

**THE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF FEMALE PRINCIPAL
LEADERSHIP: A CASE STUDY OF TWO PRIMARY
SCHOOLS IN THE EAST LONDON DISTRICT**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Kiki CorrinaWebu, declare that this dissertation entitled "THE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE FEMALE PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP: A CASE STUDY OF TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS AT THE EAST LONDON DISTRICT" is a result of my own original work and has not been submitted in to any other institution of higher education. I further declare that all sources cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a list of references.

Kiki CorrinaWebu

.....

Signature

Date:

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ABSTRACT

In the South African context, the leadership positions in both public and private sectors are dominated by males. After 1994, there was an improvement in the employment of females in leadership positions, particularly in the Department of Education. But the female principals are still facing challenges that emanate from them, as well as extrinsic challenges. Studies highlighted leadership traits, leadership styles, the teachers' attitudes, prejudice and gender stereotypes that contribute towards female principalship challenges. This study focused on the perceptions of teachers of female principal leadership in two primary schools. Furthermore, it highlighted limitations as well as successes of female principal leader as perceived by the teachers.

The qualitative research approach was used to investigate the perceptions of teachers in terms of the limitations and successes of female principal leaders. A case study of two primary schools with six Post Level One teachers across the phases and two Heads of Department (HODs) was conducted. One-to-one semi-structured interviews were used as qualitative research tools to collect data from the teachers.

The findings of this study revealed that the female principals demonstrated two sides in their leadership, the positive side and the negative side. The respondents had expectations that the female principals would be more nurturing in character when they encountered personal problems. The respondents became happy when the female principals demonstrate the motherly traits such as warmth, care and love to them when they had personal problems. The female principal demonstrates sympathy and humanity by being there when the teacher is experiencing personal problems and shows interest in how the teacher is feeling. On the other hand, the respondents claimed that they did not feel that quality of

motherhood when the female principal was not protecting them against angry parents. The respondents also perceived the female principals as being competent in solving the personal problems of teachers while, on the other hand, they were not able to solve the school problems. The respondents felt that the female principals showed little interest in the learners' wellbeing with regard to issues such as bursaries and involvement of social workers.

ACRONYMS

DET	- Department of Education and Training
DoE	- Department of Education
EDO	- Education Developmental Officer
GETT	- Gender Equity Task Team
HOD	- Head of Department
IDT	- Independent Development Trust
NGO	- Non-Governmental Organization
SGB	- School Governing Body
SMT	- School Management Team
USA	- United State of America
UK	- United Kingdom

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This research study focused on teachers' perceptions of the female principal leadership in two selected primary schools. The aim was to get information on how the teachers viewed the female principal leadership and to explore the limitations as well as the strengths of the female principals.

Traditionally, teaching has been viewed as a profession for women, but at the level of a classroom or a subject teacher, not in a management position (Coombs, 2004). In 2010 women formed the majority, that is, 68% of the teaching force in South Africa (Lumbi & Azaola, 2011). In South Africa, the management positions are dominated by men and there is an under-representation of female teachers in promotion posts (Coombs, 2004). Thakathi & Lemmer (2002) endorse this by saying that men occupied 58% of all principal posts and 69% of all deputy principal posts, although they made up 36% of all teachers in South Africa in 1994. While the Department of Education (DoE) as cited in Paulsen (2009) notes that recent figures illustrate that women form only 30% of school managers, yet they constitute 70% of the teaching population. Moorosi (2006) also illustrated that in South Africa, women form only 30% of school principals, yet they constitute the majority in the teaching profession. In the study by Kawana (2004) on the inspectors' perceptions of the female principal, the school inspectors also confirmed that in the appointment of principals the selection panels were dominated by men. Furthermore, the study showed that the inspectors prefer to appoint men rather than women in management posts (Kawana 2004).

