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Women and Promotability in Rural South African Schools

*Listening to the Voices of Female Teachers in Ehlanzeni District
Municipality*

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Submitted in partially fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree

Master of Social Sciences in Development Studies

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December 2018

Declaration

I declare that **Women and Promotability in rural South African Schools: listening to the voices of female teachers in Ehlanzeni District Municipality**, is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. This work has never before been submitted to any institution for academic credit.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Thandi Velile Mkhonto

Dedication

To my younger sister Zodwa Mkhonto being a working and married woman, balancing work and family conflict is not a simple task for one person, let alone pursuing studies further. Studies need courage, support and motivation which many women lack. As a result, I dedicate this study to my mother; Norah Mnisi She is uneducated and unemployed but values education more than anything. She would do whatever it takes to ensure that we got the best education, like other kids. Once again, I am grateful to have her as my mom, my cheerleader, my pillar of strength, and my guide.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to direct my gratitude to the following people who contributed to the success of this dissertation. Firstly, and most importantly, I wish to acknowledge the Almighty God for the strength He gave me throughout my studies. I am confident that without His consecrations I would not have done so. My parents for their support, motivation and always reminding me that I will make it. The National Research Foundation (NRF) for their financial support, which made this research and the dissertation a success. To my supervisor, Prof. Vusilizwe Thebe, for his patience and encouragement during the course of the study, I say thank you. To Ms Zodwa Mkhonto, Ms Gugu Dhlamini and Ms Ntombikayise Shangase Zulu, I cannot thank you enough for your support, inspiration and for pushing me until the finishing line. You contributed immensely to this dissertation.

To Mr S.D. Sifunda, my husband, and my kids Sergeant and Amiable, for their support, patience, love and understanding when I could not be with them during my studies. To the Mpumalanga Department of Education and School Principals who permitted me to conduct this study in their schools, I will be forever indebted to you. Finally, and most importantly, thanks a million to the teachers whose participation made this study a success. Without them this study would not have been possible. Their experiences encouraged me to ensure that their predicaments and perceptions are emphasized and satisfactorily presented.

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Abstract

The issue of gender disparities has captured the attention of the entire globe since the mid-20th Century. Theories and strategies have been propounded directed at addressing the issue (gender differences). As engines of development, institutions have been the first target where these strategies are put into praxis. Institutions international, national and local are encouraged to adopt gender mainstreaming principles. Against the above, institutions seem to be perpetuating gender differences even more. This study is about the gender gap in leadership positions at South African schools. While a lot has been written on gender and leadership, the study focused on hearing the perspectives of women teachers.

The aim was to understand the women and promotability question from the women teachers' own terms. The study adopted a qualitative approach to explore the views of women teachers in rural South African schools. This was done through a single case study where women teachers in four schools in Nkomazi in Ehlanzeni District were studied. To capture the voices of the teachers, the study adopted an approach that was grounded in long-term research that involves sustained engagement in the lives of the women teachers. The study started by understanding the context under which the women teachers operate, before exploring their views on the gender and promotability question.

Contrary to expectations, the study offered a different perspective from the popular narrative on gender, work place and promotability. It showed that the women teachers did not see themselves as victims or disadvantaged. The women teacher knew and understood the gender reforms that were instituted in post-apartheid South Africa and how these had changed their situation. They also understood that it would be difficult to close the gender gap in school leadership positions because of the social circumstances. However, they maintained that these circumstances did not disadvantage them into leadership position. The women particularly raised the issue of agency, which has been overlooked in the promotability question. The study emphasized that the women had qualifications to be school principal and could be principals if they so wished, but there was an element of choice. The study concluded that the voices of women are important if the gender and promotability question is to be addressed. Why some women opt against being school principals can only be understood from the women themselves, and their perspectives are key for gender policy.

List of acronyms

CEDAW:	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CWP:	Community Works Programmes
DEEP:	Departmental Employment Equity Plan
DHET:	Department of Higher Education and Training
DPSA:	Department of Public Service and Administration
EEA:	Employment Equity Act
EPWP:	Extended Public Works Programmes
HEI:	Higher Education Institutions
HOD:	Head of Department
IDP:	Integrated Development Planning
MPDE:	Mpumalanga Department of Education
REQV:	Relative Education Qualification Value
RSA:	Republic of South Africa
SACE:	South African Council for Educators
SADC:	Southern African Development Community
SAHRC:	South African Human Rights Commission
SARS:	South African Revenue Services
SES:	Senior Education Specialist
SGB:	School Governing Body
VSP:	Voluntary Severance Package

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study focuses on the voices of women on the question of their promotability to higher positions within the context of the South African school system. It provides a critical examination of this critical question, by focusing on the women themselves as concerned individuals and hearing their views, aspirations and position. The study broadens the existing literature on gender and the work place and provides a South African-specific context to our understanding of women and promotability in the education sector. It also has policy relevance and is significant to the democratic government in South Africa, which prides itself in progressive policies. Although South Africa has a considerable number of policies that create an enabling environment for women empowerment, there are still some challenges with respect to praxis.

This study provides empirically grounded evidence, drawn from the people concerned. Their perspectives can assist policy makers in ensuring that policies are not guided by dominant narratives but are context-specific and domesticated. This introductory chapter introduces the reader to the research problem, the aims and objectives of the study, the major research questions and the key concepts that will be employed in the study.

Justification for the study

In South Africa gender reforms to eliminate many forms of discrimination against women in labour markets and in the public sphere have attained broad recognition among academics and gender activists, alike (Boserup, 1995; Greyvenstein 2000; Booysen, 2007; and Goetz et al., 2003). Backed by global conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1979, Workplace Gender Equality Act No 91 of 1986 and The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 4th Conference (September 1995), opportunities have opened for women in a world that were previously seen as male territory (Miller et al., 1995; Padavic et al., 2002; Neuwirth, 2005). These opportunities include, for example, equal access to education and health; participating in

decision-making and access to power; access to vocational training; science and technology; and access to economic resources (Booyesen, 2007; and Goetz et al., 2003)

However, drawing on the literature dominant in the 1980s and 1990s, changes to women's situation in society started much earlier, when women asserted their agency and resisted gender hierarchies by partaking in labour migration (see, Bozzoli, 1983, 1991; Izzard, 1985). Unfortunately, these achievements were not uniformly achieved. As a result, discrimination against women in the work place and labour markets continues to manifest itself (Kaufmann, 2015). As highlighted in the World Bank Policy Research Report of 2001, women continue to earn less than men in the labour market (Arbache et al., 2010); their representations in parliaments remains minimal (Chattier, 2015), and they continue to have systematically poorer command over a range of productive resources, including education, land, information, and financial resources (World Bank, 2001). In the work place, women continue to dominate the unskilled workforce and occupations that are considered reproductive and domestic (Kaufmann, 2015). Some authors regard socio-cultural factors as major barriers to gender equity in the labour market (e.g. Lunyolo et al., 2014; Jamali et al., 2006), and hindering women's progress at the work place, particularly their promotability to leadership positions (Kaufman et al., 2015).

Yet, South Africa was expected to be an exception to the rule after adopting interventionist approaches to employment equity and facilitating the progress and careers of women in organizations. The South Africa Gender Equity Act of 1988 particularly put pressure on organizations to achieve Employment Equity quotas (Booyesen, 2007). In South Africa, the political relevance of promoting gender equity is highlighted in the country's post-independence Constitution, where Section 9 of the Constitution states that everyone is equal and shall fully enjoy the equal benefit of the law (RSA, 1996). Besides the Constitutional provisions, there is no shortage of gender initiatives in the country as a whole.

Since independence in 1994, government has passed the Commission on Gender Equality Act, 39 of 1996, the National Policy Framework on Women Empowerment and Gender Equality of 2002, and the Republic of South Africa Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill of 2013. The government also became a signatory and committed to the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, the Protocol to the

African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (July 2004), and the South African Development Community Protocol on Gender and Development (August 2008).

While that may well be existent in policy terms, studies on women and the labour market in South Africa tell a different story. In a 2013 study, Maseko highlighted challenges that are still encountered by women in leadership positions in both the private and public sector. Oosthuizen, et al., (2005) also highlighted the challenges faced by women in the labour markets in South Africa. This is evidenced by the proportion of women in executive positions in JSE-listed companies remains low, as estimates puts the percentage at 19.2% of executive management positions, while the figure of women holding parliamentary seats was just above 30% (Kurt et al., 2007).

These gender disparities are also highlighted in the education sector despite its traditional dominance by women. A report by the Basic Education Minister, Angie Motshekga (23 August 2013) showed that there were only 8 210 female principals compared to 14 337 male principals holding permanent posts in South African schools. These studies portray a gloomy picture of South Africa's progress in the area of gender equity in the work place and labour market. Yet, according to Kaimba (2008: 7), 'women continue to aspire to leadership positions in all spheres of governance both in the public and private sectors'. This body of literature therefore points to continued gender disparities in the South African labour market. More significantly, the literature points to certain challenges in the promotability of women in both the private and public organizations.

However, missing in this literature and statistics are the voices of women who are the subject of the literature. Elsewhere, there are others that have pointed to the importance of considering the voices of women. This is seen as an important way for understanding women on their own terms. Cecil Jackson has warned against the importance of the 'vexed question of women voices, and how they are understood and represented' (Jackson 2003). But, according to the women, a voice remains important in our attempt to understand their plight, as it affords us a qualitative angle. Statistics provide a rather dry although still necessary representation of women's situation. It is within this context that this study focuses on gender equity in leadership positions in South African schools, paying particular attention to

women's voices or perceptions, and particularly seeking to understand the gender initiatives and question of women's promotability to senior positions in schools from their perspective.

1.2 Aim of the study

The main aim of the study was to understand the position of women on two key issues on the gender and promotability debate: first, their views on the gender initiatives undertaken by the postcolonial state in South Africa and second, their perceptions on promotability and ambitions for leadership positions in their schools. The findings aim at improving our understanding of a subject that continues to dominate the poverty debate, but whose perversity continues to elude even gender enthusiasts. By grappling with the voices of women and focusing on how women understand and see their situation, the researcher intended to contribute a different, but practical argument to the debate. This study was grounded on women's own views, perceptions and experiences, and the presentation of their perspectives is the strength of this thesis.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How do female teachers view gender disparities in management positions in the South African school system?
1. Do female teachers consider themselves as disadvantaged in relation to male teachers when it comes to promotions to school principal positions?
2. What is the perception of women teachers on the various gender initiatives that have been adopted by the South African government? How do the women see them affecting their situation as women?
3. Do the female teachers have the requisite qualifications for management positions at schools? Have they applied for management positions? What do they find as a major impediment to their promotability?

1.4 Operationalizing Terms

The complexity of the women and their promotability problem need to be understood differently from the common place explanations of women's situations but taking into account their own perspective and the way they understand their situations. The theoretical basis of the perspective presented in this dissertation is built using the concepts women, gender, leadership and promotability. These concepts reveal the complex relationships between phenomena that are the subject of the current inquiry.

1.4.1 Differentiating women from gender

The rise of feminism in the late 1970s has led to positive changes in many women's lives. Since then, women have been gaining access to the labour market in increasing numbers, with the aim of balancing traditional mothers' and wives' roles with career aspirations. There have been major shifts in conceptual language which have led to a growing practice of using the term gender as a substitution for the word woman. In this study I have used the concept woman in line with Morrow et al., (2006)'s identification of a woman as a female human, usually an adult female and distinguishes it from a child female, who they identify as a girl. The usage is cognizant of the complexity of the concept and the fact that the term can assume a gendered characterization. In fact, Morrow et al., (2006) also relate the concept to gender, noting that woman may depict gender identity.

Suda (2002) emphasizes that gender does not refer to women or men as usually misconceived. In addition, Suda (2002) defines the concept gender as the relationship between men and women, the ways in which the roles of men and women are socially constructed and to the cultural interpretations of the biological differences between men and women. On the other hand, others think gender is a way of structuring social practice; for example, a woman's space is valued in her kitchen whereas a man space is valued in leadership. Furthermore, gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys as well as the relations between women and those between men (Marsiglio, 1995; Martin, 2001).

Hence, other scholars define gender as the attitudes, feeling, and behaviours that a culture associates with a person's biological sex (Baez et al., 2017). Lopez et al., (2004) state that gender can be understood as a socio-cultural construction and as behaviours or patterns of activity that a culture considers fit for men and women. In the household a girl is responsible for fetching water and firewood, cleaning, washing, cooking and looking after her siblings, whereas a boy child is responsible for herding cows and protecting his siblings.

On the other hand, gender refers to the behavioural, social and cultural associated with sex. Thus, Derlega et al., (2005) defined gender as the dimension of masculinity or femininity that

is much determined by the social and cultural atmosphere in one's living society. Bronfenbrenner (1997) and Leaper (2002) state that gender is communicated through cultural values and practices of the macro-systems, such as power and economic differentials between men and women, which influence the micro-systems of one's experiences at home, school, and even in the neighbourhood. Gender roles, relations and identity are socially constructed through the process of socialization.

Therefore, gender is an inclusive concept which not only entails what men and women do in a society and how they relate socially but also embraces cultural ideas about maleness and femaleness and the structural inequalities which emanate from those differences. As a result, women are still facing many challenges related to social and cultural pressures. Coon and Mitterer (2012) define gender role socialization as the process of learning gender behaviours considered appropriate for one's sex either being male or female in a given culture. Women leaders and professionals are still faced with traditional roles and have to meet work and professional expectations, which seem to have hindered their advancement to senior positions for a long time.

Gender is also a culturally contingent variable, unfolding from biological features (Connell, 1995). However, Kimmel, 1995, cited in Courtenay, (2000) states that gender is constructed from cultural and subjective meanings that constantly shift and vary, depending on the time and place. In the current study the word gender refers to the relationship between men and women, the ways in which the roles of men and women are socially constructed and to the cultural interpretations of the biological differences between men and women.

1.4.2 Other gender-related concepts

1.4.2.1 Gender stereotypes

The term women may assume gendered stereotyping, defined in this case as the belief that a set of traits and abilities is more likely to be found among one sex than the other. By stereotyping men as more efficient and achieving in work life, the important and valuable characteristics that women have remain undervalued (Piha, 2006). However, Lumby (2010) states that women teachers who try to advance professionally often face cultural and social stereotyping that allocates them to specific and junior roles. Stereotyping slows down change

and can act as a major obstacle when it comes to women's career possibilities and because everyone has their individual characteristics and strengths, stereotyping should be avoided.

Furthermore, according to Valerio (2009), stereotypes are destructive to both males and females and are responsible for the erection of the glass ceiling. For example, although, some women manage to hold senior positions, they lack the encouragement and support (Uwamahoro, 2011). Kirai's study revealed that the working environment for women is still unfriendly both at work and societal levels due to gender stereotypes and patriarchal structures (Kirai, 2012). In most rural areas female educators do not view promotion as a priority due to cultural roles and gender stereotypes surrounded them (Kirai, 2012). The study conducted by Lunyolo, et al., (2014) in Uganda postulates that socio-cultural factors and gender stereotypes hinder women's access to management positions in secondary schools.

1.4.2.2 Gender discrimination

Globally, women continue to be disadvantaged as regards to public participation in decision-making positions in the public and private sectors of society as they still face gender-based discrimination in hiring and promotion (Hesse-Biber, 2014). In general women suffer discriminatory practices when promotions to senior positions are considered, (Greyvenstein 2000, Petersen & Gravett, 2000; Mathipa & Tsoka, 2001; Jackson, 2003). This includes being accepted by their organizations, receiving support and encouragement, having training and development opportunities, and being offered challenging work and visible assignments.

Furthermore, according to Sebola and Khalo (2010) South Africa is heavily affected by the stereotyping that women are a weaker sex and can rarely succeed in leadership positions. Booysen (1999, 2001), observed subculture differences and similarities between South African men and women managers in retail banking, whereby he argued that South African male managers concentrated on performance, competition and winning, power, control and directive leadership compared to their female counterparts. Grant (2005) posits that women leaders do not always get the necessary support from the communities and usually have to prove their capability as leaders under trying conditions in the patriarchal society. Maseko (2013) alluded that discrimination against women has been an integral part of the corporate world and will take a long time to be eliminated. Another related concept is gender disparity.

1.4.2.3 Gender disparity

The issue of gender differences in the workplace is not today's issue. It has been tackled by many scholars. Anaeme (2012) contended that gender disparity is as old as humankind and experienced by numerous religious and cultural traditions. Literally, the meaning of gender disparity means not having equality in terms of gender, either in language use or equal participation in all spheres of life. It is considered as an obstacle for the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace. In addition, it affects the capacity of women to participate freely and fully in society and in turn brings psychologically harmful consequences (Pokharel, 2008). In South Africa, perceptions on gender differences in the abilities of men and women as leaders are also considered to be marked by race (Maseko, 2013). Black and coloured women face stereotypes that are rooted in their historical employment as maids in the homes of white employers (ibid). Regardless of the legislatures and laws that are put in place. Even though the United Nations and its specialized agencies have been giving women preferences, gender disparities still exist. In the current study gender disparity refers to the inequalities between men and women at secondary schools.

1.4.3 Leadership

According to Kroontz et al., (1986) as cited in Magagula (2009) leadership is an art or process of influencing, so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the achievement of group goals. Aja-Okorie (2010) defined leadership as a management function that is determined by the principles of coordination, controlling and communication. Maseko (2013) asserted that leadership positions entail hard work and long hours, resulting in additional stress for women to their child care, home and family responsibilities, which Sadie (2005) referred to a dual shift. Ogunsanya (2007) adds that most women in Africa do not acquire the needed experience to become leaders because of social positioning. She further observes that most women in Africa have been outside the leadership domain for a long time and thus are not equipped for leadership roles. Furthermore, women believe that they cannot succeed in leadership and consequently do not actively try to achieve leadership (Pirouznia, 2006). Kariuki (2006) asserts that Africa is largely a male-controlled society and hence leadership is the field of men. Leadership here refers to the school principals who are leaders, managers, coordinators and decision makers of schools.

1.4.4. Promotability

Promotability has been defined as “the favourability of an employee’s advancement prospects” (Greenhaus et al., 1990) and includes judgments of an employee’s capacity to perform at more senior levels (De Pater et al., 2009). The advancement of an employee within a company position can be defined as promotion. It is usually perpetuated by satisfactory performance, for example, positive appraisal. Promotion can involve advancement in terms of designation, salary and benefits. Promotions into higher executive levels are notable events in people’s work lives, and ‘going up in the world’; they are considered to be an absolute value in western society (Gattiker & Larwood, 1990). Biyela (2009) states that promotion does not come with responsibility only, but offers a salary increase as the main incentive, which encourages many people to apply, so as to fill the positions in accordance with attached requirements. Promotability in this study refers to the advancement of women teachers to principal positions in secondary schools.

