policies, to know the South African Schools Act (SASA). I did not know much about policy before becoming a principal. Therefore, I had to learn a lot but I was prepared to learn. I attended a lot of seminars and workshops and made notes. I really tried to improve myself."*

However, Anne noted that she has encountered some obstacles of a gendered nature associated with her position:

> *"Another challenge is that not all men are prepared to work under a female principal. Strangely enough, the teachers [men] are not the problem but I have found it difficult to work with the grounds manager. The ground staff do not like me telling them what to do. I have found that it was difficult for them to take instructions from me. Interestingly, some of the female teachers found it more difficult to work under a female principal."*

Anne believes that the reason why so few women reach educational leadership positions in secondary schools in South Africa is that they do not believe in themselves and that management, especially in secondary schools, is still dominated by men:

> *"Management especially in high schools is a men's world. In Afrikaans schools, the focus is on rugby. Men are put in those positions for the sake of rugby. Rugby is very important for Afrikaans schools. Men remain in principalship posts due to the history."*

5.2.2 Eve's journey to educational leadership

Eve is an English-speaking white South African. She was 64 years old at the time of the study, married with one adult child and had been principal of a co-educational secondary school for fourteen years. Although the school is in an urban area, it is in close proximity to an informal

settlement where many of the learners live, and thus the school serves a predominantly poor black community. The language of instruction at the school is English and Eve is its first female principal of the school. From the outset, Eve was ambitious. She knew that she wanted to be a secondary school principal and looked for opportunities to advance her career. After matriculating from high school, Eve went to university where she completed a BA degree in Geography followed by a Higher Diploma in Education (HDE) and an Advanced Diploma in Education (ADE) in History and Media Science. After teaching for four years, Eve resigned and moved to the Free State with her husband. Whilst Eve was living in the Free State, she had her child and was a stay-at-home mother. After living in the Free State for a year, Eve and her husband moved back to Gauteng. Eve frequently went to visit staff members at a school close to where she used to work. After a couple of weeks, the principal phoned Eve and offered her a teaching position. He also found Eve a caregiver to look after her child:

> *"The principal phoned me and asked if I want a job because I am always here. I told him, yes I do. The principal found a caregiver who used to drive to school and fetch three babies from teachers. The caregiver lived around the corner from the school. She used to take the babies home and look after them during the day. At the end of the school day, the teachers fetched the babies from her home. The principal was thinking out-of-the-box and that is how he retained his staff."*

Eve started teaching Geography and Biblical Studies as a post-level one educator. She was able to balance work and family responsibilities because of the support she received from the principal and her family. Eve's parents also lived in close proximity to the school where she worked. If Eve's child was ill, she could leave him with her mother. Eve never felt that her decision to have a child affected her career negatively. In fact, Eve felt that being a teacher was advantageous because she could bring her child to school when necessary:

> *"As a Geography teacher, I completed twenty field trips and I took my son with me (until he went to school). My (HOD) had two sons of her own and she did the same. We did everything and the boys did everything with us. If I had to go to a meeting, I could put my son in a corner with some toys and he would play. I continued to be a teacher."*

After teaching Geography and Biblical Studies for many years, Eve realised that she could not position herself to become an (HOD) by teaching two subjects. Eve described her experience of teaching two different subjects as follows: "I belonged to two worlds and was really going nowhere". Eve expressed her desire to teach Geography only, which the school leadership

reluctantly agreed to. When an (HOD) post for Geography became available at her school, Eve applied for the post but was unsuccessful.

"I was told by the school [leadership] that they were bringing a gentleman from the Western Cape and they had earmarked the HOD post for him".

Eve recalls how this disappointment set her on a course to apply for promotion posts at other schools, to immerse herself in the extra-mural programme of the school (coaching boys' soccer, and girls' hockey, as well as running the environmental club, the science expo and tutorship) and play an active role in the teacher's union of which she is a member. After six months, the man who had been appointed (HOD) for Geography at Eve's school left and Eve subsequently applied for the post and got the job. After four years, Eve started applying for deputy principal posts at other schools but was again unsuccessful:

"I was getting very frustrated. I went for interviews for deputy principal posts, and I was not successful. During the July school holidays, I went to see the chairperson of the selection board in Pretoria and I asked him why this was happening to me. I had exceptional marks [for Geography] and obtained 93% on an evaluation. I said to him that I am ready to be a deputy principal and nothing happens to me, and he said you are not a man and you do not have a tassel and that is the problem."

Eve recalls how that was the last time she did not succeed in a deputy principal interview. She applied again for a deputy principal post at another school, and got the job. She held this post for a year and then applied for the senior deputy principal post at the same school but was unsuccessful:

"I still remember when I wanted to be a senior deputy principal and I never got the post, I was at home scrubbing the kitchen floor and I said to my husband, nothing comes easy for me, nothing. I am so tired of having to fight for everything."

After the senior deputy principal post had remained vacant for some time, the school reluctantly gave the post to Eve. She subsequently held this position for ten years before she started applying for principal posts. Once again, she experienced the same level of frustration as she had prior to her appointment as deputy principal, going for many interviews but ultimately being unsuccessful. Eve maintains that the disappointments she experienced with these principal interviews were a direct result of the prevailing bias against women at the time on the part of the (SGBs):

"I remember going for a principal interview in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. After the interview the union representative spoke to me in the parking lot and said; 'my child is coming to this school [next year] and I wish you were going to be the principal but I want to tell you now that you are not. This interview is structured in such a way that it is not going to happen."

The disappointment Eve experienced when applying for promotion posts for (HOD), deputy principal and principal at other schools forced her to channel her energy into Geography. Eve believes that her journey to educational leadership started with examinations. Eve became a marker, a senior marker, a chief marker, and then an examiner, as well as a provincial and national moderator for Geography. She also wrote several Geography textbooks and has recently developed a new syllabus for a leading publisher.

"I had moments of being very frustrated in the mainstream system. For this reason, I carved a pathway for myself in examinations. I became a marker, then a senior marker, then a chief marker, then a Gauteng examiner, Gauteng moderator and eventually a national moderator for Umalusi. In total, I put 30 years into examinations. I also wrote books and edited material for several publishers. I have kept myself busy with other things. You need mental stimulation otherwise you feel as if you are in a rut."

As a woman actively seeking promotion, Eve experienced tremendous difficulty and highlighted the selection board in Pretoria and the interview with the (SGB) as being the main obstacles she had to overcome in order to reach principalship:

"The year I was appointed principal of this school, I also went for six other interviews. At the end of the year, I was phoned and told I had the job. I wanted a principal post, so I said that I would be there. I have come to a school with tremendous challenges. I put myself out of my comfort zone and I have enjoyed myself nevertheless."

Eve acknowledged that since becoming a principal she has struggled to maintain a good work-life balance. She used to be very involved in her local church and was part of the finance committee of her teachers union. However, since her appointment as principal, she has had to give up many of her outside interests. Eve firmly believes that her life is a calling and that she became principal of her school because it was God's will for her life:

"My husband and I are strong believers. All my life I have had a spiritual strength. I prayed for this job, for principalship."