The figures shown in the previous paragraph indicate that there are few women in the leadership positions in the Department of Education in South Africa. Based on this background, the study on teachers' perceptions of female leadership was undertaken.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Department of Education in South Africa is characterised by under-representation of female teachers in leadership positions. Kgomo (2006) states that women are under-represented within educational leadership and other areas of executive management. This means that men are still dominating the positions of leadership and management. The new Constitution that followed the demise of apartheid in 1994 embedded a strong commitment to racial and gender equality (Lumby & Azaola, 2011). The Bill of Rights in the Constitution of South Africa of 1996 spells clearly the value of non-discrimination and human rights concerning the status of women and gender equality (Coombs, 2004; Damons, 2008). The Employment Act 76 of 1998 states that in the making of any appointment or the filling of any educator post, due regards shall be given to equality, equity and other democratic values and principles which are in section 195 (article 1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 (Coombs 2004). The Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) has influenced the formulation and implementation of quite a number of related legislation which ensure that women are no longer discriminated against due to their gender and sexual orientation (Kgomo, 2006). Before explaining more about the representation of female principals in leadership positions, it is proper to give a brief explanation of a school principal.

The school principal is a senior departmental official in the school and is therefore responsible for ensuring that departmental instructions are communicated to the staff and are adhered to by the school (DoE, 2003). The DoE (2003) further explains that the professional management of a public school is undertaken by the principal under the authority of the Head of Department. The school principal is the manager and leader of the school, and, therefore, is legally accountable for the administration and governance

of the school (Department of Education and Training (DET), 1991). The DET (1991) outlines the roles of the principal of a school.

The principal is responsible for all the functional, administrative, organisational and working processes necessary for the efficient functioning of the school. The principal is expected to give guidance in connection with the tuition and other and other activities of the school, such as extra-mural activities. The principal is responsible for the maintenance of the discipline of the staff and pupils or students. The principal is responsible for the use and care of government property. The principal should supervise the activities of the staff attached to the school. The principal should submit the returns required by the Director General and fulfils other duties entrusted to him or her. The main consideration is the quality of teaching in the classroom, together with the pupils' broader moulding by means of cultural and extra – mural activities. The character and the conduct of the principal are one of the crucial aspects when appointing a school principal.

According to the (Department of Education and Training, 1991), for a person to be appointed as a school principal, he or she must comply with the following:

- A person should be academically suitable and qualify for the post.
- He or she should possess irreproachable character and conduct.
- He or she must possess necessary teaching experience required.
- The principal should show personal and management qualities.
- The principal should be fully conversant with the teaching and organisational requirements of school.

Irrespective of the number of female principal in leadership positions, some female principals succeeded in their role as leaders and they are committed to their work (Kawana, 2004). Women leaders are more caring, collaborative, consensus-orientated and student and curriculum focused (Paulsen, 2009). Kawana (2004) states that women principals have good relations with staff, are efficient organisers, self-disciplined and have the ability to bring about positive change. Women principal are less hierarchical and they are more democratic, participatory, communicate better with educators, approachable and more inclined

to encourage inclusiveness and motivation than their male counterparts (Paulsen, 2009; Kawana, 2004). Kawana (2004) states that the characteristics of female leadership fit well with the notions of how to run successful schools. Eagle & Carli (2003:810) agree by saying that "...effective leadership is congruent to the ways that women lead." This means that the female principals succeed in their role as leaders of the institutions.

The female principals also show negative characteristics in their leadership. There are cases where the female principals are seen as being assertive and firm because of their position as accounting officers (Paulsen, 2009). Mavin (2006) identified "queen bee syndrome" in some female leaders by stating that the senior women act in a more assertive way by "pulling up the ladder" for other women once they have reached the senior levels. Mavin (2006) further explains this by saying that the queen bee will sting if her power is threatened by other women, and that she prefers to work with men and tends to reward them, support and promote them ahead of females. Women principals are still experiencing some challenges in their roles as leaders in their institutions.

Despite the fact that there is an improvement in the percentage of women in management posts since 1994 (Coombs 2004), and that female leaders portray the successes mentioned above, the women in management posts are still experiencing intrinsic, as well as extrinsic barriers in their role as principals (Coombs, 2004). Kgomo (2006) agrees by saying that even when women managers acquire a measure of power, they are constrained by societal norms and intra-organizational pressures in ways that make it difficult if not impossible for them to successfully exercise their power. It is the part of culture that society expects women to look after family, children and husband. The society does not accept the advancement of women to senior positions because of the view that they should look after their families (Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango, 2009). The dominance of men in leadership positions is also linked with traditional perspectives of the position of women in the society (Moorosi, 2006). It is difficult