1.5 Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter One is the introductory chapter. It covers the key aspects of the study, including justification for the study, the aims of the study, the research question, which the study seeks to provide answers, as well as definitions of key concepts used in the study. Chapter Two is the literature review. The chapter reviews relevant literature in an attempt to develop a framework of analysis. While the review focuses on broad theoretical literature, it also looks at specific South Africa literature and gender policies and their implications.

Chapter Three is the methodology chapter. It focuses on the research instruments, procedures, techniques and methods used to collect, analyse and interpret data. It also provides some insight into the limitations of the study, the challenges encountered during field research and the research ethics issues and how they were handled. This chapter also presents the data analysis method employed by the study. Chapter Four presents the major research findings. The findings are interpreted, discussed and analyzed.

The data presented were gathered through interviews. A thematic system of data analysis was used as an overall approach of data analysis. It provides a profile of the study area and the schools that participated in the study. It also looked at the female teachers and their views on gender disparities in leadership positions at schools through listening to the voices of women

teachers. The final chapter (Chapter 5) provides discussions of the findings presented in chapter four, conclusion of the findings and policy implications on gender initiatives in South Africa as a whole.

Chapter Two

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter, based on secondary data, explores the historical and contextual framework of the situation of women in the education sector, as well as reviews about the under-representation of women in principalship. The analytical starting point for this study is the understanding that the socially determined ideas and practices, which define what roles and activities, are deemed appropriate for women and men, have long been recognized as the root cause of gender disparities (Wadesango et al, 2008). Firstly, it begins by looking briefly at the nature, culture and history, in an attempt to provide a background to the gender and promotability question. It recognizes that historically, a woman's place was seen as her home space, caring for her husband and children, as opposed to the workplace (Domenico, et al, 2007; & Kirai, et al., 2012), hence the under-representation of women in leadership positions.

Secondly, it looks at the situation of women in the workplace and in the education sector. Thirdly, it looks at gender equality instruments, including international, and regional instruments. Observing the acts and policies, and its implementation, the literature shows that there are policy implications in the workplace. Lastly, this chapter looks at the promotability of women into principalship positions in the education sector.

2.2 Nature, culture and history

Women's discrimination and violence are issues as old as humankind and are part of many religious and cultural traditions. A study conducted by Anaeme (2012) describes how God created a woman out of a man. The Bible states that God created a Woman brought her unto the Man (Adam). Adam then said, "She shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man" (Genesis, 2: 23). Furthermore, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over woman" (Genesis, 3: 16). This shows the nature of all differences between males and females. Biologically, males and females are physically different; and these differences have historically been used to justify or naturalize the differential treatment of, and differential expectations of men and women (Zalewski, 2010).

It is believed that in society, cultural factors lead to stereotypes about women's abilities within cultural contexts, especially in developing countries. A study conducted by Zalewski (2010) shows that cultural diversity is one of the defining characteristics of the current workforce. Most societies believe that a good mother must give less effort and priority to work demands and put more effort on family issues, such as parenting (Kirai, 2012). On the contrary, Ridgeway (2001) in Kirai, believes that this biased belief is likely to create barriers to women advancement in the workplace. Moreover, Zalewski believes that the socialization for boys and girls has an impact on their future careers.

In a 2012 study conducted by Kirai, it was found that cultural barriers are among the most difficult to remove, as they are often subtly enforced by both men and women. According to Kiamba (2008), beliefs and cultural attitudes in a society are still prevalent in terms of the role and status of women, and many women find it difficult to dislocate from these cultural traditions for fear that they will be ostracized, especially in the African context. In addition, women continue to perceive the priority of women as a family, irrespective of managerial aspiration or position (Kirai, et al., 2012). This is therefore a result of socialization practices that do not prepare females to face challenges and develop other skills outside the ones necessary for the performance of their traditionally related activities (De-Leon, 1996). Despite the obvious change in all spheres of life, such as socially, culturally, economically and political spheres, patriarchal attitudes are still deep-rooted; for example, in South African parliament women are still under-represented, irrespective of the number of policies and laws that are put in place for implementation.

Cultural barriers are seen to be immutable (Kirai, et al., 2012). Other studies show that female managers are perceived as inadequate (Ibid). This clearly indicates that such cultural barriers still persist in today's modern world, more especially in rural areas, and they are unchallenged (Kirai, et al., 2012). The opinion that top management positions are only suitable for men relegates women to secondary roles as mothers, caregivers and nurturers. Despite these cultural barriers, some women have been able to climb the ladder of success to senior positions in South African schools frequently in urban areas, perpetuated by the ratification of a number of international and national laws. However, in rural areas this is still a phenomenon.

Although women succeed in breaking the so-called glass ceiling, some studies have reported that women struggle to maintain their position, as they are discriminated because of their gender. Cultures differ in nature and intensity of differentiation between the sexes, gender, gender roles, gender-role ideologies and gender stereotypes. However, gender differentiation exists universally (Lopez, et al 2004).

2.3 Women's under-representation in the workplace and principalship.

Women have increasingly become more involved in the workforce following World War II. The view of a woman's role in the workforce has changed significantly throughout this period. This is true of South African secondary schools, where the number of female principals has changed dramatically since democracy (MPDE, 2018). Shabaya and Kwandwo (2004), state that deep-seated cultural barriers have conspired to create and perpetuate gender disparity in access to education in many African countries in general and the world in particular. Furthermore, women are achieving training and development, as well as increasing years of work experience necessary for career advancement. However, they seem to get stuck in the middle management, with few achieving senior management positions (Powell, 2011). It can therefore be said women remain discriminated against in terms of accessing top management/leadership positions. This is despite the fact that more women are getting educated and hold more jobs worldwide than ever before. (Dykeman, 2001).

However, comparatively not much is known regarding the barriers that women teachers face when aspiring to and applying for career promotion and their experiences in developing economies (Oplatka, 2006). Research has shown that, globally, women tend to dominate the teaching profession across most sectors of schooling, but when it comes to positions of management, they are generally still in the minority (Addi-Racah & Ayalon, 2002; Celikten, 2005; Chabaya, Rembe, & Wadesango, 2009; Coleman, 2002, 2005; Davies, 1990; Fitzgerald, 2003; Morris, 1999; Phendla, 2008; Sperandio & Kagoda, 2010).

In the United States the role of women has changed dramatically in the last 50 years as the proportion of women attending college, matriculating from graduate schools and obtaining doctorate degrees has increased dramatically (Laff, 2006). According to Cooper Jackson (2000) Women are no longer associated with low expectations both in education and the workforce but instead constitute nearly half of the US labor force and occupy a significant

and growing proportion of entry and mid-level managerial positions. In addition, women make up to 50.8 % of the US population, and are 52% of the US professional workforce (Census 2014; Catalyst 2014).

African countries seem to be an exception to the trend, whereby the situation is further complicated by traditional barriers. Shabaya and Kwandwo (2004), state that deep-seated cultural barriers have conspired to create and perpetuate gender disparity in access to education in many African countries. Kellogg, Hervy, and Yizengaw, (2008) emphasize that higher education provides the means through which women and other historically disadvantaged groups can achieve positions of leadership and increase their economic well-being, thereby having a long-term impact on overall productivity and equality of opportunity. Nguyen (2000) contends that higher education supplies the best resources for the labor force; it influences current leaders and prepares future leaders, so women should be privileged in higher education. However, scholars argue that leadership self-efficacy pertains to the confidence that one has in his/her knowledge, skills and abilities to lead others and accomplish various leadership tasks (Hannah & Harms, 2008; Paglis, 2010).

African literature seems to portray a more complicated scenario with regards to gender disparities in the education sector. Women like in developed countries outnumber men in universities in several African countries. However, their domination is confined at lower positions (Davidson & Burke, 2011). Salo (2003) found that across regional, cultural and national divides, women were under-represented at all levels in African universities and were concentrated in traditionally female fields such as education. Despite much increased training and development and increasing years of work experience necessary for career advancement women seem to experience a glass ceiling, especially with regards to the professorial level and in senior management (Powell, 2011). It can therefore be said women remain discriminated against in terms of accessing top management/leadership positions.

In Nepal, Bista and Carney (2004) found that female heads of schools comprised only 3.7% of all the leaders in 2004. In other countries, like Korea for instance, Kim and Kim (2005) reported that only 14% of school heads were women in 2005, despite the fact that the country had many female teachers. The study conducted by Mbepera (2015) in Tanzania revealed that women in leadership positions in all sectors acquiring a higher level of decision making

constituted only 25% in 2007/2008 (United Republic of Tanzania, 2008). Mbepera (2015:20) further found that female heads in secondary schools nationally in 2006 comprised 12.7%, while males comprised 87.3% (Bandiho, 2009).

Furthermore, data from the Tanzanian mainland show that in 2013, about 18.7 % of secondary school heads were women (ADEM, 2013). Male teachers still appear to dominate school leadership positions in those localities, where data is available (Omboko & Oyoo, 2011). For example, in 2010 of the 25 schools in Iringa Municipality, 16 (64%) were led by men, while only nine (36%) were led by women in 2010 (Mbepera, 2015). The same study shows that the Bagamoyo District in the Coast Region had 23 Community Secondary Schools (CSSs) in 2011, but only one (4.3%) woman was the head of a school, while 22 (95.7%) schools were headed by men, despite a significant number of women with a degree (74.8%) in the District (District Educational Office, 2011b).

In Kenya, according to Ongaki et al, 2015, women under-representation is a serious problem in Kenya. This is evidenced by the research report by Goddard and Chrish (1997) in Ongaki, which found that only 15% of the women in the primary education sector held senior positions.

In Nigeria, structural or institutional-based perception that women do not possess leadership traits has become an instrument used by men to marginalize women's leaders in hope and aspirations to succeed. According to Aja-Okorie (2010), some of these social and cultural prejudices are used to discourage more women from realizing their leadership dreams. Also, these challenges affect female principals in Nigeria, in spite of their tenacity to work and determination to succeed in their administrative functions (Aja-Okorie, 2010).

Culturally, a black Zimbabwean woman, whether she is educated or illiterate, is responsible for her family and the development of the home (Maposa, 2013). Her place is in the kitchen and she submits to her husband's will/ wishes, as indicated in chapter 1.

In another study conducted in Uganda, 2006, only 12% of the women were deputy heads and heads of secondary schools. The situation was worse in private schools in Uganda, where

only 10% of heads of schools were women (Kagoda & Sperandio, 2009). Kagoda and Sperandio (2009) postulated that women were only well-represented in lower-paid positions, such as secretaries and attendants. In fact, the under-representation of women in top leadership positions in these countries reflects the general situation in many African countries.

South Africa is not different from other countries when it comes to gender inequalities. Despite the number of legislatures and laws ratified, women are still under-represented in senior positions. Since the 1994 educational reforms in South Africa, including the National Plan for Higher Education (Ministry for Education 2001), the government has attempted to "provide a system of education that builds democracy, human dignity, equality and social justice" (Department of Education, 2001). However, gender inequality in the South African educational system persists. Girls tend to be predominantly present in the social and caring fields of education. The participation rate of boys even declined in these female-dominant fields of education, due to deeply lodged gendered assumptions in organizational practices, parental influence and lack of gender-sensitive vocational guidance programs for male students.

Furthermore, the report delivered by the Minister of Basic Education shows that women are under-represented in principalship positions, as indicated in chapter 1. Women constitute nearly 70% of the teaching profession in South Africa, but they only constitute 30% of school managers (Paulsen, 2009).

In spite of efforts at transforming both the country and the public service, to embrace national priorities of development and economic growth, challenges persist for women across the public and private sectors (Fagenson, 2003; Maseko, 2013). For example, while women have the potential and ability to be leaders, they often lack opportunities, resources and support for realizing their potential (Maseko, 2013). The lack of women in senior positions means that women are globally under-represented across all decision-making fora (Dunne & sayed, 2007). Feelings of inauthenticity and insecurity are exacerbated by age, gender, status and a performative ethos where the right products (research outputs and grants) are an essential part of changing institutions (Archer, 2008) pressured to enhance their research status and reputation.

2.4 Gender Equality Initiatives

Although globally much has been done to make sure that women feature at all levels of governance, they are still under-represented in many government organizations, mostly in positions of authority and leadership (De La Rey, 2005). For example, in Africa, statistics obtained by Sadie (2005) on the Southern African Development Community (SADC) parliamentary structures show that the targeted 30% representation of women in political and resolution-making structures in member states was not met, except in South Africa and Mozambique. It is, however, important to note or realise that the South African government has shown commitment to addressing issues of gender discrimination against women, by ratifying the terms of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1996. This was an attempt to curtail gender bias and ensure that women are not discriminated against in any form.

The policy shows government's effort to eliminate discrimination, particularly in a rural context (World Bank, 2005:3). The South African Constitution also provides for several channels to assist women in accessing resources and to actively participate in the economy. Women, however, face challenges in accessing the resources implied above. There are several initiatives that address gender inequality, and these comprise of international, regional and national initiatives. In this section I looked at the international and regional only: the CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the SADC as the national initiatives are detailed in chapter 4.

2.4.1 International Initiatives

2.4.1.1 The CEDAW

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) was the first international instrument to comprehensively address women's rights in the realms of politics and culture, as well as in economic, social and family spheres (Hassim,2006). The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) binds all state parties to work actively towards the abolition of gender discrimination. The CEDAW was ratified by the South African government in (1996) and it contains a comprehensive set of legally enforceable commitments and imposes obligations on the state concerning both rights to education and to gender equality. It further seeks to end discrimination against women and girls in education.

Article 10 of the CEDAW specifically requires state parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women, in order to ensure equal rights with men in the field of education. It plays a crucial role as an element of fighting against gender equality; it is a tool for eliminating any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education, by encouraging coeducation and other types of education. These will help to achieve this aim and, particularly, the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods.

Most importantly, it aims at bringing the same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing at the earliest possible time any existing gap in education between men and women. It urges countries that traditionally bar or discourage girls from attending school to open the doors to their education and for women to be given equally treatment with men regarding their success, for them to be given equivalent opportunity as that of their counterpart (CEDAW: 2008). Without disregarding the effective role that it plays, the one that it seeks to remove have historically kept female students from participating in many careers and vocational programmes.

Furthermore, article 11 articulates the right to non-discrimination in the work place, by encouraging all states to take all appropriate measures, to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, equality of men and women. The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment and more important the right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security, and all benefits and conditions of service are targeted. Furthermore, the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training constitute the central and most comprehensive bill of human rights for women (CEDAW, 2008; Benedek, et al, 2002: 33).

2.4.1.2 The Beijing Platform for Action

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was a product of the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, convened by the UN

from 4 to 15 September 1995 in Beijing, China. The Beijing Declaration notes in paragraph 44 that unequal access to education by women (including girls) is a critical area of concern and thus calls upon governments, the international community and civil society organisations to take strategic action in addressing inequalities, inadequacies and unequal access to education and training. Paragraph 69 of the Beijing declaration states that education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace.

Non-discriminatory education benefits both girls and boys and thus ultimately contributes to more equal relationships between women and men. Equality of access to and attainment of educational qualifications is necessary if women are to become agents of change. In addition, investing in formal and non-formal education and training for girls and women, with its exceptionally high social and economic return, has proved to be one of the best means of achieving sustainable development and economic growth that is both sustained and sustainable. The Beijing Platform for action also advocates against discrimination in the work places; enacts and enforce legislation to guarantee the rights of women and men to equal pay for equal work.

2.4.2 Regional instruments

The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (2008) in August 2008, and the Heads of State of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) adopted the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, committing their governments and countries, inter alia, to enhancing access to quality education by both women and men and removing gender stereotypes from the curriculum, career choices and professions. On the employment part, the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development in article 19 states that states that parties shall, by 2015, review, amend and enact laws and policies that ensure women and men have equal access to wage employment in all sectors of the economy and eradicate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discriminate. Southern African Development Community (SADC) members have committed themselves to 50/50 representation in all senior decision-making positions in the public and private sectors by 2015. My view is that, for effective and efficient change or outcomes, innovative policies are required not only for them to be drafted but for implementation. This has to be done because it has been a long time since the policies were drawn over and over, but implementation is failing.

2.5 Women's promotability

Promotability has been defined as “the favourability of an employee’s advancement prospects” (Greenhaus, et al, 1990: 69) and includes judgments of an employee’s capacity to perform at more senior levels (De Pater et al., 2009). Promotions into higher executive levels are notable events in people’s work lives, and ‘going up in the world’ is more and more considered to be an absolute value in western society (Gattiker and Larwood, 1990). The advancement of an employee within a company position can be defined as promotion. It is usually perpetuated by satisfactory performance e.g, positive appraisal. A promotion can involve advancement in terms of designation, salary and benefits. Biyela (2008) states that promotion does not come with responsibility only, but offers a salary increase the main incentive, which encourages many people to apply so as to fill the positions in accordance with the attached requirements.

In general women suffer discriminatory practices when promotions to senior positions are considered. According to, Greyvenstein, 2000, Petersen & Gravett 2000, Mathipa & Tsoka 2001, Jackson 2002) being accepted by their organizations, receiving support and encouragement, having training and development opportunities, and being offered challenging work and visible assignments. However, in the teaching sector women occupy middle-management positions, while mostly men occupy executive positions, especially in rural secondary schools. Kariuki (2006) asserts that Africa is largely a male-controlled society. Hence, headship is the field of men. Ogunsanya (2007) adds that most women in Africa do not acquire the needed experience to become leaders because of social positioning. She further observes that most women in Africa have been outside the leadership domain for a long time and thus are not equipped for leadership roles.

There are several scholarly articles, journals and books which have discussed the challenges facing women in advancing to leadership positions. Women who aspire to, or assume an administrative position are often not even supported by other women in the profession. Barriers to women’s promotion to management positions are based on systemic gender bias model, lack of networking, lack of female role models (Marcus, 2013), lack of support from colleagues and administrators (Chisholm, 2001; Chabaya et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2012); discriminatory hiring and promotion practices (Baltoni, 2013), lack of mentoring systems in the teaching profession, as well as lack of support systems (from both family and colleagues).

Because of what some researchers have termed “Woman’s Place or Socialisation” or “cultural model”, even women who get appointed in school management positions tend to face a range of challenges, including lack of support and cooperation from their colleagues, subordinates and families (Chisholm, 2001). Moorosi’s study concluded that while women have made tremendous efforts at the “anticipation phase”, to prepare themselves for principalship positions, and the “acquisition phase”, to make entry into the principalship accessible to women (in terms of policies), there seems to be an insufficient effort to support the women who have broken through the glass ceiling in order to ensure sustainable equity (Moorosi, 2010).