Eve and her husband do a great deal of travelling during the school holidays, having undertaken several overseas trips. This helps Eve to relax and regain perspective:

"I travel. Since 1994, my husband and I have completed twenty overseas trips. I drive a very old motorcar, which has 296000 km on the clock because I would rather spend my bonus on a holiday. Then my husband and I are together, out of the country, so I cannot do anything work related. For me, that is the best way to relax. As a principal, you can only relax if you get out of the province."

Despite the setbacks she has experienced, Eve has remained optimistic. She believes that the department of education has gone to great lengths to reduce the deficit of women in educational leadership positions in secondary schools:

"I can see a huge change. I think there has been great strides in reducing the deficit. It still does exist but it is nothing like when I made my moves. Today it is easy for women but I do not know how many actually have the staying power because the job is exhausting. Many principals, male and female, want to leave the job before they are 65 years of age. Many principals feel they cannot handle the pressure of the job."

5.2.3 Mary's journey to educational leadership

Mary is an Afrikaans-speaking white South African. She is forty-five years old and has been principal of an urban co-educational secondary school for eight years. The school is dual-medium, with the language of instruction being both Afrikaans and English. Mary is the first female principal of the school, which serves a predominantly Afrikaans community. She has been married for twenty-two years and has two adolescent children. After matriculating from high school, Mary went to university where she completed a BCom Accounting degree followed by an (HDE). Mary started teaching Accounting at a school in close proximity to where she currently works. After teaching Accounting for a couple of years, Mary had her first child, taking a short period of maternity leave and returning to work soon afterwards. Mary immersed herself in the extra-mural programme at the school and was involved with various fundraising initiatives:

"The school was very good to me. I got many opportunities to grow there. The principal was supportive of me. I did a lot of fundraising there."

Mary then decided to apply for an (HOD) post at her alma mater and got the job. After being an (HOD) for one year, Mary had her second child, again taking maternity leave and returning to

work soon afterwards. Mary recalls that both principals were very accommodating of her decision to start a family and allowed her to bring her children to school:

"I was very active when I was pregnant with my second child. I actually went on a hockey tour for school when I was five or six months pregnant. Both of my children actually grew up at school. They grew up by the side of the hockey field. I never wanted to leave my children in a crèche or nursery school until 17:00. Before hockey practice, I went to collect my children and brought them back to school with me. That is where they grew up."

Mary never felt that her decision to start a family affected her career negatively. In fact, Mary felt that being a teacher was advantageous because she could take her children with her to school when necessary. Her husband, mother and three sisters also provided an additional support structure.

When Mary first started working at her alma mater, the school was struggling financially and Mary played an instrumental role in raising funds for the school with a rugbyraai competition (which is similar to a round-robin competition). After several years, Mary applied for the deputy principal post, which she had always aspired to and got the job:

"That is actually where I wanted to be. I only applied for that one post and got the job. I believe that is where the Lord wanted me to be."

Whilst Mary was the deputy principal of the school, the principal left unexpectedly, and Mary became acting principal having no aspirations to become principal of the school.

She did not intend to apply for the principal post but was encouraged to do so by her work colleagues, family and principals from other schools. Mary also realised that as she was acting principal, she was doing the job of a principal already, so changed her mind:

"I actually said to myself that I was not going to apply for the principal post because I did not see myself as a principal. After 2 or 3 months, I realised that I am actually doing the job of a principal already, and then I changed my mind. I applied for the principal post and got the job."

Mary acknowledged that since becoming a principal, she has struggled to maintain a good work-life balance. She has an open door policy at her school and teachers are welcome to see her at any time so she tries to complete her own work in the afternoons. She also relies on her deputy principals and secretary to help her with the administrative work:

"During school time, I have an open door policy. Teachers are welcome to come in and see me. I will try to complete my own work, when no one is here to see me. In the afternoons, after 14:00 when everyone has had their chunk of time with me, I will try to complete my own work until 16:00."

Mary said that prayer helps her to remain calm and maintain focus at work, particularly in stressful situations:

"I pray every morning and every evening. Sometimes I pray during the day when I am facing a difficult situation. Prayer helps me to keep calm and maintain focus. I say breath prayers throughout the day."

Mary tries to go on holiday with her family at least once a year, as it is one of the ways in which she unwinds and regains perspective.

"As a family, we try to go on holiday once a year. My family is a support system for me, not only my husband and children. My sisters stay in Pretoria and we keep in contact. My family is part of who I am."

Mary acknowledged that most women have a far more difficult road to principalship that she did. Mary only ever applied for one (HOD) post, one deputy principal post and one principal post and got the job each time. From the outset, Mary was self-motivated to apply for the (HOD) and deputy principal posts, but encouragement to go for the principal post came initially from outside. Mary believes that she is in an educational leadership position because it is God's will for her life:

"I applied for the HOD post and I got it. I only applied for that one post and I got it. I still believe it is the Lord's way. I applied for the deputy principal post and I got it. That is actually, where I wanted to be. I also only applied for that one post and I got it. I believe that is where the Lord wanted me to be. I know that teaching is what the Lord wants me to do. Teaching is far more rewarding than working with numbers and money."

As a woman actively seeking promotion, Mary did not experience difficulties. Therefore, she believes that opportunities do exist for women, if they aspire to educational leadership positions. Mary acknowledged that in the past there were fewer female principals in secondary schools because of gender stereotyping:

"I think it was because of our former society who believed that women must stay at home and look after children. Men often think that women are not able to lead. This form of

stereotyping is changing. I know that in our district alone there are three female principals in secondary schools now- two are recent appointments."

Mary also mentioned that she does not attend inter-high sports meetings that involve affluent Afrikaans schools, the reason being that the principals of these schools are still white, Afrikaans men who think that a woman cannot be a principal. Mary said that she prefers to work in her own district with principals who experience the same conditions as those that prevail in her school:

"I will not attend any inter-high sports events with big schools. The principals at these schools are white, Afrikaans males who think that a woman cannot be a principal. Unfortunately, white Afrikaans males think women are incompetent."

5.2.4 Susan's journey to educational leadership

Susan is an English-speaking coloured South African. She is sixty-four years old and at the time of the study had been principal of an urban co-educational secondary school for eleven years. The language of instruction at the school is English. Susan is the first female principal of the school, which serves a predominantly poor black and coloured community. Susan is divorced and has three adult children. After matriculating from high school, Susan went to university where she completed a BSc degree in Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics. She started her teaching career at a neighbouring school but resigned in order to have her second child, and be a stay-at-home mother. Susan's involvement with the school of which she is currently the principal spans thirty-five years as she taught grade twelve Physical Science and Mathematics on a part-time basis, whilst completing her (HDE) and raising her children. The principal subsequently offered Susan a permanent teaching post for Physical Science and Mathematics, which she accepted. After having had her third child, and returning from maternity leave, the principal asked her to bring her baby to school:

"When I returned to work, the principal at the time said to me that because I taught Mathematics and Physical Science, the school could not afford to lose me. He asked me to bring my baby to school. So I brought my baby with me, and taught with my baby."

When the (HOD) post became available, Susan applied and got the job. In addition to being an (HOD), Susan helped with various administrative duties in the school, including the SASPAC computer software program used to capture learner marks:

"I was the master of SASPAC. Still to this day, I know how the program works and how to change it and what to do, so much so, that other schools would phone me at the end of the year and ask me to come and help them with a particular problem they were having. I always tried to do more than the actual teaching in class."