for men to accept women as their heads because of culture (Menstry & Schmidt, 2012). Coombs (2004) agrees that the Department of Education has tried to appoint women in senior posts since 1994 but these women left the Department within six years because the acceptance of their authority was a problem due to these intrinsic and extrinsic perceptions. Moorosi (2010) articulated that women principals continue to face obstacles in performing the management function even after they have been appointed. Intrinsic perceptions include cultural, social and traditional beliefs that still influence the behaviour of women managers (Coombs, 2004). Mestry & Schmidt (2012:535) maintain that “the patriarchal culture, deeply rooted amongst all ethnic groups, remains dominant in many communities and schools in South Africa, placing constraints on women’s advancement into senior leadership positions”. For instance, female principals believe that they must perform to be seen and that they must be what the ‘world’ wants them to be (Coombs, 2004). Paulsen (2009:2) further explains the intrinsic barriers by saying that “Sometimes it is not the glass ceiling that prevents women to go to top, but something in their own make-up. Sometimes it is not society’s fault-it is our own decision to balance our lives or set our own priorities that sees us taking only the deputy chair seat on the board.” Women managers in Education are facing some problems which do not exist for male managers which come from other stakeholders (Damons, 2008). This is what Coombs (2004) refers to as extrinsic perceptions.

Women managers feel that they are exposed to critique by both males and females (Damons, 2008). A successful manager is seen as assertive and self-reliant. “If they are strong they are regarded as aggressive, tough not feminine, if they are jovial they are permissive, if they cry they are emotional, if they make a mistake, remarks like ‘that you can expect from a woman’ are heard all over (Coombs, 2004:13).” If the female principal is unable to fulfil a certain role, she is perceived as weak and passive and more capable of being led than leading. Kawana (2004) agrees that women in leadership positions are expected to adopt masculine characteristics, calling them ‘men in skirts’ leadership style. If

she is assertive, self-reliant and initiative, she is perceived as hostile, maladjusted and over-controlling (Damon 2008). Even when women are well qualified, the predominance of males in leadership posts resulted in a culture where male behavioural patterns are perceived to be the norm, and women often find it difficult to be accepted as equals by their male counterparts (Mestry & Schmidt, 2012).

Women managers are frequently reminded that they are outsiders who only represent their gender and that they are not seen as part of management groups (Coombs, 2004). “...when women hold positions in management, all eyes are on them and comments are made about the smallest error. They are under constant public scrutiny due to the perception that women are less able to cope with crises, and are not capable of leading” (De Witt as cited in Coombs, 2004:14). The reasons for this attitude include lack of acceptance of and resistance by the teachers of the female principal authority. The dominance of men in powerful positions within the structure of school management such as school governing bodies and district officials is also detrimental to women’s access and performance in these positions (Moorosi, 2010). Hence Naledi Pandor, in her keynote address to the Gender Equity Conference, noted that even though the government has passed laws to ensure equity in employment, there is still a hidden glass ceiling that leads to unequal practices in the distribution of leadership posts amongst men and women.

The above instances show that women in leadership positions in schools are facing challenges in South Africa. This study, therefore, focused on the perceptions of teachers on the female principal leadership in two primary schools in the East London District.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite an improvement in employment of women in leadership positions in the Department of Education in South Africa since 1994, the female principals are still facing challenges which emanates from them, as well as from extrinsic perceptions by other stakeholders (Coombs 2004). Women do not succeed as expected in their leadership roles, not because of the glass ceiling that prevents them to go to top, but because of something in their own make-up. Sometimes it is not society's fault but it is the women's own decision to balance their lives or set their own priorities that sees them taking only the deputy chair seat on the board (Paulsen 2009:2). Women managers perform to be seen by the world (Coombs, 2004). This means that women managers do what the world expects them to do.

Women managers are also exposed to critique from male and female teachers (Damons, 2008). They are seen as representatives of their gender, otherwise they do not have the guts to be managers (Coombs, 2004). "...when women hold positions in management, all eyes are on them and comments are made about the smallest error (De Witt as cited in Coombs, 2004:14).

It was against this background that the study was undertaken to investigate the perceptions of teachers on female principal leadership in two primary schools in the East London District.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study investigated the perceptions of teachers on female principal leadership in two selected primary schools. The following research questions were used to guide the study:

The main research question:

- What are the perceptions of teachers of the leadership of female principals

at primary school level?

Sub-questions:

- What do teachers consider as the limitations of female principal leadership?
- What do teachers consider as the successes of female principal leadership?
- What are the leadership and management implications of the teachers' perceptions?