Historically, race, culture and ethnicity, religion and language as well as marital status have been identified as the main barriers affecting and defining women’s experiences, especially black women teachers in general, and women managers in particular (Moorosi, 2010; Lumby & Azaola, 2011). Pirouznia (2006: 27) believes that culture in some society conditions women to believe that they are not as capable as men for administrative roles. Women believe that they cannot succeed in leadership and consequently do not actively try to achieve leadership roles (Pirouznia, 2006). Kiamba (2008:13) and Chabaya, Rembe and Wadesango (2009:245) contend that the women themselves are often unwilling to compete for top management positions in public and private organisations (including schools). Kyriakoussis and Sait (2006), in their study on the lack of ambition amongst Greek female teachers to attain managerial positions, found that 94 % of the female teachers did not apply for promotional positions.

The study conducted by Mbepera (2015) on the Influences of female under-representation in senior leadership positions in Community Secondary Schools (CSSs) in Rural Tanzania revealed that some women are unwilling to take leadership posts because they lack confidence, feel inferior and accept men’s superiority. Liu (2000) cited by Pirouznia (2006) contends that when women are challenged in work, they doubt their ability, and often stop advancing (Liu, 2000). Some research suggests that low aspirations are directly affected by women’s internalization of their inferiority, as ascribed by society through sex role stereotyping (Gupton & Slick, 1996; Wilkinson, 1991). If a woman has achieved a position of

power and responsibility, she is supposed to be exceptional and must prove her worth, whereas the male is not expected to perform in such an exemplary manner.

Brown and Ralph (1996) found that female participation in leadership is hindered by internal and external factors. They also revealed that the majority of female teachers aspired to leadership posts in school but were hindered by a lack of confidence. Chabaya, Rembe and Wadesango (2009) investigated the factors that impede women advancing into leadership positions in primary schools through face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. They discovered that the majority of the women were qualified to hold a leadership post but did not apply for it (Mbepera, 2015). Furthermore, the study conducted by Amondi (2010) found that women are not assertive enough, do not want power, lack self-confidence, are unwilling to play the game or work the system, do not apply for jobs and even when in a job, they do not apply for line positions (Tallerico & Burstyn, as cited in Growe and Montgomery, 1999). Of the 500 participants surveyed, 54% of them did not aspire to attain higher leadership positions in the schools where they worked (Ibid).

Promotions of female educators are sensitive issues, as stated by Biyela, women were found to first start by weighing their chances, and some believe that men have strong credentials that make them more likely to qualify for promotion. At times women faced a number of challenges which resulted in lack of aspirations and ambitions to principalship. Mazibuko (2006), and Zulu, (2009) also found that lack of mentorship and formal preparation in the form of professional development programs, appear to have been major constraints for women, but only before and after assuming a Head of Department (HoD) positions (Mathipa & Tsoka 2006).

Ogunsanya (2007) adds that most women in Africa do not acquire the needed experience to become leaders because of social positioning. She further observes that most women in Africa have been outside the leadership domain for a long time and thus are not equipped for leadership roles. Pirouznia (2006: 27) believes that culture in some societies conditions women to believe that they are not as capable as men for administrative roles. In such societies the women believe that they cannot succeed in leadership and consequently do not actively try to achieve leadership (Pirouznia, 2006). Kiamba (2008:13) and Chabaya, Rembe and Wadesango (2009:245) contend that women themselves are often unwilling to compete

for top management positions in public and private organisations (including schools). Kyriakoussis and Sait (2006), in their study on the lack of ambition amongst Greek female teachers to attain managerial positions, found that 94 % of the female teachers did not apply for promotional positions.

2.6 Chapter summary

The literature reviewed reveals an under-representation of women in the workplace and educational leadership positions worldwide. This chapter looked at the historical background of the role of women in society and their nature as women. It recognizes that men and women are different in nature and expected by a society to play distinct roles. It further looks at the situation of women in the workplace and educational sector. It shows that women are under-represented in all sectors, including the education sector worldwide. Aja-Okorie, (2010) asserts that men and women have equally been socialized to accept that masculinity depicts aggression, power, and strength, while femininity denotes weakness, fragility and even naivety. He further states that the society generally accepts that masculine traits are more socially acceptable and desirable in leadership function. Therefore, the few women who dare these leadership positions are not judged fairly (Aja-Okorie, 2010).

This chapter also looked at the gender initiatives undertaken by postcolonial South Africa to redress gender inequalities in the workplace. It recognizes the vast increase in the number of women entering the work place and leadership positions. Thus, women are still under-represented in leadership and principalship positions. The chapter also looked at the challenges facing women aspiring for leadership positions in general and the principalship in particular. The next chapter deals with the research methods, resources and procedures used to conduct this study.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The methodology of this study was guided by the broader purpose and objectives of the study, which sought to understand the position of women teachers on two key issues on the gender and promotability debate: their perspectives on the gender gap in school leadership position; whether they regard themselves as being disadvantaged; whether they have aspirations and ambitions for school leadership position; and whether they have the necessary qualifications to be school principals.

This chapter focuses on the research instruments, procedures, techniques and methods used to collect, analyse and interpret data. It also provides some insights into the limitations of the study, the challenges encountered during field research and the research ethics issues and how they were handled. Fieldwork was conducted between June and August 2018. There were no particular reasons for the timing and scheduling of the fieldwork, except that it coincided with my annual leave and the times I could get study leave from my work. The study was conducted in four schools in Nkomazi West and Khulangwane Circuit in Ehlanzeni District, although some basic understanding of the Nkomazi society and Ehlanzeni District as a whole was also sought. The four schools are located in Ehlanzeni District, which is predominantly siSwati speaking.

As a Swati-speaking South African woman, who also originates from the district, language barrier was not an issue. In fact, I share many aspects with the communities being studied, including the culture, and as such, I thought I understood some of the issues that the study sought answer for. I am a married woman with family responsibilities, although I am based in an urban area. Thus, I have lived and experienced some of the life that the women teachers lived, both as a child and a wife. As such, the research problem was important to me, as it reflected aspects of my life as a woman.

The short association with the research problem motivated me to dig deeper into aspects within society that could provide answers. In carrying out the study, I sought to give women voices, as the problems affected them and no other members of society. This was a problem, however, because in my interaction with these women, I became very close to them and their families that it inevitably affected our interaction and the way I saw things.

The study began with a review of literature and other relevant documents. This was necessary for providing the context. This background information is provided in Section 4.2. The second and most important part of the study was the extended study at the four schools in the Nkomazi West and Khulangwane Circuit. The third and final stage was the analysis of the data in an attempt to make it manageable.

3.2 The methodology

The research work followed to a larger extent the qualitative design. It proved more feasible to follow the qualitative path because the sources of information were people. Other idiographic data presented in households and compiled through time were read. These served the purpose of examining how qualitatively the questions of the under-representation of women have been studied through history. Such data, too, sharpened the research at hand and helped come up with rich theories that were qualitatively questioned through interviews, questionnaires and focus groups (Maree, 2007: 34).

3.2.1 Nature of the study

I used the qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is characterised by the fact that the researcher tries to get to the heart and soul of the issue in order to understand it (Mouton & Marais 1990:175). Qualitative research is naturalistic; it attempts to study the everyday life of different groups of people and communities in their natural setting. It is particularly useful to study educational settings and processes.

Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter, it attempts to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:25). According to Gubrium and Sankar, (1994: 9), qualitative research aims to explore and to discover issues on hand, so I saw an opportunity that using

qualitative approach will help produce quality information about the under-representation of women in leadership positions.

The qualitative approach uses soft data and gets rich data. In addition, qualitative research wants to understand a social phenomenon within its cultural, social and situational context without imposing pre-existing expectations upon the setting (Gubrium & Sanker, 1994: 52; Mouton & Marais, 1990: 204). In qualitative research, different knowledge claims, enquiry strategies, and data collection methods and analysis are employed (Creswell, 2007: 37-39). Qualitative data source includes observation and participant observation (fieldwork), interviews and questionnaires, document and texts, and the researcher's impressions reactions.

This was done to identify challenges facing women teachers in leadership positions. As their challenges are different, I needed to study them in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Such data, too, sharpened the research at hand and helped the study to come up with rich theories that were qualitatively questioned through one on one discussions. In most cases where people are taken to be a unity of study, authors advice is that researchers should to a larger extent adopt qualitative research methods (Neuman, 2006: 220).

This is contrary to quantitative research techniques which in most cases are based on representation. In this sense, qualitative methods best suited the aim of the study because it was an engine to assess the perceptions of women teachers in rural South African schools. Nieuwenhuis (in Maree 2007: 11), reports that qualitative research usually involves smaller sample sizes than quantitative studies. It is this advantage that the research exploited constraints like time and funds in academic research. Moreover, qualitative methods are flexible and make use of data saturation, which in turn gives the research findings credibility.

3.3 Literature Review

The methodological approach applied in this research began with a review of the currently available literature on women and promotability. In a study that involves policy issues, a review of literature was always a logical starting point. The attention focused on academic literature; both published and unpublished reports, policy documents and legislation and commentaries and other related issues. The review also focused on national gender equality and women empowerment legislatures, laws and policies as well as scholarly articles,

government reports and media articles conducted on issues related to gender equality and women empowerment in South Africa.

The first part of the literature review began with a discussion and analysis of some of the most prominent gender theories that the researcher believed would be relevant to this study as approaches to understanding gender issues and the lives of female educators. It also engaged the scholarly articles on challenges faced by women in the workplace, looking at the changes since nineteenth century. The second part looked at the policy implications on gender initiatives undertaken by the South African government. Finally, the third part looked at the promotability of women in all spheres in general and in the education sector in particular. The review of literature strengthened the arguments made by other scholars on the issues of gender and women in the workplace. The review of the literature aimed at answering questions one and three, although it also extended to other questions.

3.4 The Case study

The last method for collecting data used was the case study. The objective of the study was to listen to the voices of female teachers on their situation as female teachers, on the domination of men in leadership positions, on the gender legislations introduced after independence and on their ambitions and aspirations. This could be best achieved through a phenomenological case study. Phenomenological case study was used to collect primary data from female educators in four schools in the Nkomazi Circuit, Ehlanzeni District in the Mpumalanga Province.

The purpose of the phenomenological case study was to understand in great depth the lived experiences of female educators from their perspectives. According to Lester (1999: 1), phenomenological methods bring experiences and perceptions of individuals from their perspectives. This was useful for research that granted individuals a platform to provide their side of the story rather than getting information from third parties. The phenomenology case study provided answers to research questions two, and four. It also extended to other questions. Thus, the phenomenological case study was the ideal method to explore the gender disparities in the education sector at Ehlanzeni District.

According to Bromley (1990: 302), phenomenological case study research is a “systematic inquiry into an event or set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest”. Creswell (2007: 73) regards phenomenological case study research as involving an exploration of a bounded system (bounded by time, context and/or place), or a single or multiple case over a period of time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information. Yin (2003: 23) defines the phenomenological case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.

The study had an interest in the meanings that subjects give to their lived experiences as women and teachers. Thus, the phenomenological case study method was used to obtain an intimate familiarity with their social worlds, and to look for patterns in the participants’ lives, words and actions in the context of the case as a whole, using the activities of a single person or a small number of people. According to Yin (cf. Maree 2012: 76), the key strength of the phenomenological case study method is the use of multiple sources and techniques in the data collection process. The study adopted multiple methods, combining discussions with observations at the case study level. Data gathered was qualitative, but this did not prevent the quantification of data.

Case studies offer a multi-perspective analysis in which the researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of one or two participants in a situation, but also the views of other relevant groups of actors and the interaction between them. It opens the possibility of giving a voice to the powerless and voiceless, such as children or marginalized groups. This is essential for the researcher to come to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the situation. Furthermore, the aspect is a salient feature of many studies (Maree, 2012: 74). This is exactly what the study was about – listening at the voices of the marginalized population, but also understanding their voices in relation to dominant and powerful discourse about their situation as a group.

3.4.1 The study area

The four schools are located in Nkomazi Local Municipality in Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Mpumalanga Province. It lies in the western part of South Africa, between

importantly, I was familiar with the area since I am married in a neighbouring area and I was of Swati ethnicity, and a professional woman. This proved to be a useful negotiating point, as acceptance was always going to be difficult.

The initial plan was to study 6 schools, 3 headed by females and 3 headed by males in Nkomazi West Circuit. This number was later revised after realising that this could be achieved within the circuit. The low numbers of female school principals meant that in order to achieve that number, I had to spread my study to other areas of the province and doing so was going to involve some costs – both in monetary terms and in time. Initially I had planned to focus on two sites one nearer to an urban area and another further away from urban areas of Zimbabwe. A Master's degree study is of limited duration and requires one to be clever in planning, so that the time taken in the field is reduced. Successful fieldwork depends on how the limited time is spent. My fieldwork was already delayed by the delay in granting permission to conduct the study by the district education office.

The number of schools was reduced to four schools in Nkomazi West and Khulangwane Circuit, as mentioned, and largely focused on women teachers in these four schools. This was because of their specific context. One was headed by a female principal and the other two had female deputy school principal while last one, although headed by a male had women dominating subject headships. These women provided the study with appropriate subjects, and allowed for a focus on these women, and facilitated the contextualisation of the investigations, and this allowed a deeper understanding of the women teachers.

3.4.2 Population and sampling

The study population comprised of female teachers in Ehlanzeni District. The focus was mainly secondary female teachers, although female teachers from combined schools formed part of the population. Strydom in De Vos (2012: 223) defines a sample as a small portion of the total set of objects, events or persons from which a representative selection is made. It comprises of elements or a subset of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study, or it can be viewed as a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which we are interested (Unrau, Gabor & Grinnell 2007: 279). Sampling means taking a portion or a

smaller number of units of a population as representative or having particular characteristics of that total population (Denscombe, 2008; Kerlinger et al., 2000).

According to Maree (2012: 79), sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for study. In qualitative research sampling is flexible and often continues until no new themes emerge from the data collection process. The study made use of non-probability techniques, namely the purposive sampling technique. Non-probability sampling is a sampling method that is not based on known probabilities. Purposive sampling means that participants are selected because of some defining characteristics that make them bearers of the data needed for the study.

Such samples are not valid for obtaining true representations of larger populations. Research with specific groups such as female educators, however, calls for non-probability sampling (Fisher & Foreit 2002:67). The researcher used non-probability sampling, because in non-probability sampling each unit in a sampling frame does not have an equal chance of being selected for a particular study. She also used purposive sampling because it implies that the researcher decides at the design stage of a study the typical characteristics of the participants to be included and the number of participants. In purposive sampling, researchers purposely choose participants, who are relevant to the research topic.

Purposive sampling was used so that individuals were selected because they possessed some relevant knowledge about issues of promotions as they have more than 10 years of service. Moreover, purposive sampling was chosen in order to select few participants (cases) according to the list of specific criteria. According to Morse (2003: 5), the selection of participants in qualitative research must be both appropriate and adequate. Appropriate implies the degree to which the choice of participants and method of selection fit the purpose of the study.

At Ehlanzeni District, 4 schools were selected: 3 secondary schools and 1 combined school. The sample was skewed towards schools that have a large population of female teachers and those with female principals. At the school level, 10 participants were selected, based on their

position at the school. For a study that focused on promotability, teachers with more than 10 years of service, subject HODs, Deputy Principals and Principals, were approached to participate in the study. In total, 3 female educators, 3 female HODs, 3 female Deputy Principals and 1 female Principal in 3 secondary schools and 1 combined school at Ehlanzeni District participated in the study.

3.4.3 Activities at the case study

An extended study was conducted on participating individual female teachers in a three-month period between June and August 2018. I undertook extended visits to individual female teachers to gather their views and understand both their work and home situations. Adopting an extended approach was the most appropriate approach for a study that sought to understand people's situation from their perspectives. This exercise involved extended periods of interaction. Once-off interviews have a problem in that they are an exchange between people who are strangers, and the possibility of those being interviewed hiding their true opinions are high. Extended interviews, on the other hand, allow the parties to interact on an extended basis and can take place at times and places convenient to the one being interviewed.

Each extended visit, particularly to teachers, focused on specific themes, and an interview schedule was used as a guide. These interviews usually took place outside the work environment, either at the participants' homes or on shopping trips. The extended approach and the fact that some sections took place in the home of the respondents meant that the study extended beyond women teachers to those around them. This also meant that I received unsolicited information from people other than the women teachers. One of the reasons why I ended up receiving unsolicited information was because the interaction and conversations with the female teachers took place within a broader social setting and did not exclude other people around the respondents. I employed a combination of techniques to collect data.

I conducted one on one interviews and made observations of the women teachers and their surroundings. The interviews were open conversations that focused on a particular issue, and I made sure that these did not degenerate into a question and answer session, but what others have called a '*conversation with a purpose*' (Kann and Cannell 1957: 149). These

conversations and observations revealed the complexity of the promotability question, as well as the complexity of being a woman teacher in a rural setting. It is always difficult to tap into these dynamics when using conventional interview methods. Long term interaction has an advantage in that it allows the researcher into the lives of those being interviewed.

More importantly, through long-term interaction, trust is earned, and this allows the respondents freedom to engage in issues more freely and in-depth. This is because always easy to share issues with someone you trust. Through the approach that I adopted, I became a friend to some, younger sister to some and a daughter to others. For such an approach to work and produce the relevant data, a structured approach was necessary. The discussions were organised according to major themes on the subject, and I made sure that I recalled the key issues being discussed. This was often difficult because there were diversions and many stop gaps in our conversations. However, I always made sure that I would note most of the discussions without disrupting the process.

In some cases, I would record the early conversation before there were digressions, which happens with any extended interaction. I made sure that I would probe and seek clarity or seek more information or follow-up if something interesting emerged from the interaction. But, to ensure control I made use of an interview schedule. The interview schedule served as a guide and was a particularly useful tool in a study that adopted an extended approach and sometimes the interaction took place on different days.

3.5 Challenges and ethical considerations

This section looks at the limitations of the study and the ethical issues that the study raised and how they were handled. For every study that involves fieldwork, there are certain challenges that are encountered and these challenges, if they are not properly handled, can compromise the research. This also applies to research ethics issues.

3.5.1 Fieldwork challenges

Magudu Village is an area with poor communication facilities. As a result, it was difficult connecting between institutions and exposing their links under such circumstances. This

negatively impacted on the exercise, by making it time-costly. Time was a constraint, and this reduced the time frame on the field. This was an academic study; hence, the researcher did not have enough time for data saturation. This was countered by adopting purposive sampling technique, which aims at relevance, even if the sample is small.