When the deputy principal post became available, Susan applied for and got the post. In addition to her administrative duties as a deputy principal, Susan completed an advanced certificate in education management and leadership. She also became very involved in the finances of the school and school fee concessions. When the principal post became available, Susan applied for the post and was appointed.

From the outset, Susan was self-motivated. Susan believes that her journey to educational leadership started with her field of expertise in the classroom, at a time when there was a shortage of Physical Science and Mathematics teachers. Susan was motivated by the fact that the school, at which she is currently principal, phoned her and asked her to teach grade 12 Physical Science and Mathematics first on a part-time basis and then permanently. Her field of expertise in the classroom coupled with her knowledge of the SASPAC computer software program, school finances and procedures regarding school fee concessions gave her a distinct advantage, when applying for principalship.

Susan acknowledged that since becoming principal she has struggled to maintain a good work-life balance:

"Whilst doing schoolwork, the swimming pool at home turns green and all my plants die. When it is school holidays, I get the swimming pool and the plants sorted out again, and it looks beautiful. When I return to work, everything at home becomes a mess again. That was my life up to now."

Susan has several hobbies or interests outside of school, which helps her to unwind and regain perspective. She also loves gardening, and reading and is involved in her local church. She also enjoys camping with her family:

"I do many things. I enjoy sewing, crocheting and knitting. I have files full of patterns. I do a lot for charity as well. I knit beanies for charity. I am involved in my church. I love gardening. I love reading. I go to the scuba club, to support. I do not scuba myself. We go to the scuba club once a week. For church, we have a cell group once a week. Lately, I am quite involved with the security in our street (the street cameras and monitoring)."

As a woman actively seeking promotion, Susan did not experience difficulties and felt that opportunities exist for both men and women, if they aspire to educational leadership positions. However, Susan noted that she had encountered some obstacles associated with her position:

"I did not really encounter obstacles to leadership but I did experience some frustrations when I became a principal in terms of the politics in education. The interference of the unions and people who think they can come into your school and tell you what to do, they try to intimidate you. That kind of thing was frustrating for me. Emotionally and physically, it gets to you. It is not easy but luckily I am beyond that now."

Susan acknowledged that in the past there were fewer female principals in secondary schools because of gender stereotyping but that the situation is changing:

"I think it is changing. It is not as bad as what it was. I see in our district they have recently appointed two female principals and I was surprised by that. It is changing. In the past our district was male dominated because [most of] the union leaders were men."

5.2.5 Katlego's journey to educational leadership

Katlego is a Setswana-speaking black South African. She is fifty-three years old and has been deputy principal of a co-educational secondary school for twenty-two years. The school is situated in an informal settlement on the outskirts of an urban area. The language of instruction at the school is Setswana and English. Katlego was the first acting female principal of the school, which serves a poor black community where most of the parents are unemployed. Katlego is single and does not have any children. After matriculating from high school, Katlego went to university where she completed a BA Education degree followed by an honours degree and a Master's degree in education management. Katlego started her teaching career at a neighbouring school, where she taught English for eight years. She subsequently applied for the deputy principal post at the school where she currently works and got the job. After the principal of the school retired, the school could not find a suitable replacement and Katlego became the acting principal for a year. However, Katlego chose not to apply for the principal post for health reasons having had to have a tumour removed from her pituitary gland. Katlego also suffers from high blood pressure, which has contributed to a heart condition:

"I have been diagnosed with an enlarged heart muscle. I was supposed to be on heart medication. My health is one of the main reasons why I did not want to become a principal of the school where I work."

Katlego also mentioned that during the year in which she was acting principal she found the position too demanding on her time:

"My reasons include the demands placed upon the principal in terms of hours. I do not mind working extremely hard during the week from Monday to Friday and I leave work late in the afternoons. However, this became a challenge for me personally after school hours and on weekends. If you are the principal at this school, you cannot take holidays. The school offers extra classes each afternoon during the week, Saturday morning classes and a winter school programme. Meetings with the (SGB) take place in the evenings. When I was acting principal, some of the meetings finished at (21:00-22:00). This was a challenge for me."

Katlego's experience as acting principal had an adverse effect on her health as well. "When I was acting principal, my legs would often be swollen by the time I got home from work. I wanted to lead but health wise it was difficult."

Katlego has no dependents as her parents have passed away and she is does not have any children of her own. She enjoys creative writing and uses it as a way to unwind, from the pressures experienced at work:

"I enjoy writing poetry and short stories. I have published a novel. I have written many poems. That is how I unwind. Writing takes my mind away from the challenges I face at school. Writing is my biggest hobby."

From the outset, Katlego was self-motivated to apply for the deputy principal post. The school where she currently works is results-orientated and the school needed an educational leader who was good with administration:

"I applied for the promotion post because I have the ability to plan, lead and organise. My biggest strength is the administration side of leadership. I prepare most of the administrative requirements for the school. I am the key person who manages these processes."

However, Katlego only filled the acting principal position temporarily not intending to apply for the permanent post. She believes that her journey to educational leadership has been easier because she has been at her current school for twenty-two years and had developed a good rapport with the staff in the school:

"The staff knew where I was taking them as a deputy principal. When I took over temporarily as acting principal, I indicated to the staff that nothing had essentially changed. The staff

knew that we would continue in the same way. Last year, I swiftly moved in as acting principal. Initially, the circuit manager and IDSO came to the school for a couple of months but they soon realised that there was no need for them to be here because the school was not experiencing any challenges."

As a woman actively seeking promotion, Katlego did not experience difficulties and felt that opportunities do exist for women, if they aspire to educational leadership positions. However, she did highlight the interview with the (SGB), membership of a teacher's union and social networking as being the potential obstacles that women have to overcome in order to reach principalship:

"Currently it becomes difficult to break through in terms of obtaining a management post if you are a woman. You need to be known by certain individuals in order to break through. You need to be known within your teachers union and with the (SGB). Only then will you be recommended. As much as you go for interviews, there is the possibility that they already have a candidate in mind."

The key to Katlego's success whilst she was acting principal was the establishment of a good rapport with members of the (SGB). This enabled her to implement meaningful change at her school:

"As an acting principal, I established a good rapport with members of the school governing body. They listened to the innovations I wanted to introduce and they supported me. For example; when we were doing camps, we had some problems with lighting. It was dark outside. I recommended that we install Apollo lights so the area around the school can be seen. The learners leave the school at 20:00 and go for their supper when it is dark. You cannot see everywhere. The parents agreed and the Apollo lights were installed. We also installed basins for water outside the kitchen, so learners can wash their dishes. I also recommended that we install better lighting in the toilets. I felt it was not safe. I got an electrician to install sensor lights in the toilets. Whatever recommendation I made as acting principal was implemented. Members of the school governing body never missed parents meetings. I used to give a report of curriculum coverage- what are some of the challenges we are experiencing, and they supported me. Members of the school governing body would address the parents at their level, as parents. They assisted me in getting the support and cooperation of the parents."

Katlego's motivation for pursuing an educational leadership position is to provide structure, maintain focus and keep the staff motivated:

"The goal helps me to maintain perspective. There are results that need to come out. There are people who are depending on you for guidance, especially teachers. If the staff sees

that you are not focused then they also let go. You need to maintain an atmosphere of things going well, even though there are challenges. Then the people around you will also be motivated."