1.5 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aims of the study are:

- To investigate the perceptions of teachers on the leadership of female principals in two primary schools.
- To identify the limitations of female principal leadership.
- To identify the strengths of female principal leadership.
- To identify the leadership and management implications of the teachers' perceptions.

1.6 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers on female principal leadership in two primary schools. Therefore, it was necessary to obtain the viewpoint of the teachers on the leadership of female principals as they are the ones who are working together with the female principals at school and who are being led by the female principals. Another point was whether the teachers perceived the female principals as effective leaders or whether they have negative perceptions of them.

1.7 RATIONAL FOR THE STUDY

I am a female Post Level One educator. I am working under the leadership of a female principal. I observed that female principals succeed in their leadership because of their hard work. The female principals are dedicated to their work and make things happen. I have noticed that the leadership of female principals is different from that of male principals. The female principals possess nurturing character in their leadership. This means that they have the motherly trait where they are able to listen to the teacher even if he or she has different opinions from them. To me this is the strength because they solve problems in a calm manner. The female principals allow free participation of the teachers and they are able to build relationships with other stake-holders such as parents. As a Post Level One educator who is being inspired by these female principals, and who is also willing to be a leader one day, I decided to undertake the study on female principal leadership.

This study was conducted to explore the perceptions of teachers on female leadership. Therefore, the information gathered from this study will assist the teachers by giving them understanding of their own perceptions on female principal leadership. The study will also assist the teachers to critically analyze and evaluate whether their perceptions are still worth having or not.

The study will also benefit the female principals by giving them information about the perceptions of teachers on their leadership, so that they can make changes in their leadership where necessary. The study will also assist the female principals to improve their leadership skills.

This study will not only benefit the teachers and the female principals, but also help the Department of Education with knowledge of what perceptions teachers have of female principal, so that it can assist the teachers and the female

principals with necessary developmental programmes that will reduce the negative perceptions and cultivate leadership potential among women. This can make the role of school principal more accessible to women.

1.8 DEFINITION OF THE KEY CONCEPTS

Perception: Perception is the process by which organisms interpret and organize sensation to produce a meaningful experience of the world. In other words, the person is confronted with a situation and interprets it into something meaningful to him or her, based on prior experiences (Lindsay & Norman as cited in Pickens, 1998). However, what an individual interprets or perceives may be different from reality (Pickens, 1998).

Principal: Principal means an educator appointed or acting as the head of the school (Setoaba, 2011). The school principal is the manager and leader of the school, made responsible and legally accountable for the administration and governance of the school in terms of the appointment by the Department of Education and Training (DET) according to the provisions of Regulation R819 within the framework of the Education Act 90 of 1969 (DET, 1991) .

Gender: Gender refers to array of socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential basis (Esen & Jolly, 2006). Gender is an acquired identity that is learned, changes over time and varies widely within and across culture (*ibid*).

Leadership: The concept of leadership can be explained as an ability to influence and motivate other people's actions in order to achieve certain goals, and also be able to initiate change in order to reach existing and new goals (Bush & Middlewood 2005).

Management: The concept of management involves the day-to-day running of the school by ensuring that the policies of the Department Of Education are maintained and carried out efficiently and effectively (Bush & Middlewood, 2005).

1.9 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study focused on the teachers' perceptions of the female principal leadership. The study was conducted in two selected primary schools in the District of East London.

The study was limited to only two primary schools in the East London District. This study was also narrowed down to schools with black learners only whereas there are many schools in the East London District that consist of different races. Therefore, the findings that came out of this study cannot be generalized to other schools within the East London Schools.

1.10 DEMARCATION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter one provided the introduction, background to the study and the statement of the problem .The research questions and the aims of the study were also highlighted in this chapter. Also the definition of key concepts that relate to the study were presented.

Chapter two provides an overview of literature on the female principal leadership at two primary schools. Previous studies that are relevant to the topic of investigation are reviewed. These include the theoretical framework of distributed leadership, the concept of leadership and management, and perceived leadership traits. Finally, the literature pertaining to the attitudes, prejudice and gender stereotypes associated with female leadership is explored.

Chapter three presents the methodology that was used in the study, including the approaches that were relevant to the study. These include the overall research approach which was the qualitative research approach, research design which was the case study, the interpretive paradigm and interviews as data gathering instruments.

Chapter four presents the findings that emerged from the data collected from the respondents and provides discussion of the findings in connection with the research questions and literature review.