Another limitation was lack of transport. As such travelling from one point to the next, gathering data was so demanding physically, and the researcher was forced to walk for long distances at times. In addition, some participants chose to withdraw after initially agreeing to participate. These were usually short notice withdrawals, which made it difficult for the researcher to find suitable replacements. However, this did not compromise the research because the study is qualitative, and conclusions could be reached on the basis of the data from the remaining participants. It is unfortunate that some respondents expected incentives and withdrew the moment they realized they were not going to be paid.

Authorities also delayed in granting approval for me to proceed with data collection. The first letter requesting approval to conduct a study in schools was misplaced before it could reach the MPDE HOD. I only got to know of the problem when I was making a follow-up. This meant that I had to start all over again. After the new application, approval took over a month. It appears that officials were suspicious of the study and saw it as a threat in its efforts to improve the status of women in the workplace. Approval only came after I had made a personal appeal to the office where I clarified the aims of the study.

3.5.2 Research ethics

The research was carried out independently and impartially, in accordance with the rules and regulations set by the University of Pretoria. The fundamental ethical rule of social research is that it must bring no harm to participants (Babbie 2007). Furthermore, the researcher should weigh the risks against the importance and possible benefits of the specific research project. The researcher has an ethical obligation to protect participants within all possible reasonable limits from any form of physical discomfort that may emerge from the research project (Creswell 2003: 64). Protecting participants from harm is a key consideration in any study undertaken and involving human subjects. From this perspective, I realized that women's promotability is a sensitive issue. As a result, careful design of research instruments

was required. I was ethically obliged to ensure that I was competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed investigation.

Beside these issues, there were other ethical issues pertinent to my research that I had to consider, and these are addressed below:

Anonymity and confidentiality: This were integral in this study considering that female educators might raise sensitive issues. There were therefore concerns about the security of their jobs and fear of possible victimization. Pseudonyms were used to identify my respondents and their schools, and all information given by respondents was not shared with anyone, to ensure confidentiality. I had to ensure that the data was store safely in my google drive and was shared with my supervisor.

Informed consent: All those who were engaged in the study as sources of data were informed ahead of time. I explained the purpose of the study and their expected roles in the study. I also made sure that they knew their rights: they could withdraw from the study at any time during the study and decide not to answer some questions if they made them uncomfortable. Once they had agreed to participate, they were asked to sign a consent form (see Appendix: H). Those who decided against signing were allowed to participate without signing the form. Permission was also requested from informants to record the conversations for quality analysis, where necessary.

Authorization to carry out the study: It would've been disrespectful of me if the proposed study was to be conducted without permission from the responsible authorities in Ehlanzeni District and the respective school principals. I had to seek permission from the district, and once the permission was granted, I approached the individual school principals for their permission for me to carry out the study in their schools. Acquiring the permission limits disturbances in the process of research in cases where authority agents require proof of permission to conduct the study. In this sense, accessibility was improved.

Trustworthiness: In this study issues of validity and reliability in the individual in-depth interviews were considered important. This is called trustworthiness. It was established using the four criteria; namely, credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

Voluntary: Participation in this study was voluntary. This means that prospective participants had the right to decide voluntarily whether to participate in this study, without risking any penalty or prejudicial treatment. It also meant that people had the right to ask questions, to refuse to give information, to ask for clarification, or to terminate their participation. In this study therefore, only those who were willing to take part were included. In addition, participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time they wanted to without prejudication. They were assured that withdrawal from the study would not make them suffer any harm or discomfort.

3.6 Data Analysis and Triangulation

Since data that was collected was qualitative in nature, a thematic analysis approach was adopted. This entails identifying themes emerging from the broad data set, which are used in the development of the dissertation. The purpose of the Thematic Analysis was to identify patterns of meaning across a dataset. The process evolved in steps. The first step involved grouping similar data and allocating codes. The second involved comparing the groups and further grouping. Three broad themes emerged at the end of the process, and these were used to build the arguments and positions taken in this study. Some of the data were used in their raw state, as direct quotations and cases, to support the argument and positions adopted.

During data collection, and during analysis, triangulation of data was done through bringing several sources, connected variables, and weighing the responses against each other. This is what this study did, by drawing from what was exhumed from the Ehlanzeni District versus what has been written in history, not only of the area of study but in those areas that share the same experiences with the place, too.

Primary and secondary sources of data were used. This was done to validate the data collected, refining it in ways. It became a tool through which implementation of the recommendations would yield visible and possible results. This was done to foster reliability

of research work and prepare further research work pertaining to gender issues, so that the research itself was an open process that had provision for adaptability, in order to bend in situations as they unfolded.

3.7 Chapter Summary

The chapter presented the methodology adopted by the study. It highlighted the qualitative approach that guided the study, particularly the qualitative methods used – the review of key literature and documents; and the variety of ethnographic techniques adopted at the case study level. It sought to justify the study area and its significance in any study that focuses on gender and leadership. The chapter then presented the kind of challenges encountered in conducting field research, together with the research ethics issues involved in embarking on such a study. In the last section, the chapter presents the data analysis method employed by the study.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation

4.1. Introduction

Observing the statistics on male and female principals in South African schools as a whole, there is little wonder why some people understand the sector from a broader societal perspective that views gender as an important determinant in leadership positions in the country's school system. Like most sectors in the country, men continue to dominate leadership positions as School Principals than women. This study set out to understand this question from the perspective of the women teachers, who are the people that are affected. It particularly set out to understand women teachers' situation and their ambitions and aspirations including their teaching lives and home situations. The study was guided by the general narrative that positions women as a disadvantaged group. While this narrative continues to gain consensus, it has failed to accommodate the issue of agency, particularly the element of choice.

The objective of this chapter is to analyse the realities of women teachers vis-à-vis the general gender stereotyping of women's situation. The chapter draws data from extended visits and discussions with women teachers from secondary schools in Nkomazi in the Ehlanzeni District in Mpumalanga Province. The chapter begins by way of background. It provides a profile of the study area and the schools that participated in the study. Such an approach was key in gaining an understanding of the social context and grounding our analysis of the women teachers on social aspects. The second section focuses on the female teachers and their views on gender disparities in leadership positions at schools. The section takes the reader through a journey with these women teachers and how they look at things.

The third section focuses on how female teachers see themselves in relation to their male counterparts. The views of these women are key if we are to understand their ambitions and what needs to be done in policy terms. The section following this is an analysis of women in relation to the principal positions. It first provides a brief account of what it takes to be a school principal, before providing an answer to the question whether the women teachers have the necessary attributes to be school principals. The last section then explores a critical

question in the women and promotability debate in South Africa: how the women teachers understand the gender reforms that were introduced by government, and how they see these reforms as impacting their situations as women.

4.2 The Social Setting of the Study

Contrary to some countries in the north, which have implemented successful work-place based gender reforms, the South African society still has a strong patriarchal culture, which is strongly held and protected through the traditional system in some societies. Patriarchy is particularly strong in rural areas, where traditional institutions have remained undiluted by modernity. Of course, the country has introduced modern institutions like the democratic local government institution, which has opened opportunities to leadership for women. However, the traditional institutions continue to command high respect from certain sections of society. While the traditional institution has played a large part in defending and championing the interests of men, some ethnic groups also have customs that disproportionately disadvantages women over others. This section looks at this context in an attempt to understand women teachers from the society in which they live. It looks at both the geographical and social context of Ehlanzeni District before analysing the education aspects, including the secondary schools that participated in this study.

4.2.1 Ehlanzeni District in Mpumalanga

The four schools that participated in the study are located in the Nkomazi West and Khulangwane Circuit in Nkomazi Local Municipality, Ehlanzeni District in Mpumalanga Province. Ehlanzeni District provided a perfect setting for a study of gender issues, partly because of its rural setting, but also its traditional orientation. These factors combined provided a setting where the position, situation and roles of women in society can be interrogated and better understood. Rural areas are generally known for their custodianship of tradition, and the more rural a setting the more the position of women as subordinate is being exacerbated. More importantly, women in these social systems are brought up and taught to conform to these systems, and anyone who questions these traditions is seen as a social rebel.

Nonetheless, Ehlanzeni District, like the rest of the country, has been integrated into the modern economic system, and women have entered the workforce at all levels. Women work

locally, in towns and as migrants in major urban centres, such as Mbombela, Johannesburg and Pretoria, where they hold both professional and menial jobs.

The Ehlanzeni District Education office is situated in Ehlanzeni District Municipality, in Mbombela Local Municipality, within the scenic Lowveld area of Mpumalanga Province. The district's economy is dominated by agriculture, forestry and tourism (Nxesi, 2015). The district is bordered by Mozambique and Swaziland, which are accessible through the Matsamo, Mananga and Lebombo border posts. It boasts four major perennial rivers: the Crocodile, the Inkomati, the Mlumati and the Sabie, and with the dominance of agriculture, these rivers contribute to agricultural production and employment (Nxesi, 2015). According to Nxesi (2015) the district has two components of agricultural, namely subsistence and commercial, which accounts for a large proportion of employment. Moreover, the district is comprised of five local municipalities, including, Mbombela, Nkomazi, Thaba Chweu, Umjindi and Bushbuckridge local municipalities. According to the Statistics SA census from 1996, 2001 and 2011, the population of Ehlanzeni District Municipality averaged 1 688 615.

Figure 2: Ehlanzeni District Map



Mbombela Local Municipality is situated in the north-eastern part of South Africa within the lowveld sub-region of the Mpumalanga Province in the Ehlanzeni District Municipality. The Mbombela Municipality is the capital city of Mpumalanga Province and the head office of the provincial government (legislature), where the Ehlanzeni District office is located. The Mbombela Municipality is also home of the Government Research Institute for Citrus and Subtropical Fruits and the Lowveld Botanical Gardens. It is a major stopover point for tourists on their way to the Kruger National Park and to Mozambique (Mbombela Local Municipality, 2013).

Furthermore, the schools studied are situated in the Nkomazi Local Municipality. The Nkomazi Local Municipality is situated in the eastern part of the Ehlanzeni District Municipality. The Nkomazi Municipality is situated between Swaziland and Mozambique and is linked with Swaziland by two provincial roads the R570 and R571, and with Mozambique by a railway line and the main national road (N4), which forms the Maputo Corridor (Nkomazi Municipality IDP, 2011-2012). It is a deep rural area under the control of 8 traditional authorities and comprises of about 43 villages, including the Mlambo, Hhoyi, Siboshwa, Kwa-Lugedlane, Mawewe, Matsamo, Mhlaba and Lomshiyo Tribal Authority.

The Nkomazi area has a high rate of unemployment due to the demographic profile which is mainly rural. This has a negative impact in terms of attracting investors (ibid). Shortage of skills and illiteracy prevent the people from being marketable in terms of employment, the majority earn below the poverty line (Nkomazi Municipality IDP, 2011-2012). Most people work on farms, Home-based Care Projects, Extended Public Works Programmes (EPWP) and Community Works Programmes (CWP), which have become the major source of earning and living for rural people.

The 2007 Statistics SA Community Survey shows that the population in Nkomazi Municipality was 338 095 (Statistics South Africa, 2007). These include Swati and Shangaan speaking people. Generally, the Nkomazi Local Municipality is an overpopulated area and the population has been growing since the 1980s, mainly because of migrants from Mozambique and Swaziland. This migration was dramatically increased as a result of war, starvation and poverty in the two countries. Thousands of Shangaan people were forced to flee their traditional way of life as farmers in the countryside to South Africa where some

landed in the Nkomazi Local Municipality. The ethnic composition of the district is very significant in any study of gender and leadership positions in society. Swati and Shangaan ethnic groups have a patriarchal culture and are characterised by unequal power relations between men and women and gender- based discrimination. In these societies, the division of labour is clearly defined, with the women's place generally seen to be the domestic space where they look after the children. Polygamy is also condoned, and men can marry many wives. It emerged from the study:

The responsibility of women in most families is to care for the children, cook, clean, and gather food and farm for their families. Men are seen as the main providers and are usually the spouse in the household that will have a job aside from the farm that brings in money to the family (Interview, Nkomazi, 3 May 2018).

While ability and laws allow women to be the providers for the family, there is little opportunity for them to do so. It is not often that a woman will have a job, especially if she has a family (Interview, Nkomazi, 20 July 2018).

As a result, Nkomazi Local Municipality, being a rural area and occupied by migrants from Swaziland and Mozambique, has adapted the patriarchal practices, which makes the role of women invisible.

4.2.2 Status of women in the education sector

In South Africa and the world as a whole, women have been regarded as incapable compared to their male counterparts, in all spheres of life, such as socially, economically, and politically (Aja-Okorie, 2013; Giroux, 2013; Kirai, 2012; Domenico, 2007; Mbepera, 2015). However, the emergence of democracy has brought drastic changes on the status of women. As a result, women entering the workforce have increased since early twentieth century. Nevertheless, structural gender division of labour continue to lie at the heart of many cultural and social practices in South Africa (SAHRC, 2017).

Considering the national statistics by the Basic Education Minister, Angie Motsheka, there is still a significant gender gap in the education sector in the headship positions. This section focuses on the statistics of female principals and female deputy principals from all the four

Districts in Mpumalanga Province. The percentage of female principals as on October 2017 was reported at 35.05%, while the percentage of female deputy principals as on October 2017 was reported at 44.91% (MPDE, 2018). The table below shows the Mpumalanga Province statistics of schools and the percentages of serving female deputy principals and female principals.

Table 4.1: Mpumalanga Province female principals and deputy principals

<i>Districts</i>	<i>No of Schools</i>	<i>No. Female Principals</i>	<i>No. Female D/Principals</i>	<i>% Female Principals</i>	<i>% Female D/Principals</i>
<i>Bohlabela District</i>	397	103	84	29.51%	40.00%
<i>Ehlanzeni District</i>	402	101	177	30.33%	50.86%
<i>Gert Sibande District</i>	545	191	129	41.16%	43.43%
<i>Nkangala District</i>	547	169	122	36.50%	42.81%
<i>Total</i>	1 891	569	512	35.05%	44.91%

The preceding provincial statistics include four districts: Bohlabela, Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande and Nkangala Districts, including all schools (secondary, primary, combined and special schools). The number of serving female principals in Bohlabela District was recorded at 103 out of 397 schools; in Ehlanzeni District there were 101 female school principals out of 402 schools; in Gert Sibande District 191 out of 545 schools were headed by women; and in Nkangala District 169 out of 547 schools had female school principals (MPDE, 2017).

Subsequently, the number of serving female deputy principals differs from the above statistics. The number of serving female deputy principals in Bohlabela District as of October 2017 was 84; in Ehlanzeni District there were 177 female deputy principals; 129 in Gert Sibande District; and 122 in Nkangala District. Bearing in mind the preceding statistics, Ehlanzeni District has more serving female deputy principals than serving female principals, compared to the other three districts, which have a larger number of female principals than female deputy principals. The total number of schools and the total number of serving female

principals show that there is a gender gap in school leadership in all the four districts in Mpumalanga Province.

Similarly, a gender gap also exists in the circuits and in schools. I will focus on two circuits here, the Khulangwane and Nkomazi West circuits. The Khulangwane Circuit is comprised of 33 schools: 10 secondary, 18 primary, and 5 combined schools. The Nkomazi West Circuit is comprised of 37 schools: 12 secondary, 23 primary and 2 combined schools. In these schools, only 2 secondary schools are led by females, compared to 10 that are led by males. The situation is better at the primary school level where there are 14 female principals compared to 9 male principals.

However, males still dominate in the two combined school, which are both led by males. The data is highly suggestive and confirm the general stereo-type that females are better suited to lead primary schools, which are less challenging. It is important to note that these views emerged during discussions with female teachers, which may suggest that even women believe that primary schools are the best spaces for female principals. The table below shows the number of schools and principals in Khulangwane and Nkomazi West Circuits.

Table 4.2: Schools and principals in Khulangwane and Nkomazi West Circuits

<i>Schools</i>	<i>Khulangwane Circuit</i>	<i>Nkomazi West Circuit</i>	<i>Female Principals</i>	<i>Male Principals</i>
<i>Secondary</i>	10	12	04	18
<i>Primary</i>	18	23	21	20
<i>Combined</i>	05	02	01	6
<i>Total</i>	33	37	26	44

Amongst the four schools studied, only one school is led by a female principal, while the other three are led by male principals. One of the schools had never had a substantive female principal, but was once headed by an acting female principal, who failed to complete her acting period. This is ironic, as teaching is generally regarded as a profession for women. The other two schools had female principals, but they apparently did not last long in their posts.

The community was portrayed as generally very hostile to female principal and was less accommodating and unforgiving if women principals erred than when men did so. What this section has done is to provide a context in which we can understand the gender gap in school leadership positions.

It has looked at the social context, which presents a gloomy picture for women. It then demonstrated that a gender gap exists at all levels in the education system, except at the primary school level, where women still dominate the principal positions. Taking these observations further and locating them within the social context, what emerges is a picture that conforms to societal stereotyping. Women principals are motherly and are able to deal with children, which is why they dominate at the primary school level. This is the general stereotype, which unfortunately has gained consensus among scholars and social commentators. However, how do the women teachers see things that affect them in the schools? This is the focus of the next section, which focuses on the perspectives of women teachers.

4.3 Views on the Gender Gap in School Leadership

There is certainly a gender gap in all areas of leadership in the secondary school system in the district, except in the general teaching category, where women dominate. Women teachers certainly recognised the gender gap at all levels. There is no gender balance in leadership at the district level, circuit level and school levels. At the school level, the women form the main teaching staff and both male teachers and female teachers occupy subject headship positions. There are many reasons that have been provided by feminist scholars, and these women teachers were expected to draw extensively on this narrative in their responses. It was expected that the women would be critical of the gender gap in the secondary school and their explanations would reveal their subordinate position in society.

This section therefore set out to understand the gender gap from the perspective of the women teachers from the four schools. How the women see the gap is key to our understanding of the leadership question in the South African school system. These perspectives reveal the women's understanding of their situation and the self. However, the perspectives should be understood from a particular context: the women are both

professionals with qualifications and societal members socialised in a particular system, and this defines how they view things around them and how they respond to these issues.

4.3.1 Challenges on women mobility

While there are many reasons for the gender gap in school leadership, one particularly emerged as an important contributor during the study. As the available principal positions are few and sometimes too far away from one's place of origin, women tended to remain in schools near their homes, except where the positions were available in urban areas, where relocation was much easier. For example, in the Khulangwane and Nkomazi West circuit, there are only 70 schools, 22 secondary, 7 combined and 41 Primary schools. These schools have leadership positions for principals and deputy principals. However, these positions are always not available.