5.4 Data analysis and interpretation

In this section, I analyse and interpret the data obtained from each narrative inquiry using the capabilities approach as my theoretical framework. In Chapter 3, I introduced Alexander Goerne's (2010) five conceptual building blocks of the capabilities approach: resources, conversion factors, capability set, agency or choice and functionings (see FIGURE 1). However, based on the data obtained from the narrative inquiries, it became evident that I would need to adapt Goerne's (2010) building blocks by moving agency or choice to the beginning of the diagram. I also added constraints after the capability set (see FIGURE 2). By doing so, I was able to construct a capability set for educational leadership. My adaptation of Goerne's (2010) diagram is my contribution to the field of capabilities research in general and educational leadership in particular. Using the data obtained from each narrative inquiry, I briefly discuss each conceptual building block below.
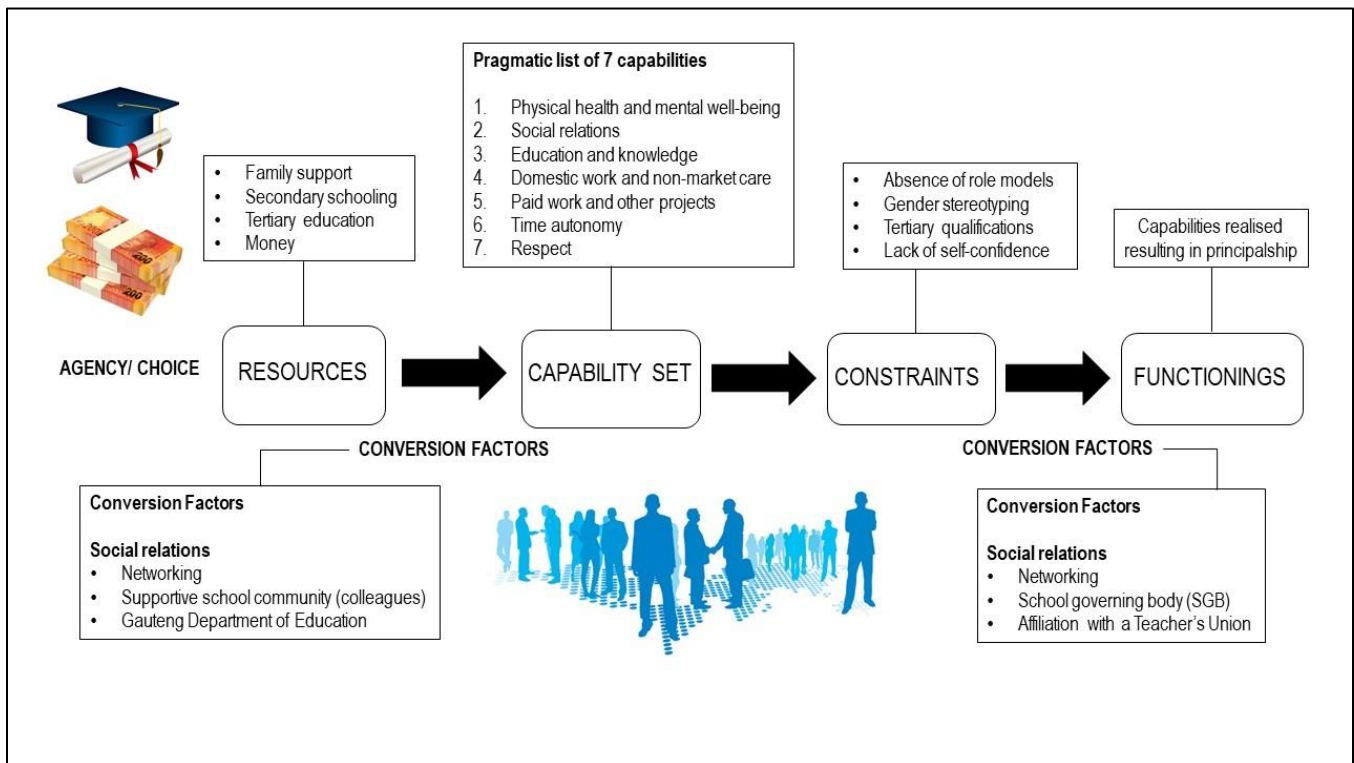
FIGURE 4: Capability set for educational leadership

a) Agency/ choice

"What we truly and earnestly aspire to be, that in some sense we are. The mere aspiration, by changing the frame of mind, for the moment realises itself."

-Anna Jameson

In terms of understanding capabilities for leadership, I felt it was important to move agency or choice to the beginning of the diagram. Without aspiration, none of the participants would have been able to convert their capability set into functionings. All five participants indicated that they aspired to become educational leaders and were determined to reach a leadership position in order to make a difference. That level of determination is essential, if women are going to overcome some of the existing constraints to reach principalship. All five participants were self-motivated to apply for the (HOD) and deputy principal positions. While Anne, Mary and Katlego were content to be deputy principals, motivation from outside (family members, colleagues and

other principals) encouraged them to apply for principal positions. In contrast, Eve and Susan were determined to become principals from the outset.

b) Resources

Resources play an important role in career progression. All five participants completed secondary schooling and then went on to obtain an undergraduate degree at university and Eve, Mary and Susan subsequently completed a (HDE) soon afterwards. Anne and Katlego completed an honours degree while Katlego completed a master's degree in education management. The resources used included supportive parents, who would have seen the inherent value of obtaining a good education, and money to pay for school fees and university fees. Four of the five participants gradually worked their way up from a post level one (educator) to a post level four (principal). The exception is Katlego who moved from post level one (educator) to a post level three (deputy principal) as she later chose not to apply for the permanent post. This seems to suggest that (SGBs) value experience and on-the-job training, when decisions pertaining to promotion posts are made. Anne and Eve used Geography as a platform to develop their leadership skills as both were involved with examinations at provincial level. Eve went on to moderate at national level, wrote textbooks and developed a new Geography syllabus for a leading publisher. Other resources used by the participants include; subject knowledge, affiliation with or knowledge of teachers unions, computer literacy and administration skills, networking and further education and training. Thus agency and resources work together in order to achieve one's aspirations or dreams. Each is dependent on the other.

c) Conversion factors

Conversion factors signify the extent to which each participant was able to convert available resources into functionings. Support from family members and friends, work colleagues and other principals enabled all the participants to convert available resources into functionings. The participants in turn made the most of every opportunity available to them both, at the school where they are working and from the department of education. They all started as post level one (educators) and gradually worked their way up to post level four (principals). Anne received support from her father, husband, and other principals and staff members. Eve received support from her husband and son. Mary received support from her work colleagues, family members

and principals from other schools and Susan and Katlego received support from work colleagues. All five participants were driven by self-motivation to apply for (HOD) and deputy principal posts while the motivation to apply for the principals post came from outside. Anne was encouraged by her father, her husband, and other principals and staff members. Mary by her work colleagues, family and principals from other schools while Katlego was encouraged to apply for the principal's post by her work colleagues, who were disappointed when she chose not to apply for the position. From the outset, Eve and Susan wanted to be principals while Anne, Eve and Mary were also motivated by their religious beliefs to apply for promotion posts, believing that it was God's will for their lives.