Chapter five provides a summary of the findings, the conclusion and recommendations from the findings, as well as possible areas for further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of the literature on female principal leadership, as well as literature that is relevant to female leadership, particularly the perceptions of teachers on the female principal leadership, both internationally and nationally. The aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers on the leadership of female principals in two selected primary schools in the East London District. Furthermore, this study aimed at identifying the limitations of female principal leadership, as well as identifying the strengths of female principal leadership.

The literature review of this study comprises different sections. The first section is the theoretical framework which is based on distributed leadership. The first section explores the difference between leadership and management and how these two concepts are intertwined. The second section discusses the perceived leadership styles that are portrayed by female principals. The third section explores the perceived female leadership traits so as to see if they contribute to the perceptions of teachers on female principal leadership. The fourth section explores teachers' attitudes, prejudice and gender stereotypes associated with female leadership. The fifth section is based on international and African trends on women leaders and managers. The sixth section is the theoretical framework which is based on distributed leadership. Lastly, a summary of the main issues raised in this chapter has been given.

2.2 CONCEPTUALIZING LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The concepts of leadership and management are distinguishable, but are characterized by interdependence. This means that leadership and management are inseparable (Neidhardt, 2009). "Management and leadership support each other and there are overlapping areas that are both leadership and management functions (Paulsen, 2009:19). Neidhardt (2009) supports this by stating that in the field of education, leadership and management are inseparable. "Management and leadership are not mutually exclusive...without managers the vision of leaders becomes a dream. Leaders require managers to change visions into reality" (Damons, 2008:26). Hence Kawana (2008) also agrees that an administrator like a school principal needs to be a good manager and a good leader. Although the two concepts of leadership and management are interdependent, they are different.

The concept of leadership can be explained as an ability to influence and motivate other people's actions in order to achieve certain goals, and also be able to initiate change in order to reach the existing and new goals (Bush & Middlewood, 2005). Kawana (2004) defines leadership as the process of influencing employees to work towards the achievement of objectives, adding that the leader inspires, guides and equips the followers. Leadership is about mission, direction, inspiration, empowering the followers and is people-oriented, and is also associated with risk-taking, dynamic, creativity, change and vision (Damons, 2008).

On the other hand, the concept of management involves the day to day running of the school by maintaining the status quo (Bush & Middlewood, 2005). This means that the manager ensures that the policies that are given by the Department of Education are carried out efficiently and effectively. The overall function is towards maintenance rather than change. Management is about designing and carrying out plans and getting things done, and is task-oriented (Damons, 2008; Kawana,

2004). "Management is viewed as the 'house keeping' items of paperwork, compliance and resourcing" (Neidhardt, 2009:18). Management is associated with efficiency, planning, paperwork, procedures, regulations, control and consistency (Damons, 2008). A person could have the ability to perform managerial tasks, but fail to persuade followers to achieve organizational goals (*ibid*).

The next section discusses the perceived leadership styles of female principals.

2.3 PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP STYLES OF FEMALE PRINCIPALS

Discussing perceived leadership styles portrayed by female principals is not the focal point of this study, but it is important to explore these perceived leadership styles to see if they have an impact on the perceptions of teachers of female leadership. To achieve this goal the following leadership styles are explored:

2.3.1 AUTOCRATIC VERSUS DEMOCRATIC AND TASK-ORIENTED VERSUS RELATIONSHIP-ORIENTED

Cuadrado, Morales & Recio (2008) have identified autocratic versus democratic and task-oriented versus relationship-oriented leadership styles. Autocratic and democratic leadership styles are discussed first. Table 2.3.1.1 below illustrates the differences between the autocratic leadership style and the democratic leadership style. The discussion of both leadership styles is provided after the table.

Table 2.3.1.1 Autocratic versus democratic

AUTOCRATIC	DEMOCRATIC
Top-down approach	Bottom up approach
Instructions from top to subordinates	Involvement of all stakeholders
Decision-making by superiors	Decision-making by all stakeholders
Lack of consultation	High level of consultation
Low level of participation	High level of participation
Holding of authority to himself or herself	Delegation of authority to others

Autocratic leadership style is characterized by the leader making decisions on his or her own, not allowing the group members to participate (Cuadrado, Mrales & Recio, 2008). Harris & Lambert as cited in Paulsen (2009) agree that in a school where leadership is autocratic, the flow of information is in a one-way direction, from the head to the educators. Eagle & Carli (2003) adds that an autocratic leader discourages subordinates to participate in decision-making.