Once principal positions have been filled, it means they can only be available again when the holders either die or retire. For example, at the schools studied, one of the principals had been at the school for 11 years, replacing his predecessor who got a post in the Nkomazi Local Municipality. If the former principal had not moved, he would still be holding on to his post. Before the former principal, there was a female principal who died after she served as a school principal for 6 years. The situation at the second school is revealing for our understanding of gender gap from the point raised by the women teachers. The school is led by a female School Principal, who has been at the school as a School Principal since 2001. This means that she has been occupying that post for more than 17 years. Similarly, her deputy has been in that position for more than 17 years. If occupants of positions stay too long, such positions do not become available, as indicated in the following excerpt:

These positions are not easily available. Incumbents do not relinquish these positions. There is no relay. These people occupy these positions until they die or retire. And even if they do die or retire, the deputy is there to take over. If the deputy does not, there are people from outside waiting and scrambling for these positions also (Interview, Nkomazi, 27 August 2018).

Although when they finally become available, school leadership positions are available to both women and men, the latter have advantages over the former because they are freely mobile and can move anywhere. This, according to the older women teachers has both social

and historical roots and they link it both to patriarchy and the culture of migrant labour that has developed with the development of capitalism in the region. In the context of the culture, the most suitable jobs for women are those that are available locally. As Mrs Khumalo noted ‘women have family responsibilities, and even if they have others looking after the home and children, the home is their own’ (Interview, Nkomazi, 11 August 2018).

After work women with families prefer to travel to their families. Thus, women’s movements are much more restricted, and this means they lose opportunities that may arise out of their surroundings. Mrs Khumalo continued, ‘...most women have families and have to stay in touch with family, even if it means letting go of opportunities’. As such, all the female teachers had homes either locally or where they could commute to work on a daily basis.

The women teachers that participated in the study, all lived locally, all lived in surrounding areas, and they commuted to and from work on a daily basis. All the women had their own transport and often drove to work. In situations where they did not drive, they used the public transport system. There is a reliable transport system connecting the school from other areas and the urban centres where some teachers prefer to live. They were able to stay home and commute to work, balancing their roles as wives and workers in the process.

Thus, married women would seldom take up jobs in places where they would have to spend time away from the family and home for long periods. In cases where they had to work away far from home, they would prefer to travel home every weekend. However, unmarried women are free to take up jobs away from their homes, as they have no family commitments. In the study only 2 were single and came from outside the community. However, single women without own families are mostly young and fairly junior teachers who do not qualify for school leadership positions. This would mean then that the women who qualify for leadership positions are faced with challenges of mobility outside their surrounding areas where their families live.

This cannot be said of men whose attachment to the family is comparably weaker. This means that the men would most likely take positions that are far away from their homes, where they will need to travel and live far away from their families. Most men generally

work far away from home and spend a greater part of the time at work. When posts are advertised, anyone who qualifies is eligible to apply for the posts, regardless of gender and area of origin. Any person with the relevant qualifications could be principal or deputy principal. However, these posts are few locally. Therefore, there were few, if any, opportunities for women to apply, while for men, there were no such constraints. As one of the women teachers reasoned: ‘they could take jobs anywhere’ (Interview, Nkomazi, 23 August 2018).

Gradually men come to dominate posts in schools and leadership posts, not because they are preferred over women, but due to their availability and adventure. One of the female teachers talked of men as adventurers and ‘free souls that can float anywhere without the additional baggage of the family’ (Interview, Nkomazi, 17 August 2018).

Certainly, the women teachers were not expecting to move out of their community to take-up jobs. They would, however, consider leadership positions available in their areas. This has certain implications though. It implies that women have competition for the few school leadership jobs available locally from men who are prepared to relocate from other areas within the province and sometimes outside the province. It is not surprising that of the secondary schools in the circuit, some schools were headed by people from outside the circuit. Even in the schools that participated in the study, one of the principals came from outside the community. The principal came from Venda and lived alone. He had left his family behind which he visited at the end of the month and sometimes when schools close.

4.3.2 Culture of male migration

This is also part of the culture in migrant labour societies, where men are on transit (Thebe, 2018) and the home and family are the immediate responsibility of women. Gradually this has been accepted as normal, and women teachers certainly find it difficult to work away from families, which act as a major constraint to mobility. Christian Boehm captured this culture in his study of the Basotho. He observed that:

Once offered a job, a Basotho man will always leave his field to others and go for the cash, which he needs badly.... Men were and are supposed to make money (Boehm 2003: 5).

Even in the current study, some women were married to migrant labour men. Some of these women have been *de facto* heads of households since they were married. Mrs Maphanga, for example, had been married for 33 years. Her husband works as a mine worker in Rustenburg where he stays. He visits mostly on month ends. Mrs Maphanga lives in Mgobodzi with her 5 children including a 12-year-old who attends a primary school. These children require her attention, and while the husband is a central part of their lives, he is rarely physically available. Similarly, Mrs Gumede has been married to Mr Gumede, who has been working in Polokwane as a Manager for Bahwaduba Bus Services for 30 years. He visits home after 2 months, sometimes after 3 months and stays only for 2 days. Mrs Gumede takes care of everything as a head of household as Mr Gumede spends much of his time at his work in Polokwane City.

Exceptions were a few women, like Mrs Sibozza, whose husband worked locally as a school principal in another village near Sibange. The Sibozza family relocated from Matsulu to Sibange after Mr Sibozza got the principalship at Madadeni, and Mrs Sibozza requested a transfer from Matsulu to be with her husband. Mr Sibozza would drop off the children at school and fetch them in the afternoon as their school was along his way to work. This meant Mrs Sibozza did not have to worry about the children when going to school. On weekends, they spent their time at home, made decisions together and went shopping together.

It should then be expected that the women teachers will come to accept that men should dominate leadership positions in schools, because they are freely mobile. In fact, they are expected to be away from home. As Colson (1962) and Thebe (2018) have realised, women would prefer men to be away from the home, so that they can exercise freedom of decision and choice. This does not mean that the women teachers expected to be led by a man rather than a woman. Instead, they expected men in these leadership positions because men are migrants, while women have certain constraints in migrating. One of my respondents, a female teacher called, Ms Khoza, reasoned as follows:

I think the under-representation of women in leadership positions at school is a societal issue and our gender roles and responsibilities. It is not difficulty for a man to leave his family, while it is not motherly for a woman to leave away from his family. That is how we were brought up...*umama onjani oshiya ingane zodwa* (what mother can leave children alone) (Interview, Nkomazi, 22 August 2018).

The dominance of men in leadership positions was therefore not questioned by the women teachers. Some saw the appointment of males to head secondary schools as a rational decision.

4.3.3 Culture and socialization

Moving away from their profession to the general world of work, the women teachers also recognised that men still dominated leadership positions more than two decades after independence and democracy. They mostly attributed this to cultural aspects and gender divisions of labour, which historically defined spaces for men and women. Women were mostly confined to the home, as care givers, and where women had to work. There were certain jobs that they were expected to occupy, and they mostly took jobs like domestic work, nursing and teaching at the professional level. The women teachers pointed out that while men have now entered these jobs, including nursing in the medical profession, women are most likely to occupy positions of authority in these professions. One of the teachers observed:

If you go to the local clinic now, the Nurse-in-Charge will be a woman and not man. This does not mean that men do not want these jobs. They do. But, women dominate the nursing profession and because of their numbers, the probability of one of them taking charge is very high compared to men who have just started entering the profession (Interview, Nkomazi, 12 August 2018).

Furthermore, because of the culture that has often positioned men as leaders – in the home and public spheres – men are generally seen as good principals. Society accept male principals and welcome their appointments. However, society will accept female principals grudgingly. One of the teachers raised an important issue:

In South Africa's environment where the performance of students and Matric results are used to judge performance, female principals are under pressure to produce better results. Once the Matric results are poor, they are blamed on the principal's gender. You hear people saying, 'how could our children pass? The school is headed by a woman' (Interview, Nkomazi, 11 June 2018).

Society associates being female with being soft and therefore failure to handle the demand of leading teachers and students. Sometimes society would refuse to accept the appointment of a female principal and demand that a man be appointed instead. There have been cases where communities have demonstrated and put pressure on authorities to reconsider such appointments.

Mrs Sibiya remembered the time when she was first appointed Acting School Principal after the death of the male principal who had been at the school for a long period:

A community member asked if I will manage to head the school because women are too soft and teenage learners are difficult to handle. He said the enrolment will drop because learners will not go to class. He reminded me the former principal would force them to go to class every day after break. When I called parents' meetings, they would not attend and informed their children that they were busy, and I should communicate what I wanted through them. For those who would attend, they would disrupt the proceedings all speak at the same time, before you tell them what the meeting was about. If you ever mentioned money issues they would leave me with the SGB members and other teachers. When I was appointed, I thought I was ready to head the school because I had more than 10 years of experience serving as a Deputy Principal. So, the lack of support and attitude of community members was surprising. I did not complete my acting term. Instead I requested that someone be appointed to take up the post (Interview, Nkomazi, 16 August 2018).

They would not mind however, if a female was appointed to deputise a male. The women teachers said they would also be comfortable with such an arrangement. The teachers attributed this to socialisation:

Our socialisation as children in families determines how we see and understand leadership, and so is the career of a boy and a girl. The man is head of the households and the woman is typically his assistant (Interview, Nkomazi, 12 June 2018).

Mrs Maphanga also told of a similar tale to that of Mrs Sibiya, where societal stereotypes were applied to a female principal. 'You know society tends to see a school differently if it is led by a female principal. In most cases, parents think that learners fail because the principal is not doing her job well', she reasoned. She told of an incident when their former principal died, and a female had to act as a principal:

She was a very good deputy principal before her appointment to act as our principal. She had good relations with parents and society and was well respected. After her appointment, she lost the support of parents. The situation was so bad that she started complaining of severe headaches. One day she fainted after an argument with a learner's parent who had told her that she was.... This shows how difficult it is to deal with society when you are a female (Interview, Nkomazi, 13 June 2018).

In the case of the School Principal mentioned by Mrs Sibiya, societal attitudes were also displayed by the school SGB, a body that is expected to work together with the principal. These bodies are elected by parents and represent parents and what they stand for. In the case of the SGB, it was not supportive of the principal and was always looking for mistakes. One day, the SGB is said to have confronted the principal, demanding to know why she took up the position, knowing it was above her capabilities. They accused her of destroying their school and causing conflict as she could not manage the school.

In another incident, the female principal sent home a learner who was caught smoking marijuana. It was school policy that a transgressing learner is sent home and would bring his/her parents before any disciplinary process is instituted. However, in this case the community took advantage of the incident and staged a protest, demanding the resignation of the principal. This, according to Ms Khoza, reveals our cultural beliefs that men are leaders. Society trusts male leaders and undermines women leaders:

.... men are strong, powerful and more authoritative than women. Not that the women are weaker, but every home needs a male head. You see it at home when the father is around. At secondary school level students need a fatherly figure. They are teenagers and are very troublesome.... We also need to take into account of the environment. This is a rural environment and we are socialised to see men differently from women, and both society and students react differently to the two (Interview, Nkomazi, 28 August 2018).

Given societal attitudes towards female leaders, it is expected that these will be transferred to the school environment. According to the women teachers that have experienced the situation as school heads, the school environment can also be toxic. This is particularly true where there are male teachers who have leadership ambitions. Men generally do not want to be led

by women. In addition, male teachers do not respect female heads of school and would do everything to undermine their leadership. According to one of the women teachers:

Men think that women only occupy leadership position because they sleep with those in authority, but they do not deserve the positions and have no qualities for leadership. It then becomes difficult to respect their authority (Interview, Nkomazi, 28 August 2018).

To illustrate this position, the women drew attention to how people refer to the leadership in the education department in their region. The phrase '*petti coat*' government has been used to refer to the leadership because the minister is a female, the HOD is a female and the Circuit Manager is a female.

The challenges associated with these leadership positions, the labels and names that women are subjected to tend to discourage women from assuming leadership positions at schools, even if they have aspirations for leadership. This is generally reflected in leadership positions in the district where men dominate secondary school headship, while women are mostly deputy principals

Secondary schools emerged as particularly difficult environments for female principals. For example, the schools are now in competition for high performance, and all principals strive for 100% which is determined by grade 12 results, when the school underperforms, the principal has to account to the department. At times educators do not put much effort in their work, and when learners fail, the principal must account. At times learners talk back at female principals, calling them names and insulting them. According to Mrs Zitha, 'ingane zikaMandela (learners born after President Mandela was released from prison) do not want school, ... they go to school for food and when they are full, they start to harass the educators in classes'

Given the challenges with the management of high school teenagers, female teachers were sceptical about taking up leadership positions at secondary school level. Five of the teachers said they would not apply for a principal's post even if it became available, describing the position as a 'headache'. This then provides a plausible explanation for the fewer women

principals at secondary schools. Not that women are less qualified or discriminated against; rather, women shun these positions which have been made male positions. Coming from a rural society where masculinity is emphasised, the learners respond better to males than females. According to the female teachers, the situation is different in primary schools, where the students require a mother figure.

4.3.4 Apartheid and school infrastructure

Besides the dominance of women in particular professions, the women associated the gender gap in leadership positions in schools with South Africa's unfortunate historical past. Such explanations are dominant in South African society, and it was not surprising that the women teachers also fell back on these explanations. The explanation, which draws from the usual 'blame apartheid for all South Africa's problems', portrays women as a disadvantaged group that was not afforded opportunities like their male counterparts. Certain laws and provisions are blamed for disadvantaging women in the labour markets.

One such law or policy that the elderly women teachers pointed to be the sufferance policy that were meant to limit the urbanisation of Africans. Women were prevented from accompanying their men to work in cities and were confined to the reserves. The second issue involved limited access to education opportunities. There were few schools for blacks and these were some distance apart, forcing children to travel long distances to attend school. The situation favoured boys than girls, which meant that many girls could not access education. Mrs Gumede remembered that there was only one primary school in their area, which was about 7 km away. To attend school children had to wake up early in the morning and return at dusk. Some parents felt that the distance was too long for girls and withdrew them from school.

The older women teachers had gone to school during the racially segregated school system and were educated through the Bantu Education System. The system was segregated along racial and ethnic lines. There was an educational department that administered and regulated education for each ethnic and racial group. Four racial and ethnic groups were recognized by the regime: Blacks, Indians, Coloured and Whites. The black population was further grouped into Zulu, Pedi, Tswana, Sotho, Shangaan, Venda and Ndebele (Thobejane, 2013). Swati was not included as a separate category, and the women associated the high illiterate rate in

Ehlanzeni District to the system. Without a system that catered for the Swati ethnic group, it meant they had to travel to other areas to access schools. This would definitely affect girls more than men.

Segregation extended to teacher training, where blacks were trained in colleges that conferred certificates of education rather than degrees. Three of the teachers had gone through the system, were engaged as certificated teachers until they upgraded their qualification through the University of South Africa.

Even then, it is the denial of access for Black women to cities that the women also saw as having impacted women negatively, particularly in accessing teacher training opportunities since the colleges were mainly found in cities. Mrs Ngwenya remembered the difficulties for girls to access further education since parents were sceptical of sending them to the cities. For most blacks, high school education was the highest qualification they could attain. And for those that were lucky enough to proceed, teachers' education was the next step. Even then, such institutions were few and far apart, and Ehlanzeni District was no exception. Yet travelling for education in some of these institutions was made difficult by legislative instruments such as the Bantu Education Act 47 of 1953. Mrs Sibiyi, for example, completed her Standard 10 at the age of 23. She wanted to attend Teacher Training in the Natal Province, but did not have the relevant papers to travel to a city, like the 'Pass'.

4.3.5. Age restriction

One issue that is often raised when talking of women and work issues is the family, particularly the reproductive task of bringing children up. Women therefore would often forego the opportunity to take up positions of responsibility to care for children. By the time the children have grown up, and the women are available and ready to take up positions of responsibility, they would have reached a particular age. The women therefore found age as a major impediment to their assumption of leadership positions. The women felt that a woman would reach an age where she can be a School Principal at an old age. The journey from mere teacher, HOD, Deputy Principal and finally Principal is generally lengthy. And yet, it would appear that age is a key selection criterion. Mrs Sambo remembered:

I was once elected to observe the shortlisting process of candidates for a position of School Principal one of the years. I observed the criteria used: first, qualifications; second, experience; third, other work for community development, and finally, the age. Candidates who met the criteria but were above 55 years of age were disqualified. I think the thinking behind the whole thing is about longitude in the position. It makes little sense to appoint someone who is on the verge of retirement (Interview, Nkomazi, 27 August 2018).

Furthermore, when people get to a particular age in their lives they tend to shy away from stressful situations and School Principal positions are seen as highly stressful as highlighted in the excerpts below:

At my age I no longer need stress. I am ok teaching the Siswati subject and I will teach until I reach my pension age. I have been a teacher for 25 years of my life... now what I think about is retiring in peace (Interview, Nkomazi, 29 August 2018).

You know I do not want to die before my time. At the age of 57 you need to start writing your retirement letter so that you get your money before you die. I will never apply for principal post at this age. At least if I was still at the age of 40 knowing that I will serve at least 25 years before retirement (Interview, Nkomazi, 29 August 2018).

The gender gap in school leadership position has been explained in terms of certain societal aspects that appear to confer advantages to men and disadvantages women. However, do women teachers in this patriarchal Swazi society see themselves a disadvantaged group when it comes to access to school leadership positions? This question is the subject of the following section. The section draws from the women teachers' responses and their circumstances and experiences in their schools.

4.4. Women as a Disadvantaged Group

In order to substantiate the rather comprehensive analysis of women teachers' views on the gender gap in school leadership positions presented in the previous section. It is a common position when looking at women and access to resources that women are presented as a disadvantaged group. This position is also dominant in work place studies. In post-apartheid South Africa, the situation of women has been accorded priority by the government. A variety of policy instruments have been put in place since independence to change the

situation of women in both the domestic and public spheres. It was one of the objectives of this study to understand women teachers' perspectives on whether they are disadvantaged when it comes to access to leadership positions in schools. Building on the last section, this section will look at this question, drawing on women teachers' responses and experiences.

As seen in the section before this one, women teachers did not see themselves as occupying a disadvantaged position when it comes to their access to positions of leadership in schools. While they recognised the societal factors that have often been cited as impediments to their access to resources, they said these are no longer applicable. They may have implications, but there is no explicit relationship. They also realised that the implications of history will take long to eliminate, but also that a lot has changed in women's situation since independence.

According to the women, the reforms brought by the South African government have levelled the playing field and the number of women in leadership positions at schools has certainly increased. Women teachers in the fourth school pointed to their own case where the school has been led by a female principal since 2001. Even women dominated as subject heads in secondary schools, while many of the Deputy Principals were women. To add to that, women had acted as principals before. This, they argued is an indication that opportunities have opened for women in school leadership.