d) Capability set

A capability set refers to an individual's capabilities, what a person is able "to do or be". What options or life chances does each individual have to convert available resources into functionings? (Goerne 2010). Based on the narrative inquiry of each participant, I identified seven relevant capabilities for educational leadership (see TABLE 3). A detailed analysis of this capability set for educational leadership is discussed in the next section.

e) Constraints

Patriarchal values and the organisational culture, that exists in secondary schools, were contributing factors to the constraints experienced by each participant. All five participants acknowledged that there were fewer female principals in secondary schools in the past because of gender stereotyping. However, they also acknowledged that things are changing, and that the education department has gone to great lengths to reduce the deficit of female principals in schools. Anne, Mary, Susan and Katlego did not have difficulty seeking promotion and felt that opportunities exist for both men and women, if they aspire to educational leadership positions. However, all five participants highlighted the bias towards men that prevails in the selection panel of the (SGB). Anne spoke about the fact that management, especially in secondary schools, is still dominated by men and that the focus is on rugby in Afrikaans schools. Men are often promoted to principalship posts because of rugby because a rugby culture still prevails in Afrikaans schools. Mary added that the larger Afrikaans schools are still managed by white Afrikaans men, who think that women are incompetent and cannot lead. Katlego and Eve

mentioned that certain candidates are often recommended for a promotion post, prior to the interview with their affiliation with a particular teacher's union and social networking determining who will be promoted.

Anne and Susan now experience trouble of a gendered nature associated with their position now. Anne has found it difficult to work with the ground staff at her school who do not like a woman telling them what to do while Susan has had trouble with members of certain teachers unions who come to her school and try to tell her what to do. Of five participants, Eve had the most trouble as a woman seeking promotion. Initially, she was overlooked for the (HOD) post at her school because the position was earmarked for a man. She was also overlooked for several deputy principal posts to the extent that she made an appointment to see the chairperson of the selection board in Pretoria, who told her that the reason why she was not promoted because she, is a woman. The era Eve grew up in could account for the difficulties she experienced.

All the participants identified the following constraints in relation to educational leadership; the absence of role models, gender stereotyping, lack of tertiary qualifications and lack of self-confidence, all consistent with the themes identified in the literature review. These constraints may prevent women from effectively using their capability set, and transforming them into functionings. A detailed analysis of the constraints experienced by each participant is discussed in the next section. It should however be noted that all five were able to overcome these constraints in order to achieve functionings.

f) Conversion factors

Conversion factors signify the extent to which each participant was able to overcome the above-mentioned constraints and convert their capability set into functionings. In the literature review, I highlighted the fact that most female principals actively sought promotion in order to make a difference, and were motivated by a strong sense of duty and service to those learners for whose education they are responsible (Lumby et al 2010; Faulkner 2015). "The desire to be a role model, to mentor female students, and to set a good example of best leadership practice" has also been suggested (Faulkner 2015: 429). Many women in educational leadership positions have acknowledged their religious beliefs as being a powerful motivator and have stated that by pursuing an educational leadership position, they are "fulfilling God's purpose for their lives" (Faulkner 2015; Schmidt & Mestry 2015). Anne, Eve and Mary felt that they were in a position

of leadership because this is God's will for their life. Such a powerful motivator can overcome any constraints.

g) Functionings

Functionings refers to those capabilities that are actually realised. All five participants were able to convert the resources available to them into a set of capabilities, which culminated in an educational leadership position or functioning. All five participants used every opportunity available to them, at school and within the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). They all started as post level one educators and gradually worked their way up to post level four (principal). Despite some of the constraints they experienced they were able to transform their capability set into functionings. It is important to note that Katlego had the choice to apply for the principal post at the school where she currently works but for health reasons decided not to. Her story is important because is adequately demonstrates choice which is central to the capabilities approach. All five participants were able to choose the life they have reason to value. From agency or choice, they were able to use the resources available to them and convert them into functionings, despite the constraints they experienced.

5.5 Capability set for educational leadership

In Chapter 3, I introduced a pragmatic list of seven capabilities for educational leadership based on the commonalities I identified from the narrative inquiries conducted with all five participants (see TABLE 3 & 4). In this section, I discuss each capability in detail.

Pragmatic list of seven capabilities	
1) Physical health and mental well-being	To be physically and mentally healthy
2) Social relations	Being able to be part of social networks, to give and receive support
3) Education and knowledge	To be educated and to use and produce knowledge
4) Domestic work and non-market care	To raise children and take care of them
5) Paid work and other projects	To work in the labour market and undertake projects
6) Time autonomy	To exercise autonomy in terms of allocating ones time
7) Respect	To be respected and treated with dignity

TABLE 4: Pragmatic list of seven capabilities

5.5.1 Physical health and mental well-being

Physical health means to live a life of normal length and to be in a good state of health as well as to maintain a healthy weight, be physically active and eat healthily. Mental well-being refers to the ability to cope with stress in life, work productively and make a meaningful contribution to society. Four of the five participants stated that they were physically healthy but found it difficult to find the time to exercise. All five participants said that they enjoyed outdoor leisure activities. Anne, Mary and Susan enjoy camping and going to places where they can walk in order to clear their heads while Eve loves travelling and has been overseas with her husband many times. All five participants stressed the importance getting out of the province in order to rest. In terms of coping with stressful situations at work, all five, Anne, Eve, Mary Susan and Katlego mentioned that prayer helps them to stay calm and maintain focus. They also said that they talk to family members, friends and trusted work colleagues, in order to regain perspective. Susan also speaks to a counsellor, a person with whom she can offload, share and talk. This enables her to unpack the problem, debrief and regain perspective. Eve likes to put her administrative work in a box, take it home, and then unpack the box in order to prioritise what is important. Mary, Eve and Susan try as far as possible to forget about school over the weekends, looking at their planning for the following week on Sunday evenings.

5.5.2 Social relations

Social relations refers to the social networks and social support provided by personal relationships. All five participants stressed the importance of establishing social networks with the (GDE), and the (SGB), affiliation with or knowledge of teachers unions, friendships with work colleagues and well as being part of a principals group. All five participants emphasised the importance of networking and affiliation or knowledge to a teacher's union:

Networking

Anne and Mary underscored the importance of networking with other educators and the (GDE). For example, Anne was a cluster leader for the district and chairperson of the Geography district teachers group while Mary invested in friendships with people at her previous school and the (GDE):

"Investing in people makes your leadership position easier. I invested in people at school and the education department. I know I can pick up the phone and someone will try to help me solve a problem. You must always try to invest in people." Susan invested in friendships with work colleagues at school and forms part of a principals group on the West Rand, which meets together once a term."

Susan, on the other hand, invested in friendships with colleagues at school and is a member of a principals group on the West Rand, which meets once a term:

"… this is also a sounding board. We try to get together. If we have to attend a meeting far away, we will travel together in a combi. We listen to one another, laugh and cry."