On the other hand, democratic leadership allows and encourages the group members to participate in decision-making (Cuadrado, Morales & Recio, 2008). Paulsen (2009) agrees by saying that the democratic approach implies that a leader of the school involves all stakeholders in the decision-making process. "A democratic leader can be described as someone who delegates authority to others, encourages participation, relies on subordinates' knowledge for completion of tasks, and depends on subordinates' respect for influence (Daft as cited in Paulsen, 2009: 21).

Table 2.3.1.2 below shows the differences between task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership styles.

Table 2.3.1.2 Task-oriented versus relationship-oriented

TASK-ORIENTED	RELATIONSHIP-ORIENTED
Accomplishment of the assigned task	Maintenance of interpersonal relationships
High standard of performance	Employees' wellbeing and satisfaction

Leaders who are task-oriented are concerned with accomplishing assigned tasks by organizing the activities that are relevant to the task and maintaining high standards of performance (Eagle & Johnnanesen-Schmidt, 2001). On the other hand, leaders who are relationship-oriented are concerned with maintaining the positive interpersonal relationship such as being available, friendly and looking out for employee's wellbeing and satisfaction (van Eupen, undated).

In recent years, feminist researchers have exposed the differences between the way men and women lead (Kawana, 2004). Cuadrado, Morales & Recio (2009:56) assign different styles for men and women, "Men are generally considered more autocratic and task- oriented because of their relationship with components of the "instrumental" dimension of gender stereotypes (for example, aggressive, enterprising, independent, self-sufficient, dominant, competent, and rational). In contrast, women tend to be considered more democratic and relationship-oriented, because they are characterized by aspects such as being concerned with others, being generous, sensitive, understanding, affectionate, or compassionate (Kawana, 2004) Eagle & Carli (2003) supports this by stating that women are more interpersonally oriented and democratic than men, and men are task-oriented and autocratic than women. Rosener & Shakeshaft as cited in Kawana (2004) also agree by saying that women's style of leadership is democratic, participatory and inclined to encourage inclusiveness and motivation than males, who emphasize individualism, duty and rules.

The next section discusses the difference between transformational leadership and transactional leadership.

2.3.2 TRANSFORMATIONAL VERSUS TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE

The difference between transformational and transactional leadership styles is illustrated in table 2.3.1.3

Table 2.3.1.3

TRANSFORMATIONAL	TRANSACTIONAL
Provides vision and mission	Exchange of relationships
Respect and pride of the group	Clarification of responsibilities
Higher level of achievement	Monitoring of work
Higher level of job satisfaction	Rewarding and correcting
New perspectives of solving problems and tasks	Focus on mistakes and failure of subordinates
Development of followers	Act when there is a problem
Individual needs	Passive participation

Transformational leadership entails establishing oneself as a role model by gaining the trust and confidence of the followers (Eagle & Carli, 2003). Transformational leaders demonstrate qualities that motivate respect and pride from the group (Cuadrado, Morales & Recio, 2008). Transformational leaders produce changes in their followers' scale of values, attitudes and beliefs and thus get them to attain higher levels of achievement than expected and therefore higher levels of job satisfaction (*ibid*). Transformational leaders examine new perspectives for solving problems and completing tasks; and they focus on development and monitoring of the followers and attend to their individual needs (Cuadrado, Morales & Recio, 2008; van Eupen, undated).

Pounde & Coleman (2002) identify four dimensions of transformational leadership:

- Idealized influence or charisma: The leader provides vision and mission,

instils pride, gains respect and trust and increases optimism. In that way the leader inspires the subordinates. The transformational leader is capable of influencing the subordinate so that they follow his or her ideas.

- Inspirational motivation: The leader here acts as a model for his or her subordinates and engenders confidence in his or her vision and values. The leader sets a good example to his or her subordinates to ensure that they look up to him or her.
- Individual consideration: The coaches and mentors provide continuous feedback and link organizational members' needs to the organization's needs.
- Intellectual stimulation: The leader stimulates the followers to rethink old ways of doing things and to reassess their old values and beliefs. The followers are provided with interesting and challenging tasks and encouraged to solve problems in their own way.