In democratic South Africa, women have become a top policy priority and women have taken advantage of the policy environment. The policies have given women an advantage over men through some form of affirmative action. This is captured by in discussions with Mrs Sibozza:

I do not see myself as being disadvantaged because since the advent of democracy women are more advantageous than men. Looking at the Constitution of the RSA and other laws that are put in place to end gender inequalities, including the Millennium Development Goals for gender equality and empowerment of women, women became the priority. In fact, as far as the Constitution is concerned women in SA are not disadvantaged (Interview, Nkomazi, 27 August 2018).

As can be seen from the above excerpt, there are instances where it has become difficult for men to compete with women. As formerly disadvantage groups, women tend to receive preference even when the position is not an affirmative action. It is for that reason that Mrs

Sibiya saw the South African government as giving more support to women than men, which gives women chances to be appointed to senior positions even at schools.

The women also talked about moves by the department to advance women interests, and women were encouraged to apply for positions that became available. Mrs Khoza noted:

We are now all given same chances and women are always encouraged to apply when the post is advertised. On the advert they always bold the statement that says women and people with disabilities are encouraged to apply. So, I do not see myself as disadvantaged (Interview, Nkomazi, 28 August 2018)

The women also noted that leadership positions that become available are open to everyone who qualified. They are advertised through Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) circular, Info Desk and other platforms. Mrs Sibiya related how she has been approached by district officials to apply for a principal post that had become available. She has also been alerted to a number of posts that had become available during the last five years. She noted, 'I would be a principal if I wanted to be one by now' (Interview. Nkomazi, 29 August 2018).

While women do not see themselves as disadvantaged in the contemporary era in South Africa even in the school system, the reality in leadership in schools tell a different story. What should be the reasons? Two possible explanations emerged from the study and they will be discussed in the following two subsections.

4.4.1 An issue of choice

In a democratic system where civil liberty are protected, and women rights are protected, but women still play dual roles as public figures and mothers, the issue of choice cannot be ignored. The issue of rights is enshrined in the constitution. As we have seen already, women are accorded the same right as men, and where gender is used as selection criterion it is always to the advantage of women. The women agreed that selection to principal positions is based on qualifications and experience. They also agreed that there are some women who tick all the boxes. They also understood that there are no physical attributes that are needed for one to be a principal. Principal positions are open contests by those who qualify and are

willing to be principal. The women also realised that in the modern era, where the government thrives to empower women, their prospects in school leadership have improved.

However, the fact that men are leaders has been an issue of choice rather than a culture of subordination. Some women who qualify simply chose not to apply for these positions. As highlighted in the previous section, these positions may be too far away from home or women are comfortable with their current positions. In the study, all participants were senior at work and qualified to be principals. Out of these, many participants had never applied for principal positions, few had applied before, while one participant had the opportunity to take a substantive principal post after acting in the position but withdrew.

I will use the case of Mrs Gumede, a Deputy Principal in one of the schools that participated in the study, as an example. Mrs Gumede has been a Deputy Principal at the same school for more than 16 years. She has never applied for any principal position in the school or elsewhere. She says there have been opportunities, but she has not taken them. She felt comfortable in her current position. She has acted as principal in the absence of the principal and is therefore capable and qualified to fill a principal post, but she has not done so.

There are many women like Mrs Gumede in South African schools and other work places who have been liberated from the shackles of society but have chosen not to lead. Women appear to choose their positions carefully in a democratic society. They will not take up positions that unnecessarily put a lot of pressure on their time and interfere with family time. It would appear that Mrs Gumede was comfortable with an acting position, which was temporary where she could demonstrate her leadership acumen but did not see it necessary to stay in the position permanently.

The women also talked of the unnecessary pressure of school leadership and the challenges of managing teachers and students. According to Mrs Sibozza, 'the position is not worth the pressure from parents, from students and from your own teachers' (Interview, Nkomazi, 27 August 2018). Given the pressures, some women said they would take leadership positions in primary schools than secondary schools. However, they were all secondary teachers with specific specialisation.

The women also told of the pressure put on principals by the MPDE. They pointed to new policy reforms that were introduced for implementation, which tend to affect the smooth running of the schools resulting in conflict between the principal and parents. Mrs Gumede, aged 53, has been working as a deputy principal for more than 16 years now, indicated that she lost interest on the principal post due to the pressure that the MPDE puts on school principals in terms of the performance of learners as if the school principal attends classes and sits for exam. As a result, many teachers' loose interest in the principal posts. Moreover, being principal entails putting more hours including hours outside the normal working hours, travelling and meetings, which impede on a woman's family time.

4.4.2 Impacts of family arrangements

The family emerged as a major determinant whether women decide to apply for principal posts that arise. In the study, all but one of the women teachers were married and had children staying with them. This tended to limit the women's option in terms of work stations as most women preferred to work closer to their families. While principal posts would become available outside the area, it became difficult for women to consider these because they entail relocation. This had particularly affected women like Mrs Sibozza, who failed to apply to three posts recommended to her by the circuit, because they were far and entailed relocation. Mrs Sibozza has children; the youngest still attend primary school. It was always going to be difficult for her to leave her family or to relocate them since the husband works locally.

Thus, the women would be very selective when taking up posts. The women were all established where they were, and stability emerged as a key factor. The women said, if they had to change work stations they would prefer to schools where they remain close to their families. While others did not mind travelling, they were unwilling to be away from family for long. According to Mrs Gumede, 'a family woman cannot separate from her family.... My family comes first...I cannot sacrifice family for promotion' (Interview, Nkomazi, 30 August 2018). The importance of the family can be revealed from the following excerpts:

....my family comes first. I cannot just apply for a post because I want a high position. I am content where I am now. I have a home; a job and I am a wife and a mother of four. The status of a higher

position should not supersede what I have already achieved and should not compromise what I value. Maybe I will apply for a principal position once the children are grown (Interview, Nkomazi, 30 August 2018).

I have responsibilities at home as a mother and wife, so accepting a principal post was going to impact negatively on my family responsibilities. It was difficult when I was acting, and I was relieved when it finally came to an end. Family needs attention. My position at home did not allow me take principal posts because sometimes they hold late meetings (Interview, Nkomazi, 27 August 2018).

Some women teachers, particularly the young teachers, expressed their desire for leadership positions outside the school system, and would consider a position at the departmental offices. They felt such a move would reflect real growth. Ms Thumbathi, 35 years and employed as Geography teacher, for example, will not apply for any principal position, but would consider posts in the department. Similarly, Mrs Gumede would not mind moving to another sector, including entities like SARS, Eskom and Transnet. She had ambitions of becoming a Senior Education Specialist (SES) in the department. These positions, she argued, 'do not give headaches' (Interview, Nkomazi, 30 August 2018).

Instead of focusing on being principals, the majority of women teachers had their attention on life outside the education sector. Ms Khoza, for example expressed her desire to move on:

Instead of being Principal, I am already paving my way out of the teaching system. I want to work somewhere outside teaching. Being a teacher is not a simple task because during examinations, you must take paper home to continue working while a nurse does not take patients home. If you are a school principal, the department treats you like you are the learner because when learners fail a principal must account, when the enrolment drops a principal must account, when teachers do not do their work a principal must account (Interview, Nkomazi, 28 August 2018).

Others, like Mrs Maphanga, were looking forward to retirement and wanted to enjoy their remaining days. A Principal position would frustrate them into resigning before time. She reasoned:

I am ok at the teaching level until I go on pension. I do not want to end up resigning before my retirement time like other women that accepted promotion only to resign after experiencing great frustrations in their new posts (Interview, Nkomazi, 29 August 2018).

The frustrations in the principal office, according to the women stem from the department and the expectations. Mrs Sambo observed:

Looking at all the things that are happening in this environment, the way in which the school principal is being treated. It is like the principal is a learner as he/she must ensure that learners do not fail. As for teachers, at times teachers do not put enough effort on their work then the school underperforms, the department put blame on the school principal (Interview, Nkomazi, 14 June 2018).

This, however, does not mean that all the women teachers shun principal positions. Some have applied and failed to get the position. For example, Mrs Sibozza told of how she and her sister have been applying for advertised principal positions without success. She indicated that she had applied for post advertised at both the primary and secondary school levels. She said:

I do not know what happens after interviews since there is no feedback that we receive if you unsuccessful. I now have seventeen years serving as a deputy principal in this secondary school. As for performance, I never get less than 80% sometimes I get 100%, I have awards for achieving 100%, but still I do not get the principal post. I cannot tell what goes wrong; maybe it is because I am a woman (Interview, Nkomazi, 13 June 2018).

These frustrations have certainly discouraged some women teachers from applying for principal posts. Mrs Sibozza added, 'the process also takes forever since the department is not always in a hurry to fill-up posts since they can always depend on acting arrangements'.

At times women need to prove that they have abilities and qualities to hold management positions and this requires that they hold a certain level, particularly the Deputy Principal position. This is different for men, who can move from post level 1 to a principal position. This has also discouraged women from applying for posts. This has created a situation where women end up reporting to male principals who may have less experience than they have.

4.5. Being a School Principal

If one has to draw one main conclusion from the general narrative on the women and their situation in society, it would be probably that, due to their previous disadvantages, the women teachers did not have the necessary qualification to hold the higher office in schools. As it has been shown, women were disadvantaged by the apartheid system, they were also disadvantaged in society where their position is defined by popular culture. Such a situation would likely lead to women who do not possess the qualifications that men possess. The following section looks at the question of women and their qualification for higher office at the school. It starts by highlighting the criteria needed for one to be principal before turning to the situation of the women in the study.

4.5.1 Women teachers' understanding of what qualifications a school principal need

What qualifies one to hold leadership position at the school level is any important question if we are to understand the question of women and school leadership. The women teachers that participated in the study were all qualified teachers, had extensive experience as teachers and understood statutes and regulations governing the education sector. They also have an understanding of the requirements for one to be principal.

In principle, the criteria for one to be appointable as a school principal are clear and unambiguous, laying out the key areas. According to the MPDE circular advertised September 2017:

...an educator can only be appointed if he/she is either a South African citizen or has been granted permanent residency and in possession of an RSA ID Document, holds an appropriate professional qualification, is of sound character, is medically fit and is registered with the South African Council for Educators (SACE). Educators who took the Voluntary Severance Package (VSP) will not be considered for appointment. Medically boarded Educators must first be declared medically fit before they can apply for re-employment (MPDE, 2017).

In addition, the circular stated that:

.... all persons must have at least a recognised three-year qualification (REQV13) that must include appropriate training as a teacher in order to qualify for appointment as an educator.

Accordingly, an applicant with an REQV13 qualification will need at least five years actual experience to be eligible to apply for a vacant post of principal. From the circular, any educator with the requisite professional qualifications, is health enough and has the necessary experience to hold a school principal post. The circular does not require highest qualifications such as honours and Masters' degrees administration qualification. According to the women teachers, the same qualifications apply in the employment of mere educators. The only addition is the experience criterion, if by actual experience, it means administration experience.

According to the Employment of Educators Act of 1998, in considering the applications, the governing body must ensure that the principles of equity, redress and representatively are complied with, and the governing body or council must adhere to:

- the democratic values and principles referred to in section 7(1) of the Employment of Educators Act, 1998, i.e. equality, equity and the other democratic values and principles which are contemplated in section 195(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, and which include the ability of the candidate, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past in order to achieve broad representation;
- Any appointment, promotion or transfer to any post on the educator establishment a may only be on the recommendation of the governing body of the school;
- School Governing Bodies are required to include a subject specialist (Curriculum Implementer – responsible for the specific subject(s)) from the District Office as resources person for the selection processes of Head of Department posts to assist with the content knowledge of the subject(s);
- On conclusion of the shortlisting and selection processes, the governing body must submit to the District Director a list of at least three names of recommended candidates in order of preference;
- The governing body must ensure that the principles of equity are taken into account with a view to specifically address the under-representation of women, and people

with disabilities as identified in the Departmental Employment Equity Plan (DEEP) and;

- Procedures that would ensure that the recommendation is not obtained through undue influence on the members of the governing body or the council, as the case may be.

The women teachers that were conversant with the recruitment processes, like Mrs Gumede and Mrs Sibozza, indicated that the MPDE advert addresses the imbalance issue in the circular advertisement, and has conformed to the Employment of the Educators Act of 1998. Mrs Sibozza, who has been involved in the shortlisting process, shared intricate details, indicating that the MPDE would first check whether the school's deputy principal is a male or when considering positions for school principal. They often strive for a gender balance in leadership. She added:

.... the appointment of the school principal is determined by the deputy principal's gender. Same as the appointment of the deputy principal is determined by the current principal's gender...if the school principal is a male then the deputy principal should be a female to balance gender (Interview, Nkomazi, 27 August 2018).

Such a practice, however, has its own down side. It has partly contributed to the dominance of men in the school principal positions. For example, if the outgoing principal is a male, it means that the incoming principal will be a male as well since the deputy was a female.

The SGB, however, emerged as a very influential body in determining who occupies school leadership posts. They can determine who takes over the principal post, rendering laid down principles worthless. For example, when an incumbent school principal dies, retires or is redeployed, department would deploy an acting principal. The Acting School Principal will work closely with the SGB, and when the post is finally advertised, the SGB would more likely recommend the Acting Principal based on how they worked together. The SGB, it emerged, the SGB assists with the recommendations of candidates.

4.5.2 Do the women teachers qualify to be school principals?

Having looked at the criteria required for one to be a school principal, the question to ask is whether the women teachers qualified to be school principals. This section engages with this critical issue, focusing specifically on the women's circumstances. The advent of democracy played a crucial role in the lives of women in rural areas in particular and South Africa as a whole, by redressing the gender inequalities in education and the workplace. Since the advent of democracy, women's roles have change drastically in all spheres. Women get to be exposed in all opportunities including education. Bain et al., (2000) argued that women have realized significant gains in educational attainment and entry positions in many sectors of the labour market in recent decades.

The adoption of gender initiatives has a positive impact on the status of women in education and the workplace. For example, the report released by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in March 2018, shows that more than half of the students enrolled in public Higher Education Institutions (HEI) were women totalling in 58.1%, while 41.9% were men. With regards to the number of graduates, it reflects that women have become more career oriented compared to the last three decades (DHET, 2018).

All the women who participated in this study possess the requisite qualification to be school principals, which is REQV13. Amongst the participants, few of them hold honours degrees in education, like Ms Thumbathi and Mrs Maphanga, who are holders of an honour's degree. However, they still lack experience as HODs and deputy principals for them to qualify to be principals as per the criteria set by MPDE. All participants have been in the teaching field for more than 10 years. Moreover, the three deputy principal's participants possess certificates in leadership which acquired through workshops and seminars rendered by the MPDE. This show that the women participated in this study has the basic requirement to be principal as stated above.

4.6 Women Teachers and the Gender Initiatives

As shown earlier in Chapter 1, South Africa has made significant progress in putting in place legislations and policy frameworks for advancing equality and empowerment for women, children and people with disabilities since independence. This section focuses specifically on gender initiatives that were adopted and how the women teachers see these initiatives. The

objective of this section is to understand how the women teachers see these initiatives as impacting their situation. The popular narrative has often portrayed these initiatives as ineffective and having no effect on the gender gap in leadership at all levels. However, as has been the argument presented by the dissertation, the voices of women, who are the subject of the debates, have been missing. As the dissertation argues, these voices are significant in our understanding of the women' situation, and there is a need to tap on these voices for an informed understanding.

4.6.1 The gender initiatives

On 15 December 1995, South African Parliament adopted without reservation the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol, thus committing itself to a wide range of obligations under international law. As indicated in chapter 1 & 2, since independence in 1994, numerous other initiatives have been adopted and implemented. The government's commitment to gender equity and women empowerment began with the Constitution that was adopted in 1996. The Constitution on Chapter 2, on the Bill of Rights, Section 9 on equality state that:

- Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law;
- Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms;
- To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken;
- The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth;
- No person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds in terms of subsection (3);
- National legislation must be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination; and
- Discrimination on one or more of the grounds listed in subsection (3) is unfair unless it is established that the discrimination is fair.

The constitution under Section 187 of the Constitution of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 also provided for the establishment of the Commission on Gender Equality Act, No. 39 of 1996. The CGE is an independent statutory body established to promote and protect gender equality.

The government correspondingly adopted the National Policy Framework on Women Empowerment and Gender Equality in 2002. The main purpose of this Gender Policy Framework is to establish a clear vision and framework to guide the process of developing laws, policies, procedures and practices which will serve to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all spheres and structures of government as well as in the workplace, the community and the family.

The main objectives are to:

- Create an enabling policy environment for translating government commitment to gender equality into a reality;
- Establish policies, programmes, structures and mechanisms to empower women and to transform gender relations in all aspects of work, at all levels of government as well as within the broader society;
- Ensure that gender considerations are effectively integrated into all aspects of government policies, activities and programmes;
- Establish an institutional framework for the advancement of the status of women as well as the achievement of gender equality; and
- Advocate for the promotion of new attitudes, values and behaviours, and a culture of respect for all human beings in line with the new policy.

The government also adopted the Republic of South Africa Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill of 2013. The objectives of this Act are to:

- Give effect to the letter and spirit of the Constitution, in particular, the equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms by every person; the promotion of equality, specifically gender equality; and the values of non-racialism and non-sexism contained in section 1 of the Constitution;
- Facilitate compliance by designated public bodies and designated private bodies, with the country's commitments to international agreements, including, the Convention on

the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (December 1979); the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (September 1995); the Millennium Declaration and Development Goals (September 2000); the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (July 2004); and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (August 2008);

- Align all aspects of the laws and the implementation of the laws relating to women empowerment and the appointment and representation of women in decision-making positions and structures;
- Facilitate the development and implementation of plans and strategies by designated public bodies and designated private bodies for the promotion of women empowerment and gender equality, and the submission of those plans and strategies to the Minister for consideration, evaluation and guidance;
- Provide for the implementation of measures to achieve a progressive realisation of a minimum of 50 per cent representation and meaningful participation of women in decision-making structures including Boards by designated public bodies and designated private bodies, as contemplated in section 7;
- Provide for the implementation of gender mainstreaming by designated public bodies and designated private bodies as contemplated in section 8; and
- Provide for the development and implementation of public education programmes on practices that unfairly discriminate on grounds of gender as contemplated in the applicable legislation and in international agreements in order to promote gender equality and social cohesion.

The government also became a signatory and committed to the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals in 2000. The Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals aims were to Promote gender equality and empower women by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015; the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (July 2004). The aim of this act is to ensure the active promotion and protection of all human rights for women and girls including the right to development by raising awareness or by legislation where necessary.