Affiliation with or knowledge of a teacher's union

Eve became very involved in her teacher's union early on in her career. She became a union observer for promotion post interviews, and felt that this experience was invaluable. Eve, Susan and Katlego stressed the importance of networking in a teacher's union and speaking to colleagues from other teachers unions. Eve said, *"You can also learn a lot from colleagues affiliated with other unions. They have some very good methods."* Susan stated, *"know what is happening in the different unions, not just your own"* while Katlego maintained, "*You need to be known within your teacher's union and within the (SGB). Only then, will you be recommended [for promotion]."*

5.5.3 Education and knowledge

Education and knowledge refers to the opportunities created for women to complete primary and secondary schooling and acquire a tertiary qualification. These include the seminars and workshops attended in order to acquire more knowledge. All five participants emphasised the importance of keeping oneself informed about matters pertaining to education, furthering one's education and training, beefing up one's subject knowledge and acquiring computer literacy and/or administrative skills:

Further education and training

All five participants had completed a tertiary qualification in their respective field of interest- Anne and Eve in Geography, Mary in Accounting, Susan in Mathematics and Physical Science and Katlego in English. In addition, Anne had completed an honours degree whilst working full time.

Eve completed an honours degree in management and an advanced certificate in education (ACE) after her initial appointment as principal and Susan had completed a HDE whilst teaching part-time after her initial appointment as principal. Susan is a lifelong learner and stressed the importance of reading and keeping oneself informed about matters pertaining to education. Susan recently attended a summit on safety and security in South African schools; *"there was a lecturer there with a book about safety and security in South African schools. The minute I hear something like that, I will buy that book because I want to read it. Empower yourself with knowledge."* Katlego competed her undergraduate and postgraduate degrees before working full time and also has a Master's degree in Education Management.

Subject knowledge and expertise

Both Anne and Eve used Geography as a platform to develop their leadership ability. Both women were involved with provincial examinations for Geography at district and provincial level, and Eve at national level, while Anne was a cluster leader for the district, chairperson of the Geography district teachers group and examiner for the province. Eve was a marker, senior marker, and chief marker, and examiner, provincial and national moderator for Geography and had written several Geography textbooks. Mary's knowledge of Accounting assisted her with various fundraising initiatives at school, while Susan's knowledge of mathematics helped her to come to grips with the finances at school and school fee concessions. Katlego is teaching English in a school where Setswana is the home language. Her command of the English language has given her a distinct advantage when communicating with district office.

Computer literacy/ administration skills

All five participants developed computer literacy skills early in their teaching career. This skill gave them a distinct advantage when applying for promotion posts, because the job description of an educational leader is primarily administrative. Eve's involvement with examinations as a provincial level and as national moderator for Geography meant that she had to be computer literate in order to submit electronic reports and analyse data. After Susan became a (HOD), she helped with various administrative duties in the school, including the SASPAC computer software program used to capture learner marks.

Katlego's biggest strength lies the administration side of leadership; *"I prepare most of the administrative requirements for the school, which includes; admissions, school readiness, needs analysis, examination preparation, school timetable, invigilation timetable, stock control, schedules to the district office and issuing of reports."*

5.5.4 Domestic work and non-market care

Domestic work and non-market care refers to raising children and taking care of dependents such as the elderly, frail and sick. It also refers to domestic work in the home. Four of the five participants are married with adolescent/adult children. Katlego is the only single participant and does not have any children. Anne, Eve, Mary and Susan never felt that their decision to start a family affected their career negatively and were able to balance work and family responsibilities because of their support structures. Anne's mother and mother-in-law lived in close proximity to the school where she works and were always willing to look after her children when necessary. Eve's mother also lived in close proximity to the school where she worked so was always available to look after Eve's child if he was ill. Mary's husband, mother and three sisters were always willing to help with her children when necessary. Susan taught on a part-time basis for many years so that she could look after her own children at home. It should be noted that the principals at the participants' schools were very accommodating, which eased the women's decision to start a family. The principal of Eve's school organised a caregiver to look after her child and after Susan had her third child, the principal asked her to bring her baby with her to school. Mary noted that it was important for her to block out time for her husband and her children in order to balance work and family responsibilities.

5.5.5 Paid work and other projects

Paid work and other projects refers to the extent to which women participate in the labour market. All five participants made the most of every opportunity available to them at the school where they are working and within the (GDE). They all started as post level one (educators) and gradually worked their way up to post level four (principal). In terms of other projects, Eve and Susan were very involved in their local church and Eve was part of the finance committee of her teachers union.

5.5.6 Time autonomy

Time autonomy refers to the way in which people allocate their time to domestic work and non-market care, leisure activities and paid work and other projects, as well as the ability to manage one's time between domestic work, leisure activities and work-related responsibilities. In terms of paid work, all five participants said that being a principal made great demands on their time and was in fact the main reason why Katlego did not apply for the principal post at her school after acting in the position for a year. All five participants felt it was important for them to balance administrative duties, seeing teachers and parents, teaching and being a visible presence in the school. Mary stressed that she was not an office-based principal and that her main goal is teaching:

"I am not an office-based principal. I like walking around, I like going to see what is going on in classrooms, I like being on the corridors, I like seeing what is going on because sometimes you lie to yourself by saying that there is discipline and then you get there and everybody is standing around. I struggle to organise my day. It is difficult. The only time that I have which is set, is my teaching period. My personal assistant knows that I will not entertain any appointments when I am teaching. That is my time with my learners. District office also knows. Even if the IDSO comes to the school, he knows that if I am teaching, I will not leave my class. Teaching is my main goal, to ensure that my learners pass."

Anne acknowledged that she struggles to get out of the office and into the school because of all her administrative duties and thus she delegates class visits to her deputy principals:

"Administration places a huge demand on my time. The result is that I struggle to get out of the office and into the school because I am sitting in the office completing documents, calling people, answering emails, seeing teachers and parents. I do not really find the time to get out of the office, and I want to visit the classes to see what is going on. The deputy principals assist me with classroom visits but I want to see what is going on. I want to be visible in the school."

Susan acknowledged that she struggles to balance her personal and home life with her professional life at school:

"In all my years as an educational leader, I have battled to find a balance between my personal life, home and school. During the term, it is school, my plants die, the pool goes green and my dogs are naughty etc. When it is holidays, I can move away from school for a bit, the plants get water and the pool goes blue again. I was never able to manage these two things."

All five participants knew from the outset that being an educational leader would make huge demands on their time. Hence, it was a choice that each participant made. Anne said the following about the choice she made:

"The only way I can meet these demands is by staying late at work. Most of the staff members know that I am here at school after hours. Sometimes, I sit in my office, seeing teachers and then I can only start with my own work after 15:00 or 16:00. I do not mind because I knew that this would be part of my job. I am always willing to see staff members. I have an open door policy."

5.5.7 Respect

Respect and dignity refers to the individual and public recognition, women receive in society. All five participants stressed the importance of networking with other educators and the (GDE). Mary felt that it was important for educational leaders to, *"advertise themselves, come forward and have initiative. If you do not get involved, people will not see you and they will not acknowledge you. Then they are not going to give you a leadership position."* Susan on the other hand felt that it was important for educational leaders to stay informed, "so that other people can see you as a resourced person and they can approach you and go to you and you might well have an answer." Eventually all the participants received individual and public recognition, through a promotion post.

5.6 Constraints identified

All five participants identified a number of the constraints to educational leadership. These include the absence of role models, gender stereotyping, tertiary qualifications and lack of self-confidence, all consistent with the themes identified in the literature review. These constraints may prevent women from using their capability set and effectively transforming them into functionings.