The disadvantages of transformational leadership are that it provides a normative approach to school leadership which focuses primarily on the process where leaders seek to influence school outcomes, and that it may be criticized for being a vehicle for control over teachers and it is more likely to be accepted by the leader than the led (Bush, 2007).

On the other hand, transactional leadership entails exchange of relationship with the subordinates where the leader manages by clarifying subordinate responsibilities, monitoring their work and rewarding them for meeting objectives and correcting them for failing to meet objectives (Eagle & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Paulsen supports this by explaining that transactional leaders determine what subordinates need to do to achieve their own and organizational objectives and reward them according to their accomplishments, and that this type of leadership does little to bring about change in the organization. Van Eupen (undated) explains transactional leadership as a means of obtaining cooperation by establishing exchanges with the subordinates and then monitoring the exchange relationships by providing rewards for satisfactory performance, attends

to subordinates' mistakes and failures to meet the standards and waits until the problems become severe before attending to them and intervening.

Pounder & Coleman (2002) identify three dimensions of transactional leadership:

- Contingent reward: The leader's rewards to followers are contingent on their achieving specified performance levels.
- Management by exception in an active way: The leader seeks for mistakes and failure on the part of subordinates with the view to correcting them.
- Management by exception in a passive way: The leader takes action when the problems arrive.

Hersey-Blanchard situational leadership is discussed in the next section.

2.4 HERSEY-BLANCHARD SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY

Situational leadership is a leadership style that has been developed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977). Situational leadership implies that the leader or the manager of an organisation adjusts his or her style to fit the development level of the followers he or she is trying to influence. With situational leadership, it is up to the leader to change his or her style of leadership, not the followers to adapt to the leader's style. In situational leadership, the style of the leader may change continually to meet the needs of others in the organisation based on the situation.

Hersey-Blanchard's situational theory states that there is no single best style of leadership (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977). Different situations require different approaches to leadership (*ibid*). The effective leader is task relevant and the most successful leaders are those that adapt their leadership styles to the demands of the situation (*ibid*). Hersey-Blanchard's situational theory is advocated by Mestry & Schmidt (2012) when they state that there is no one correct leadership style; different people in different situations use different styles. If a principal decided to

use a specific leadership style, he or she should take into consideration the context, the people he or she is dealing with and the circumstances (*ibid*).

Hersey & Blanchard (1977) rate the leadership styles according to the level of maturity of the followers and they have identified four main leadership styles:

Telling leadership style: Leaders tell their people exactly what to do and how to do the work. The leader makes use of the top-down approach. In this case, the workers are new at work and they do not have experience of the work. At this stage, the people lack knowledge, skills or confidence to work on their own, and they often need a person to push them to take the task on.

Selling leadership style: Leaders still provide information and direction, but there is more communication with the followers. Leaders sell their message to get the team on board. The workers in this category are still inexperienced and still learning. The people are willing to work on the tasks, but they still do not have the skills to do the work successfully.

Participating leadership style: Leaders focus more on the relationship and less on direction. The leader works with the team, and shares decision-making and responsibilities. The workers in this category are ready and willing to do the task. They have more skills but they are not confident enough in their abilities. The workers know their roles and perform with little supervision.

Delegation leadership style: Leaders pass most of the responsibilities onto the followers. The leaders still monitor progress, but are less involved in decisions. At this stage, the workers are able to work on their own. They have high confidence and strong skills, and they are committed to their tasks.

‘Telling’ and ‘selling’ leadership styles focus on getting the task done while ‘participating’ and ‘delegation’ are more concerned with developing team members’ abilities to work independently (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977).

According to Hersey & Blanchard (1977) all team members are not created equal. Leaders are more effective when they use a leadership style based on the individuals or group they are leading (*ibid*). Leaders should start by identifying whom they are leading, and then use the leadership style that is appropriate to their workers. Hersey & Blanchard (1977) believe that the leaders should be flexible and adjust their styles as followers and situations change over time. In their study, Mestry & Schmidt (2012) state that women were perceived to be flexible and adaptable according to the situation.

The perceived female leadership traits are explained in the next section.

2.5 THE PERCEIVED FEMALE LEADERSHIP TRAITS

Neidhardt (2009) acknowledged that female leaders possess a set of common characteristics that are essentially different from those of men. Damons (2008) identifies the leadership qualities that the female principals possess and how they complement their performance. The leadership traits are interpersonal skills, communication skills, skills of collaboration, emotional intelligence skills as well as conflict resolution skills.