The South African Development Community Protocol on Gender and Development (August 2008), and the passing of domestic laws that promote gender equality and protect against discrimination and victimization based on gender. Legislation in place includes the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998. The main purpose of the Employment Equity Act is to achieve equity in the workplace, by promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through elimination of unfair discrimination and implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, in order to ensure equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels of the workforce.

The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000. The objectives of this act are;

- To provide for measures to facilitate the eradication of unfair discrimination, hate speech and harassment, particularly on the grounds of race, gender and disability;
- To provide for procedures for the determination of circumstances under which discrimination is unfair;
- To provide for measures to educate the public and raise public awareness on the importance of promoting equality and overcoming unfair discrimination, hate speech and harassment;
- To provide remedies for victims of unfair discrimination, hate speech and harassment and persons whose right to equality has been infringed;
- To set out measures to advance persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination; and
- To facilitate further compliance with international law obligations including treaty obligations in terms of, amongst others, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The Protection from Harassment Act 17 of 2011. The Protection from Harassment Act 17 of 2011 aims:

- To provide for the issuing of protection orders against harassment;
- To effect consequential amendments to the Firearms Control Act, 2000; and
- To provide for matters connected therewith.

In addition, the National Department of Education came up with Employment of Education Act, also to assist in redressing gender inequalities in the working environment of the education sector.

4.6.2 How the women teachers saw the gender initiative

As alluded to earlier in this section, it would be expected that the women teachers would be critical of the gender reforms in the context of the continuing gender gap in leadership positions at schools. To the contrary, all women teachers recognised the positives brought by the new reforms to women, even in the education sector. It is not surprising that they see their situation as being better because they have the apartheid era as a reference point. In the words of Mrs Sambo:

The situation of women has changed for the better since apartheid. The new government has championed the cause of women and put in place mechanisms for women to feel like equal citizens. As we are all aware, women can now lead. Our Minister is a woman and my School Principal is a woman. This could not be dreamt of during the apartheid times (Interview, Nkomazi, 13 August 2018).

Although women referred much to the changed political landscape where the women entered politics and took up leadership positions since 1994. They even mention the appointment of a Deputy President by President Thabo Mbeki and the fact that the Speaker of Parliament is a woman.

The women in this study also appreciated the establishment of the acts and policies adopted by the government to redress gender inequalities at the workplace. After the adoption of all these legislations, women started to enter the workplace and leadership positions in large numbers. According to Mrs Zitha:

This is evidenced by the increase of female principals and female deputy principals in secondary schools. Because of these gender reforms, it has become easier for one to be Deputy School Principal. In Ehlanzeni District, in particular there are more women Deputy Principals, and women can compete for Principal positions with men, although at the societal level, things are moving very slowly (Interview, Nkomazi, 14 August 2018).

In this way, the women have become visible in society, not just as women, but as citizens with rights. One such right, was the right to enter the work place as an equal on an equal wage. As Mrs Ngwenya argued:

We do the same tasks here at school, me and the men in my department, and we get the same salary. We all stand equal chance to be promoted. In fact, at my school there are more women Heads of Department than men. We cannot blame the government. If the women still lag behind in other areas, it is because changes do not happen overnight. It has nothing to do with the government not doing its part (Interview, Nkomazi, 15 August 2018).

Thus, women teachers perceive these policies to have played a crucial role in changing their situations as women in the education environment. Women teachers revealed that these legislations work for both women and men since they are based on equality where no one is favoured because of biological make-up.

With the exception of Ms Sibozza, who felt that men are still favoured in leadership positions because she had lost to men in all competitive posts she had applied for, the women felt that the playing ground was level. This can be seen from their reference to the advertisement for principal posts that was discussed in the previous section. As we saw, they felt that the advertisement adhered to the principle of equality. Mrs Sibozza, however, felt cheated by the system. She complained:

There is corruption at the MPDE and men still have the advantage. Some of the men that got the posts did not have the necessary qualifications. They got the positions because they were men. May be, we need a gender quota of some sort. This can be the only way to reduce the gender gap in leadership. Some of us want to be principal, but the completion is tough (Interview, Nkomazi, 16 August 2018).

However, as other women have put it, Mrs Sibozza's problem has nothing to do with the policy, but the system. The South African government has sought to introduce the principle of equity, and this principle has been applied. What happens at the local level is not a policy

issue, but an issue of practice. As highlighted earlier, society continues to play a crucial role in determining who school principal through the SDA becomes. It is interesting however, that the SDAs have a women component, and these women do not favour female principals.

4.7 Chapter summary

The gender gap between men and women in school leadership positions is complex in its manifestation and in how it is understood. It has continued in a context where the government has committed to changing the conditions of women in the country. The government has introduced reforms meant to address the situation of women, both at the society level and at the work place including the school system. These reforms, some of which came in the form of some affirmative action, were meant to empower women. At the same time the gap should be understood from a societal perspective and a long history of male labour migrancy and colonial restrictive laws on the movement of Africans. It is interesting that the women teachers' perspective of the gender gap in leadership position at school level drew heavily on these contexts. Not that they saw the gender gap as justified, rather, they understand that the prevailing situation was expected, given the context.

While the context is important, it did not entirely mediate the status quo. It was effective because it provided a platform on which to understand the reality of the gender gap. However, it does not rule out issues of agency, particularly the element of choice. The element of choice is important in our understanding of women and leadership because it introduces us to the exercise of agency by the women teachers. The analysis has shown that the women teachers have the necessary qualifications and experiences to take up leadership positions at schools and the positions are open to both women and men, but the women teachers have chosen not to apply or to take up positions even when opportunities were available, due to a number of reasons taken rationally.

Women make decisions based on certain rationalisations, including whether the job involved relocation and the associated pressure of the job. While some women showed no ambitions and aspirations to be School Principals and others were looking outside the school system, others had ambitions and had made attempts to be School Principals. However, there is competition for these posts, which are usually limited and highly contested. This illustrates an important point for the dissertation: the gender gap will persist as long as the system remains

open and there is no gender quota system is put in place. Nonetheless, even with the introduction of a gender quota system, the gender gap will persist if the current system that discourages women from taking School Principal positions.

Chapter Five

Discussions and Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

This study started by interrogating the continuing gender gap in school leadership positions in the South African school system over three decades after democracy. It was an attempt to understand the problem from a broader national context, where the post-apartheid dispensation had put women at the centre of its policy agenda and introduced a variety of policy to empower women, both in the domestic and public spheres. Subsequently, it was an attempt to understand the women situation in the work place from the perspective of the women themselves, as the people affected, rather than focusing on broader generalisations by people who are bystanders.

While the broader discourse has portrayed women as a disadvantaged group and victims of a system that champions the interest of men, the assumption guiding the dissertation was that the women within this system had agency and have used their agency to negotiate the system in such a way that they derive benefits without actually changing the system. The dissertation wanted to give voice to these women and understand their situation within the school system from their mouths. Using a case study approach, the study set out to challenge the broad-brush treatment of the women question and the failure to understand the women in any societal system through their agency and how such agency has been deployed. Not discounting the power of patriarchy and how it has positioned women as subordinates in society, the women being studied were all modern women, educated and empowered through numerous legislative positions, which have ultimately weakened the power of patriarchy.

The study explored four questions that are pertinent in any understanding of the gender gap in the school system in South Africa:

4. How do female teachers view gender disparities in management positions in South African school system?
5. Do female teachers consider themselves as disadvantaged in relation to male teachers when it comes to promotions?

6. What is the perception of women teachers of the various gender initiatives that have been adopted by the South African government? How do they see them affecting their situation as women?
7. Do the female teachers have the requisite qualifications for management positions at schools? Have they applied to management positions? What do they find as a major impediment to their promotability?

These questions were then transformed into four broad themes: firstly, the gender gap has both historical and cultural roots; secondly, women teachers do not see themselves as being disadvantaged in contemporary South Africa; thirdly, we cannot rule out the element of choice; and finally, women teachers have the necessary qualifications to hold leadership positions at schools. This conclusion aims to pull these themes together and to discuss their implications for our understanding of the gender gap in South African schools, and to discuss some broader policy question emerging from the study.

5.2. Discussions

This study began with the analysis of the local context. The premise was that in order to assess the gender gap in school leadership positions from the perspective of the women teachers it was essential to understand the contexts where the dynamics of interaction take place. In the case of the women teachers, the context included the society as well as the education sector including the gender dynamics within these settings. The analysis revealed that the women teachers were central parts of these two contexts as both societal members and as employees, and their time was split between the two contexts. As such their situation and perspectives were mediated by their experiences and understanding of society and the education system. This does not mean that these two systems had overbearing influence on the women teachers and guided their world view, rather, the women as members of the two systems were also independent individuals who also were different from other women due to their education. In this section, I particularly focus on the women's world view vis-à-vis the general discourse on the gender gap in school leadership.

5.2.1 The influence of culture and history

How did the women teachers view the gender gap? My analysis has shown that the women teachers looked at the gender gap in school leadership from both the social and historical

perspective. They alerted me to a number of cultural factors that unfortunately resulted on men dominating leadership position and understood that such a scenario is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. The women were cognisant that the society they live in was and is still a migrant labour society, which has favoured the migration of men, while the women had to remain behind to keep the fires burning. They thus saw men as migrants who respond to livelihood opportunities without any constraints.

Society expects men to move around and take up jobs wherever such jobs are available. This, according to the women, has partly contributed to the gender gap in leadership positions, where men dominated principal positions. These positions are few and may be available outside one's place of domicile, but because men are freely mobile they are able to take up these opportunities, while women are restricted by their circumstances. As others have argued, the migrant labour system was predicated on migrants retaining land rights in rural area, women had to remain to safeguard the men's land interests (Potts, 2000; Mutambirwa and Potts, 1990). Others have also observed that in these rural societies generally, the women space was seen as her home, bearing and rearing children, caring for her husband not in the labour force (Domenico et al., 2007; Kirai et al., 2012).

The women had a point, because of their position in the family, the women's mobility was constrained, and they could not move freely to take up posts. It was shown in that the women preferred to be located a commuting distance from their home. They would take-up jobs where they would spend time with families. The majority had families, and although husbands were away they had children of school going age. Thus, would not take up posts where they would have to relocate. This would mean that they would take up local posts, but these were not readily available.

With regard to history, the women blamed the apartheid system that denied other races opportunities. While this has become a popular excuse in South Africa, it was an important point. While the apartheid system including lack of school infrastructure, laws restricting movements to cities, etc., affected all blacks, women were affected more than men because the lack of infrastructure meant that they could not attend school due to distance and risks. Boys on the other hand could risk the distance. It was also shown that teacher's training

institution were mostly located in urban centres where blacks had to have a special permit. Parents were always reluctant to apply for permits for girls to study in these areas where they may be at risk.

As if this was not enough, this analysis has showed that the apartheid system of separate development meant that blacks had their own separate schools, including teacher training colleges, which mostly offered inferior education. The majority of these institutions conferred certificates. This means that even those women who managed to go through teacher education had lower teacher qualifications. Although this was a constraint for the majority of women to qualify for leadership positions, the study has shown that all the women had upgraded their qualifications.

5.2.2 Not disadvantaged in contemporary South Africa

The dissertation has explored different aspects that the women attribute to the continuing gender gap in school leadership positions over two decades after independence and the adoption of one of the most progressive constitutions in the world. It has highlighted the various social and historical factors that have been blamed for the gender gap, and how these have informed women teachers' perspectives. It has possibly understated the significance of choice in determining the low proportion of women in principal positions. This aspect, unlike the other aspects that have dominated the gender and leadership debates, has been overlooked and understudied. In order to understand the gender gap more holistic, an in-depth insight into the women teachers' ambitions and aspirations, to explain why they remain in the position they occupy. The women occupied a range of portfolios, ranging from ordinary subject teachers to subject heads and Deputy School Principals, while others had acted as School Principals before. Yet, only one of the women was a substantive school principal.

While the women teachers recognised the constraints, they faced in occupying leadership positions at school in contemporary South Africa, they did not regard themselves as being disadvantaged as compared to men. This seem to counter the popular discourse on women and leadership positions in society and workplace. The women pointed to the changes brought by the post-apartheid administration, which sought to improve their situation at the workplace and at work. The relatively progressive legislations in South Africa, including the Constitution of 1996, the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998 and the Basic Conditions

of Employment Act No 75 of 1997, were adopted to address gender inequality, and traditional gender stereotypes. The women recognised that some of these legislations placed them at an advantage in the form of affirmative action type treatment.

The government appears to have levelled the playing ground. It was revealed in Chapter Three that the available leadership positions are advertised and available to everyone who has the necessary qualifications. It was also shown in Section 4.5.1, that the MPDE applies the equity principle in advertising posts for school principals. As highlighted in Section 4.5.1, the advertisements for the school principal's post were gender neutral. However, it was also shown that many women would choose not to apply for these positions. The element of choice should not be ignored. Women as societal agents had a choice to take up these positions of responsibility or not. It was shown that some of these women decided not to take up these opportunities, even if they were presented with opportunities.

The women made their choices based on a number of factors, including their family situations. The women also alerted me to the conditions of being a school principal and the associated pressure from students, teachers, the department and society. The choice on whether to take-up a school principal post or not, was therefore based on certain considerations. Women therefore were not in a disadvantaged position, compared to me; they simply did not want to be school principals. It was shown that some of the women were already looking outside the school system for their mobility, while others were looking forward to peaceful retirement.

5.2.3 Women and qualifications for school principal positions

The different profiles of women teachers in the study demonstrate differences across the teaching fraternity, whilst different views among the women teachers on holding principal positions illustrates differing ambitions and aspirations. Individual teachers differed in their ambitions, aspirations for school leadership, and they can take such responsibility, if they become available, while others dreamt of a move out of the sector. The current positions of the women within the school system chain were determined by their own different circumstances rather than lack of qualifications to hold leadership positions. The qualifications and experiences of these women teachers differed across ages, but all the

women teachers had been in the school system long enough and they had the necessary qualifications to teach at secondary school level.

The study has also shown that there are laid down and clear criteria for being a school principal, and any person wishing to be a school principal needs to fulfil these criteria. Based on the criteria, anyone can be a school principal as long as they hold a professional qualification, are health and have the necessary experience. Assuming that by experience, they refer to administration experience, and then anyone who occupies a position of HOD and above qualifies to be a school principal. As it has become apparent, the majority of women occupy the position of HOD and Deputy Principal, and there were 3 HODs and 3 Deputy Principals in the study.

In terms of qualifications, therefore, the majority of the women in the study qualified to be school principals in terms of their professional qualifications and experience. Some of these women were recognised by their colleagues or officials from the department and have been encouraged to apply for advertised positions. Two of the women teachers had actually applied for some advertised posts, although they never got them. Some of the women even had higher professional qualifications than those laid down in the manual. Despite the official criteria, the practice also placed women in a position where they easily met the criteria. It was revealed in Section 4.5.1 that there was an unwritten practice that if a principal is male, then a female will be deputy principal or vice versa. Since males dominated the principal positions, it meant that there were more women deputising, which placed them in an opportune position to be principals.

Certain variables outside qualifications and other criteria emerged as playing a major part on who qualifies to be school principal. The SGB particular emerged as a powerful body within the school system, with power of determination who can be principal and who cannot. They make the final recommendations and since they work on a regular basis with the Acting Principal, they will more likely recommend him/her if they had good relations with the incumbent. This, however, tends to favour men, as the SGB as representatives of society in the school system, carry the mandate of society. As it has been highlighted, however, society is often opposed to female school principals.

5.3 Conclusion

Does the analysis of the education sector, the women and their situation at the society and school level tell us anything more about the gender gap in South African schools? The dissertation has shown that there is a gender gap in the education sector in Ehlanzeni District, but argues the women situation has been misunderstood. My analysis suggests that the women have equal chances to be school principals like men, which is a contradiction to the general gender and workplace discourse. After independence, the post-apartheid government implemented a rush of reforms to change the situation of women and to accelerate their ascendance to leadership positions. By the 2000s, these reforms had gathered momentum, women were entering the workplace in large numbers (although the majority were in low skilled occupations) (Kaufmann, 2015). Women were also becoming visible in the political and business spheres. In the education sector, the idea of women school principals was being entertained and issues of equity were promoted by the education department.

With so much focus on societal factors and system that serve to subordinate women, it is easy to end up neglecting these reforms and their effects on these societal factors that have long informed the interaction of women and men. Traditionally, but less common in the modern era, these were often responsible for the position women occupy in society and the gender gap in leadership. For example, the leadership positions in society, business and politics before democracy reflected the dynamics in our society, and how they have come to be normalised. Women were expected to fulfil their traditional reproductive roles as wives while the men migrated for work to support his family. Furthermore, women never offered any active resistance to these rules to avoid bruising men's egos. However, instead of accepting these rules, women used their agency to negotiate the system to their advantage.

Such agency was certain at play in the study where women appeared to allow men to occupy leadership positions while they played subordinate roles. In so doing, these women also avoided the pressures associated with school headship in modern South Africa where student's performance is given priority over all else. At the end of it all, school principals are responsible and accountable for the performance of students. Hence, most women choose to enjoy the time with their families by opting to be Deputy School Principals or acting school principals rather than occupying substantive posts. Thus, even when the women were

provided with opportunities to occupy school principal positions, they chose not to take them, allowing men to takeover.

However, explaining the gender gap in terms of women's agency and choice is at odds with the general explanations even in modern day South Africa. Yet, such explanations are also at odds with how the women teachers in the study saw the gender gap in school leadership. The association of the gender gap to the culture of labour migration and history of apartheid also highlights this departure from the general discourses on the gender gap. Furthermore, women did not look at the family responsibilities that limited their choices as a constraint. Instead, they presented these as part of the choice package – they chose family rather than leadership position. The availability and migrant character of men only acted as reinforcement for women to exercise their choices knowing that someone would be available to take up the positions they shunned.

5.4 Policy implications

Understanding the gender gap in leadership in the workplace in South Africa is often hampered by the long history of apartheid. While the post-apartheid government has made strides to address the gender challenges by instituting a number of reforms, the gender gap has persisted. Debates on women and the workplace have drawn extensively on this history and the usual society discourse, but little has been done to accommodate the perspectives of women. My research has consistently raised policy questions about how the issue could be looked at differently, and whether any lessons can be learnt from the study. Specific policy questions emerged within the discussion and this concluding section offers some observations.

5.4.1 Listen to the women

The situation of the women teachers in the study has presented broad questions to the how the gender debate has been presented. The gender gap has often been understood from the discourse that has presented women as powerless and subordinate and occupying a disadvantaged position in society as compared to men. This would mean that the women teachers could not compete for school principal positions on an equal footing. From this perspective, gender is thus one of the considerations when principal positions are being filled, which tend to disadvantage women. This, however, did not emerge in discussions with

women teachers who seemed to regard the ground as level, and women as exercise their agency and choices. This implies that the voices of women need to be sought and factored into any policy geared at addressing the gender gap.