5.6.1 Absence of role models

In the literature review, I highlighted the fact that female principals have cited an absence of role models for them to look up to (Moorosi 2010). Where mentorship by another principal (male or female) has taken place, female principals tend to perform their duties better because they have received the necessary advice and support (Lumby et al 2010; Grogan & Shakeshaft 2011). Eve

did not have a sounding board or mentor and has found principalship extremely lonely. She has cited her unique situation as being the main reason for this:

"Part of it is because my leadership at this school in unique. I have led a former model-C school through socio-economic change. Not many principals have come to a school where educators used to get incentives (money for extra murals, staff functions like breakaway weekends) and then they have a principal who cannot give them that anymore. You have to change a mind-set and that has been a very big obstacle. There was no mentor for me. In fact, I found more support from my township colleagues because we actually had something in common."

Mary and Katlego were fortunate enough to have had the advice and support of other principals and both cited them as being their sounding boards or mentors. One of Mary's deputy principals used to be principal of a local primary school in the area: "*I have a former principal [as my deputy principal] who has helped me a lot, especially in terms of organisational matters. I also speak to my personal assistant to get another point of view on a situation*". Katlego cited the former principal of the school as being her mentor: *"The previous principal was my mentor. He gave me free rein to complete my work. He would delegate a lot of his own work to me, resulting in him developing me."*

Anne and Susan both cited family members who are in education themselves as being their sounding board or mentors. Anne's father was a former principal of a secondary school and Anne also mentioned that she is always willing to ask for advice from other principals of well-functioning schools. Both of Susan's daughters are teachers: "*My sounding board is my family. Both my daughters are adults in the teaching profession. They understand because they know what it is all about.*"

Anne, Mary, Susan and Katlego were fortunate enough to have sounding boards or mentors in the form of family members, friends, personal assistants and other principals. Eve, however, did not have such a sounding board or mentor.

5.6.2 Gender stereotyping

In the literature review, I highlighted the fact that in South Africa several researchers have identified entrenched patriarchal values and practices as the primary reason for gender discrimination in the workplace (Moorosi 2007; 2010; Lumby et al. 2010; Diko 2014; Naidoo &

Perumal 2014; Faulkner 2015; Schmidt and Mestry 2015). Anne and Susan have both encountered obstacles of a gendered nature associated with their position. Anne had this to say in this regard:

"Another challenge is that not all men are prepared to work under a female principal. Strangely enough, the teachers [men] are not the problem but I have found it difficult to work with the grounds manager. The ground staff do not like me telling them what to do. I have found that it was difficult for them to take instructions from me. Interestingly, some of the female teachers found it more difficult to work under a female principal."

Susan also noted certain obstacles associated with her position:

"I did not really encounter obstacles to leadership but I did experience some frustrations when I became a principal in terms of the politics in education. The interference of the unions and people who think they can come into your school and tell you what to do, they try to intimidate you. That kind of thing was frustrating for me. Emotionally and physically, it gets to you. It is not easy but luckily I am beyond that now. In the past our district was male dominated because [most of] the union leaders were men."

5.6.3 Tertiary qualifications

In the literature review, I highlighted the fact that policy does not offer a clear description of career progression from post level one (educator) to post level four (principal). The clearest description is found in the educator promotion posts Vacancy Circular 2 of 2018. To be eligible to apply for a principalship the applicant must meet the requirements for educators as stated in the Revised Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM), have seven years of appropriate experience and be registered with the South African Council for Educators (SACE) (2018). This seems to suggest that any form of tertiary education in education management is not a requirement for promotion to principal. Katlego noted in this regard that the GDE is rewarding individuals who do not further their studies or develop themselves but are involved with teacher union activities:

"The education department is rewarding people [men] who do not further their studies and do not develop themselves but have been part of union activities. They end up being the ones who are promoted to principal positions."

5.6.4 Lack of self-confidence

In the literature review, I highlighted the fact that many women in patriarchal societies are accustomed to being subservient, which can make it difficult for them to pursue an educational leadership position (Faulkner 2015). Members of the community often view women who choose principalship as a career path in a negative light because they are deviating from gender defined roles (Makura 2009; Gaus 2011; Faulkner 2015; Mythili 2017). Anne and Katlego have noted that women do not believe in themselves and lack the self-confidence needed to apply for promotion posts. Katlego notes that women need to be more assertive:

"Women do not assert themselves. They do not want to educate themselves. They do not want to develop themselves. I know educators that have remained post level one educators. They have not tried to further their studies. They still have an entry-level qualification. Many of them are comfortable teaching lower grades. They do not want to move up and teaching higher grades. If you want a promotion post you have to assert yourself."

Eve noted that it is much easier for women to apply for promotion posts now than it was when she was going for interviews, *"today it is easy for women but I do not know how many actually have the staying power because the job is exhausting."*

5.7 Interpretation

It may be argued that Anne and Mary had an unfair advantage in their pursuit of an educational leadership position because both women became principals of their alma mater. After completing tertiary education, they returned to their respective schools and quickly moved up the tiers within the management system of the school. Susan and Katlego positioned themselves strategically in the schools where they currently work. The fact that they have been able to remain in one school for more than twenty years and build relationships with staff, parents and learners has enabled them to move up in management. Katlego's persistent health problems prevented her from applying for the principal's post when it became available, however, while Eve struggled throughout her journey to educational leadership. Despite going for numerous interviews, the bureaucracy within the education system and the (SGB) in particular prevented her from assuming an educational leadership position earlier in her career. The drive and determination to "make a difference" and "be a role model" motivated all five participants, who were able to convert their capability sets into functionings.

All five participants stressed the importance of on-the-job training at school. Aspiring educational leaders must look for opportunities to act in a managerial capacity. Networking with the (GDE), establishing good relationships with the parents on the (SGB) and affiliation to a teacher's union are extremely important if you want to move up the management tiers within the school.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

This research report presents narrative inquiries involving five women who have progressed to educational leadership positions in secondary schools in South Africa. Each narrative inquiry sought to track the sequence of events in the life of each female principal from aspiration to principalship. Narrative inquiry creates a platform for the female voice to be heard, which is often silenced by patriarchal views of leadership. The capabilities approach was used as a broad normative framework to inform our understanding of the capability set needed for women to succeed in educational leadership positions.

6.2 Research questions

Main research question

- How can the capabilities approach be applied to inform our understanding of women in school leadership positions?

Secondary research questions

- Which capabilities enable women to reach school leadership positions?
- What are the constraints on the advancement of women to school leadership positions?
- How do women convert available personal and institutional resources into capabilities for leadership?

6.2.1 Main research question

The capabilities approach is useful for a study on women in educational leadership because it is, firstly, an ethically individualistic theory. It allowed the researcher to track the sequence of events in the life of each female principal from aspiration to principalship. Secondly, the capabilities approach offers an alternative perspective to the discourse on barriers and obstacles by allowing emphasis to be placed on what can be achieved (principalship) as opposed to what cannot. Thirdly, the capabilities approach gives the female voice an opportunity to be heard which is important because research conducted on principalship tends to focus on men (Smit 2013).