5.4.2 Provide incentive for women teachers

Leadership is always a pressure job, and some people tend to shun such position if they feel that the job is not worth the pressure. School leadership positions emerged as positions of high pressure – pressure from the MPDE, pressure from students and pressure from society. As shown earlier, school principals are under pressure to ensure that pupils perform, and school principal are blamed if the results are not good. Hence, most women choose not to apply for existing school principal posts. Another reason why women shy away from school principal position is family considerations. Most women have chosen family over principal position. To close the gender gap and get more women into the school principal positions, an incentive scheme to attract more women is needed. Such an incentive scheme may include a package that would allow women to relocate with their families. This may include assistance with accommodation and schools for the children.

5.4.3 An affirmative action-type recruitment policy

In other countries in the region, affirmative action policies were introduced to ensure that more women enter leadership in government, private sector and other institutions. In some countries, gender quotas were introduced to promote women participation in politics. While South Africa has introduced progressive policies to address the situation of women, these fall short of the affirmative strategies. In the education sector, South Africa needs affirmative action policy to accelerate the movement of women into school principal positions. Under such a policy, women should be afforded priority in certain identified posts. This will ensure that more women move into school principal positions.

In the current situation, men and women compete on an equal ticket, which places them in a disadvantaged position. This can also be done by ensuring that women that apply for local posts or internal posts are given priority. As the study has shown, women teacher preferred posts where they would not relocate, but stay at home where they have family. If properly incentivised, these women may find it worthwhile to apply for positions that are available where they could commute daily.

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Appendix A: Authorization request letter



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities
Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

10 November 2017

Re: Request to Conduct an Academic Study in the Nkomazi Local Municipality

This serves to introduce **Ms Thandi Velile Mkhonto (Student # 16403933)**, who is a *bona fide* student registered for a **two year MSocSci in Development Studies degree programme** (by research only) in the **Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Pretoria**. She is researching on ‘*Gender and Promotability among Female High School Teachers*’ under the supervision of Dr Vusi Thebe. She would like to conduct her research on selected schools in the Ehlanzeni District Municipality, and within the province, the Nkomazi Local Municipality. She is seeking permission/authorization from your office to conduct her research. This is an academic project that should lead to a Master’s qualification. The municipality may get a report on the findings, if it so wishes, otherwise the data will be kept at the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Pretoria, and will be published in the form of a dissertation and scientific articles. Your assistance in granting her permission will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

Yours

Vusilizwe Thebe (PhD)

Programme Coordinator (Development Studies Programmes)
Department of Anthropology and Archaeology
University of Pretoria



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Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotheo

Appendix B: Authorization response letter



education
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Building No. 5, Government Boulevard, Riverside Park, Mpumalanga Province
Private Bag X11341, Mbombela, 1200.
Tel: 013 766 5552/5115, Toll Free Line: 0800 203 116

Litiko le Temfundvo, Umyango we Fundo

Departement van Onderwys

Ndzawulo ya Dyondzo

Miss Thandi Mkhonto
PO BOX 4214
Mazolwandle
1344

RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: THANDI MKHONTO

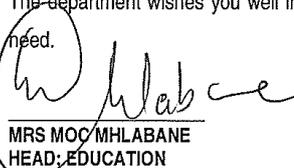
Your application to conduct research study was received and is therefore acknowledged. The title of your study is confirmed under the title which reads thus: "Gender and promotability among female high school teachers." I trust that the aims and the objectives of the study will benefit the curriculum division. Your request is approved subject to you observing the provisions of the departmental research policy which is available in the departmental website. You are also requested to adhere to your University's research ethics as spelt out in your research ethics document.

In terms of the research policy, data or any research activity can only be conducted after school hours as per appointment with affected participants. You are also requested to share your findings with the relevant sections of the department so that we may consider implementing your findings if that will be in the best interest of the department. To this effect, your final approved research report (both soft and hard copy) should be submitted to the department so that your recommendations could be implemented. You may be required to prepare a presentation and present at the department's annual research dialogue.

For more information kindly liaise with the department's research unit @ 013 766 5476 or a.baloyi@education.mpu.gov.za.

The department wishes you well in this important project and pledges to give you the necessary support you may

need.


MRS MOCO MHLABANE
HEAD: EDUCATION

18/3/18
DATE



Appendix C: Ethics approval letter



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities
Research Ethics Committee

24 May 2018

Dear Ms Mkhonto

Project: Women and promotability in rural South African schools:
listening to the voices of female teachers in Ehlanzeni
District Municipality
Researcher: TV Mkhonto
Supervisor: Prof V Thebe
Department: Anthropology and Archaeology
Reference number: (GW20180115HS)

Thank you for your response to the Committee's letter of 2018.

I have pleasure in informing you that the Research Ethics Committee formally **approved** the above study at an *ad hoc* meeting held on 2018. Data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should your actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maxi Schoeman'.

Prof Maxi Schoeman
Deputy Dean: Postgraduate and Research Ethics
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: PGHumanities@up.ac.za

cc: Prof V Thebe (Supervisor)
Prof I Pikirayi (HoD)

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotheo

Research Ethics Committee Members: Prof MME Schoeman (Deputy Dean); Prof KL Harris; Mr A Bizos; Dr L Blokland; Dr K Booyens; Dr A-M de Beer; Ms A dos Santos; Dr R Fasselt; Ms KT Govinder Andrew; Dr E Johnson; Dr W Kelleher; Mr A Mohamed; Dr C Puttergill; Dr D Reyburn; Dr M Soer; Prof E Taljard; Prof V Thebe; Ms B Tsebe; Ms D Mokalapa

Appendix D: Permission request from school Principals



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities
Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

Enquiries: Ms T.V Mkhonto 0729954208/ 0814310028

Researcher: Thandi Velile Mkhonto
Office Tel: 011 355 6304
Mobile: 072 995 4208/ 0814310028
Email: mthandivelile@gmail.com

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

Dear School Principal

I am Thandi Velile Mkhonto a masters' student at the University of Pretoria, Hatfield campus, Pretoria, Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, faculty of Humanities, Student number is 16403933, working with Prof Vusilizwe Thebe my supervisor.

I hereby seek permission to conduct research in your school. My research title is **Women and Promotability in Rural South African Schools: Listening to the Voices of Female Teachers in Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Mpumalanga Province**. I have written to the Department of Education of the Mpumalanga Province (MDE) and have received permission from the HOD.

I would like to have discussions with female educators who have 10 years and more of service in your school to establish their perceptions on promotability. Also, to get their views, ambitions, and aspirations to leadership positions. Although the school will not benefit from the study, but the pooled results of the study will draw a practical picture of

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Lefapha la Bomo

how female educators and principals feel about promotions in secondary schools specifically in rural areas.

For confidentiality and anonymity guarantees, pseudonyms will be used to identify participants and password for data collected will be created. Teachers must sign a consent form before discussions starts. In addition, this is an academic study, so no incentives will be available for participation. All participants who will agree to participate will do so voluntarily. For quality data purposes, extended discussions for more than three times per participant will be conducted. Information will be recorded during discussions

For enquiries, you can contact Thandi Velile Mkhonto

Mobile Number: 0729954208/ 0814310028

Email: mthandivelile@gmail.com

Thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully

Mkhonto T.V

Appendix E: Participation request for Principals



Faculty of Humanities
Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

Enquiries: Ms T.V Mkhonto 0729954208/ 0814310028

Researcher: Thandi Velile Mkhonto
Office Tel: 011 355 6304
Mobile: 072 995 4208/ 0814310028
Email: mthandivelile@gmail.com

RE: REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Principal,

I am Thandi Velile Mkhonto, a masters' student at the University of Pretoria, Hatfield campus, Pretoria, Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, faculty of Humanities. Student number is 16403933, I am working with Prof Vusilizwe Thebe my supervisor.

I am requesting your participation in the study titled: **Women and Promotability in Rural South African Schools: Listening to the Voices of Female Teachers in Ehlanzeni District Municipality.**

The main aim of the study is to understand the position of women on two key issues on the gender and promotability debate: first, their views on the gender initiatives undertaken by the postcolonial state in South Africa and second, their perceptions on promotability and ambitions for leadership positions in their schools.

I am kindly requesting your participation on this research study as a respondent on the discussions of the above-mentioned study. This is just an academic study for the master's

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degree qualification. Thus, your involvement in this study is voluntarily so you may choose to participate or not. There are no incentives for participating, thus, participants have a right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. For guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality, identity is not required and passwords for the information given will be created for security reasons. For quality data purposes, extended discussions for more than three times per participant will be conducted. Information will be recorded during discussions by means of an audio recorder.

The intention is to contribute a different but practical argument on how women understand and see their situation. This study will provide an empirical grounded evidence, drawn from the people concerned, who will assist policy makers in ensuring that policies are not guided by dominant narratives, but are context specific and domesticated.

For further clarity, you can contact Thandi Velile Mkhonto

Mobile Number: 0729954208/ 0814310028

Email: mthandivelife@gmail.com

Thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully

Mkhonto T.V (Student)

Appendix F: Participation request for Educators



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities
Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

Enquiries: Ms T.V Mkhonto 0729954208/ 0814310028

Researcher: Thandi Velile Mkhonto
Office Tel: 011 355 6304
Mobile: 072 995 4208/ 0814310028
Email: mthandivelile@gmail.com

RE: REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Teacher,

I am Thandi Velile Mkhonto, a masters' student at the University of Pretoria, Hatfield campus, Pretoria, Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, faculty of Humanities, Student number is 16403933, working with Prof Vusilizwe Thebe my supervisor.

I am requesting your participation in the study titled: **Women and Promotability in Rural South African Schools: Listening to the Voices of Female Teachers in Ehlanzeni District Municipality, Mpumalanga Province.**

The main aim of the study is to understand the position of women on two key issues on the gender and promotability debate: first, their views on the gender initiatives undertaken by the postcolonial state in South Africa and second, their perceptions on promotability and ambitions for leadership positions in their schools.

I am kindly requesting your participation on this research study as a respondent on the discussions of the above-mentioned study. This is just an academic study for the master's

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Lefapha la Bomo ho

degree qualification. Thus, your involvement in this study is voluntarily so you may choose to participate or not. There are no incentives for participating, thus, participants have a right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. For guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality identity is not required and passwords for the information given will be created. For quality data purposes, extended discussions for more than three times per participant will be conducted. Information will be recorded during discussions by means of an audio recorder.

The intention is to contribute a different but practical argument on how women understand and see their situation. This study will provide an empirical grounded evidence, drawn from the people concerned, who will assist policy makers in ensuring that policies are not guided by dominant narratives, but are context specific and domesticated.

For further clarity, you can contact Thandi Velile Mkhonto

Mobile Number: 0729954208/ 0814310028

Email: mthandivelife@gmail.com

Thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully

Mkhonto T.V

Student

Appendix G: Researcher's introduction letter



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities
Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

29 May 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

REF: INTRODUCTION LETTER

This note serves to introduce **THANDI VELILE MKHONTO**, who is a *bona fide* student (Student Number 16403933), at the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology of the University of Pretoria, enrolled for MSocSci in Development Studies. She is conducting research on ‘*Women and Promotability in Rural South African Schools*’, and requests your assistance in order for her to achieve this objective. The research is part of her academic programme and has satisfied the institution’s ethical scrutiny. It is not a political project and is not harmful to individuals, groups and society. If you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact me.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vusilizwe Thebe', enclosed in a simple oval scribble.

Vusilizwe Thebe (PhD, UEA, UK)
Programme Coordinator (Development Studies)
Tel. +27 12 420 3526
e.mail: vusi.thebe@up.ac.za



Appendix H: Informed Consent form



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities

Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

Enquiries: Ms T.V Mkhonto 0729954208/ 0814310028

Researcher: Thandi Velile Mkhonto
Office Tel: 011 355 6304
Mobile: 072 995 4208/ 0814310028
Email: mthandivelile@gmail.com

INFORMED CONSENT BY RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for your involvement in the proposed study. It is an ethical practice to get informed consent from a research respondent prior to the commencement of a research initiative. Informed consent entails the following:

1. **Title of the study:** Women and Promotability in Rural South African Schools: Listening to the Voices of Female Teachers in Ehlanzeni District Municipality.
2. **Purpose of the study:** This study is being undertaken for a MSocSci in Development Studies programme at the University of Pretoria. The purpose of the study is to understand the position of women on two key issues on the gender and promotability debate, their views on the gender initiatives undertaken by the postcolonial state in South Africa and their perceptions on promotability and ambitions for leadership positions in their schools.
3. **Procedures:** The researcher will conduct an unstructured interview in a form of discussion with female educators who have 10 years of service and more in the teaching sector. Some of the discussions may be recorded for accuracy in reporting. Interviews will be conducted at my convenience. An interview schedule will be used as guidance.
4. **Risks and discomfort:** There are no foreseen risks and discomfort involved in participating in the study. However, this research may remind you of the practical realities and challenges in the education sector.
5. **Benefits:** There will be no incentives for participating in the study.
6. **Respondent's rights:** Participating in the study is entirely voluntary and participants may withdraw from participating in the study at any time without negative consequences.
7. **Confidentiality:** The information collected will be used for research purposes only and completed interviews will not be shared with any unauthorized persons. All the information will be regarded as personal and confidential. No names will be mentioned in the

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interpretation of the data and where applicable, pseudonyms will be used. All the raw and transcribed research data will be securely stored. The research data and transcripts will not be used by the researcher or any other researcher without participants' informed consent.

8. **Storage of research data:** The data will be securely stored for archiving purposes only and will be used for future research purposes.
9. **Questions and concerns:** Should any concerns or questions arise, the researcher and or her supervisor could be contacted at the following cell phone numbers or e-mail addresses. Velile Mkhonto (researcher) 0729954208 [mthandivelile@gmail.com] and Prof Vusilizwe Thebe (supervisor) 0784987430 [Vusi.Thebe@up.ac.za]

If you have any questions about the study please contact me or my supervisor.
Please indicate your consent to participation in the interview by signing this consent form.

DECLARATION

I, understand my rights as a research participant and give consent to participate in the study voluntarily and have received a copy of this consent letter.

----- Date	----- Place	----- Participant signature
----- Date	----- Place	----- Researcher signature

Appendix I: Interview schedule for Principals



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities
Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS

Title: Women and Promotability in Rural South African Schools: Listening to the Voices of Female Teachers in Ehlanzeni District Municipality.

1. Family setting

- 1.1. Household and demographic characteristics
- 1.2. Participant's career
- 1.3. Spouse's occupation

2. Qualifications

- 2.1. Highest professional qualification
- 2.2. Years of completion
- 2.3. Further qualification relevant to the teaching career
- 2.4. Phase specialization

3. Experience as a school principal

- 3.1. Number of years in the Education profession
- 3.2. Factors influencing teaching as a career choice
- 3.3. Challenges faced by female school principals (both social and curriculum)
 - 3.3.1. Physical challenges
 - 3.3.2. Organizational challenges
 - 3.3.3. Social challenges
- 3.4. Impacts of family arrangements

4. Promotion in teaching

- 4.1. Criteria for promotion
- 4.2. Requirements for promotion

Room 8-3, Level 8, Humanities Building
University of Pretoria, Private Bag X20
Hatfield 0028, South Africa
Tel +27 (0)12 420 3526
Fax +27(0)86 542 9204
Email vusi.thebe@up.ac.za
www.up.ac.za

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-
- 5. Aspirations about headship**
 - 5.1. Beliefs on leadership
 - 5.2. Views and perceptions on women promotability.
 - 5.3. Ambitions and aspiration for promotions

 - 6. Career support**
 - 6.1. Family support
 - 6.2. Colleagues support
 - 6.3. Community support
 - 6.4. Government support

 - 7. Socio-cultural factor**
 - 7.1. Traditional Practices
 - 7.2. Community Attitude
 - 7.3. Religious Conservations

 - 8. Gender perceptions**
 - 8.1. Gender stereotyping
 - 8.2. Gender disparities
 - 8.3. Gender equity

 - 9. Other matters**
 - 9.1. Spouse's attitude on being a school principal
 - 9.2. Society attitude on being a school principal

 - 10. Any other issues arising**

Appendix J: Interview schedule for Educators



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities

Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR EDUCATORS

Title: Women and Promotability in Rural South African Schools: Listening to the Voices of Female Teachers in Ehlanzeni District Municipality.

1. Family settings

- 1.1. Household and demographic characteristics
- 1.2. Participant's career
- 1.3. Spouse's occupation

2. Qualifications

- 2.1. Highest professional qualification
- 2.2. Years of completion
- 2.3. Further qualification relevant to the teaching career
- 2.4. Phase specialization

3. Experience as an educator

- 3.1. Position
- 3.2. Number of years in the Education profession
- 3.3. Factors influencing teaching as a career choice
 - 3.3.1. Physical challenges
 - 3.3.2. Organizational challenges
 - 3.3.3. Social challenges
- 3.4. Impacts of family arrangements

4. Promotion in teaching

- 4.1. Criteria for promotion
- 4.2. Requirements for promotion

5. Aspirations about headship

Room 8-3, Level 8, Humanities Building
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- 5.1. Beliefs on leadership
- 5.2. Views and perceptions on female promotability.
- 5.3. Ambitions and aspiration for promotions

- 6. Career support**
 - 6.1. Family support
 - 6.2. Colleagues support
 - 6.3. Community support
 - 6.4. Government support

- 7. Socio-cultural factor**
 - 7.1. Traditional Practices
 - 7.2. Community Attitude
 - 7.3. Religious Conservations

- 8. Gender perceptions**
 - 8.1. Gender stereotyping
 - 8.2. Gender disparities
 - 8.3. Gender equity

- 9. Any other issues arising**

Appendix K: Proof of Editing Letter

SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

11 December 2018

Department of Anthropology & Archeology
Faculty of Humanities
University of Pretoria
Hatfield
Pretoria

Sir/madam

This serves to certify that I have proof-read Ms T.V. Mkhonto's dissertation titled, "Women and Promotability in Rural South African Schools: Listening to the Voices of Female Teachers in Ehlanzeni District Municipality".

The proof-reading entailed editing some parts from it; for example, to avoid wordiness, redundancy; sub-dividing long sentences, and so on, to make the document more understandable. However, I have not tampered with the content of the document, except where this constituted repetition or made the document confusing.

The dissertation is presently ready for examination.

Sincerely



.....
V.T. Bvuma
083 423 9227



University of Venda

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

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"A quality driven, financial sustainable, rural-based comprehensive University"