6.2.2 Secondary research questions

In terms of the constraints on the advancement to school leadership positions, it is clear that the decision to start a family did not adversely affect the participants' careers. In fact, the schools in which participants were working at the time were very supportive of the decision. The main constraints identified were the selection board in Pretoria, the SGB panel members and one's affiliation to a teachers union. Katlego said; "*As much as you go for interviews, there is the possibility that they already have a candidate in mind.*"

In terms of converting available resources into capabilities for leadership, the participants looked for opportunities to lead in their respective field. Anne and Eve used Geography as a platform to grow and develop their leadership abilities, while Mary used her knowledge of fundraising to improve the finances of her school and Susan used her knowledge of computer software programs, school finances and procedures regarding school fee concessions to lead in her school. All five participants were self-motivated and were able to work around the bureaucracy within the education system to advance their careers. This gave them a distinct advantage when applying for a promotion post when it became available.

Based on the data collected from five semi-structured interviews, a pragmatic list of seven capabilities for educational leadership emerged, namely: (1) physical health and mental well-being; (2) social relations; (3) education and knowledge; (4) domestic work and non-market care; (5) paid work and other projects; (6) time autonomy; and (7) respect.

6.2.3 Shattering the glass ceiling

The five participants in this study did in fact "shatter the glass ceiling" and were able to convert available resources into functionings, despite some of the constraints they experienced.

6.3 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study include the scope of the research and the sample size. Given more time, it would be advantageous to broaden the research conducted to include other districts within Gauteng province. The sample size could also be increased to include more participants,

thus increasing the validity of the research findings. Other data collection methods, such as observation, could also be used which would help to triangulate the data. For example, the researcher could observe the way in which the female principals chair staff and SGB meetings. Triangulation assists the researcher to probe for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon studied.

6.4 Recommendations

This research report highlights the fact that there is an absence of reliable and comparable data about women in educational leadership positions. This often results in a situation where the sparse data, that are available, have to be used (Lumby et al. 2010; Grogan & Shakeshaft 2011). In South Africa, few studies have been published to add to the body of knowledge on women in educational leadership (Mathipa & Tsoka 2001; Moorosi 2007; 2010; Lumby et al. 2010; 2011; Msila 2013; Smit 2013; Diko 2014; Naidoo & Perumal 2014; Faulkner 2015; Schmidt & Mestry 2015; Davids 2018). Accordingly, I would like to recommend the following:

1. Female principals could be requested to participate in a focus group interview, to discuss their aspirations, and ambitions, as well as the challenges associated with education leadership. They could also discuss ways in which they could reach out to younger women in middle management positions who aspire to education leadership themselves. Two of the participants in this study mentioned that they are members of the West Rand principals group that meets together once a term. This forum could provide a useful starting point for a focus group interview and enable the researcher to probe for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon studied, possibly at doctoral level.

2. The DBE, in collaboration with an NGO, could establish a mentorship programme specifically for women who are interested in educational leadership. Former and current principals could assist in mentoring women in middle management positions in schools so that they can take on leadership roles in the future.

3. The GDE recently launched a school twinning initiative in order to achieve a non-racial education system (ENCA NEWS 2019). Two schools from different backgrounds are paired in order to collaborate and share resources (ENCA NEWS 2019). In the future, the twinning initiative could be extended to educational leadership, with women in middle management

positions from different schools being paired with a female principal from a top performing school in order to learn best practice, thus offering a form of on-the-job training.

4. Female principals from top performing schools could be invited to speak at seminars and host workshops on topics such as finance, school discipline and curriculum management, on behalf of the DBE.

6.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this mini-dissertation was to contribute to knowledge on women in educational leadership positions and ask whether the capabilities approach as a theoretical framework could offer an alternative perspective on understanding women's success. A pragmatic list of seven capabilities emerged for educational leadership based on the commonalities I identified from the narrative inquiries with all five participants (see TABLE 4). The drive and determination to "make a difference" and "be a role model" enabled all five participants to convert their capability set into functionings thus "shattering the glass ceiling".

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UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
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Faculty of Education

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to give you an opportunity to discuss your journey to educational leadership. The information obtained from this interview will be used for research purposes only. All your answers will be treated confidentially.

_____

- Do you have any questions before we start the interview?
- May I audio-record the interview as it would help me to listen to it again later and to make a transcript of the interview for the purposes of data analysis?

_____

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself: your age, where you are from and your educational background.

2. Tell me about your journey to education leadership.

3. What was your motivation or driving force for actively seeking promotion?

4. Did you have difficulty as a woman actively seeking promotion?

5. What are some of the obstacles that you had to overcome in order to reach principalship?

6. Who is your sounding board or mentor?

7. What are some of the demands required of you as an education leader?

8. How do you organise your day to ensure that you meet these demands?

9. Why do you think so few women reach education leadership in secondary schools in South Africa?

10. What advice would you give women in middle management positions who aspire to become education leaders themselves?

FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this second interview. The information obtained from this interview will be used for research purposes only. All your answers will be treated confidentially.

_____

- Do you have any questions before we start the interview?
- May I audio-record the interview as it would help me to listen to it again later and to make a transcript of the interview for the purposes of data analysis?

_____

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

MAIN QUESTIONS [capability: domestic work and non-market care]

1. What is your marital status?
2. Do you have any children?

SUB-QUESTIONS
- *Did you resign from a teaching post in order to have children or did you go on maternity leave and then return to work?*
- *Tell me about your experience of having children and the impact it had on your career.*
- *Did maternity leave affect your career?*
- *Please explain.*

_____

MAIN QUESTION [capability: domestic work and non-market care]

3. Tell me more about your work-life balance.

SUB-QUESTIONS
- *Have there been any challenges or changes as you progressed up the career ladder?*
- *Do you have children, grandchildren, elderly parents or family members that you take care of?*
- *If yes, how has this influenced your ability to manage work related responsibilities?*
- *Do you have any hobbies or interests outside of school?*
- *What do you do in your free time?*

_____

MAIN QUESTION [capability: social relations. Capability: mobility]

4. What support do you receive from your husband partner or spouse?

SUB-QUESTIONS
- *Please elaborate. How or when do you receive support?*

- *If no, has this posed a challenge for you career wise?*
- *Would you say that you have established a good rapport with members of the school governing body?*
- *If yes, how have you managed to achieve this?*

MAIN QUESTION [capability: physical health and mental well-being. Capability: religion]

5. Tell me more about your health.

SUB-QUESTIONS
- Do you have any challenges?
- Has your health had an impact on your career?
- *Do you exercise, meditate or pray?*
- *Do you go on holidays or participate in any leisure activities?*
- *When the pressure at work becomes too much, what helps you to regain perspective?*

MAIN QUESTION [capability: bodily integrity and safety. Capability: shelter and environment. Capability: political empowerment]

6. Has there ever been a time as a woman when you have felt unsafe at work?

SUB-QUESTIONS
- *Please explain.*
- *Do you think that union interference at school level has contributed to an unsafe working environment?*
- *Would you describe your present working environment as safe and pleasant?*
- *If yes, explain why. If no, explain why.*

MAIN QUESTION [capability: time autonomy]

7. In the previous interview, you highlighted the fact that time is one of the biggest demands required of you as an educational leader. What leadership qualities have you adopted to ensure that you have enough time to complete your own tasks?

SUB-QUESTION
- *Would you describe yourself as being in control of your working hours?*

MAIN QUESTION [capability: respect]

8. Has there ever been a time as an educational leader when you were treated with less dignity and respect because you are a woman?

SUB-QUESTION
- *Could you please describe the incident for me?*