The next section discusses interpersonal skills of a female principal.

2.5.1 INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Damons (2008) explains interpersonal skills as the process of relating well to others and revealing the intrinsic characteristics of relationships and communications with others. Kawana (2004:55) adds that "good interpersonal relationship needs to be accompanied by honesty, being straightforward with people so that they know where you stand. Honesty breeds an atmosphere of trust." The principals must be seen as caring towards the individual problems of

teachers, learners, parents and other individuals who have an interest in the school Kgomo (2006). A caring person is one who is able to listen and support others during their emotional outbursts (Kgomo, 2006).

According to Kgomo (2006:80) “Leaders who do not only know their own worlds, but instead they are able to understand other people’s world as well. In order to understand the worlds of others one must develop empathy. Empathy is a process through which one attempts to see the worlds of others putting self in other person’s place. It is deep understanding of other people, identifying with their thoughts, feeling their pain, sharing their joy. Such empathy is typically of strong, healthy relationship.”

Bush as cited in Damons (2008:28) states that women generally have an ethical and caring approach as they demonstrate qualities such as warmth and empathy and they pay special attention to honesty, gentleness, compassion and trust. Female leaders are perceived to demonstrate compassion, collaboration, nurturing, sensitivity and sound communication (Neidhardt, 2009). Paulsen (2009) supports that by saying that women managers are caring, communicative, consultative, consensus-oriented and student and curriculum focused. The female leaders are able to cultivate relationships and build strong communities and they are more instrumental in instructional learning than men (Neidhardt, 2009). Women have the capacity to build effective management and leadership through confidence, courage and respect of others’ opinions (Damons, 2008). Women leaders take each other as colleagues, value each other and show respect (Damons, 2008). Eagle & Carli (2003) have pointed out that women are interpersonally oriented and are more democratic as compared to men. Barth (2003) mentions congenial relationship which is a relationship that is personal and friendly. Congenial relationships build strong bonds among the staff in terms of socializing. Barth (2003) cautions us that this kind of relationship should not be taken lightly because it is the one which encourage teachers to attend the school regularly.

Damons (2008) cautions that the above statements do not mean that women are always good; they also display some emotions such as anger. They show anger by being sharp-tongued, annoying and crying (*ibid*). They can use crying to manipulate while on the other hand, they can cry to reveal their openness (*ibid*).

The next section explores communication skills of the female principal.

2.5.2 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication can be defined as the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another (Lunenburg, 2010). Unless a common understanding results from the exchange of information, there is no communication.

"There are few management skills as important to the education manager as the ability to communicate effectively - both in writing and orally" (Damons, 2008:30). Damons (2008) further explains that the principal spends 80% of his/her day communicating. The principal must be an agent of communication in that all other stakeholders in the school interact with each other through him or her (Kgomo, 2006). This means that the principal acts as a link between the SMT and the teachers, learners and parents. The principal is also a link between the school and the Department of Education. The principal also forms bond with other stakeholders who can assist the school, such as social workers and churches.

Female leaders are considered to be effective in communicating with others and they use simple communicating styles (Damons, 2008). Kgomo (2006) agrees and observes that women principals have a good command of communication and conflict management skills and they maintain healthy relationships in the school environment. This means that the female principals are capable of solving problems and challenges through effective communication. Thakathi & Lemmer

(2002) highlight that women principals are consultative and considerate in their communication because they give others the opportunity to participate in discussions. The female principals are able to inform the teachers of everything that is taking place and engage them in the issue of discussion. The female principal is willing to listen to others, is friendly and approachable, and able to communicate things with a smile, whether the opinions are positive or negative. Paulsen (2009) concludes that women run more closely-knit schools than men do and communicate better with educators and that they have softer approaches to management and keep more in touch with what is happening with the educators in their classes. Women leaders are able to apologize if there is a misunderstanding (*ibid*). Damons (2008) also observes that women in their communication have a good sense of humour and the ability to confess to making mistakes, and they care about the well-being of staff-members, learners and parents.

Skills of collaboration are explored in the next section.

2.5.3 SKILLS OF COLLABORATION

Neidhardt (2009) highlights that recent literature claims that women's leadership is collaborative, rational and de-emphasizes hierarchical relationships. Neidhardt & Shakeshaft (2009) identify a collaborative approach to leadership as a hallmark of female leadership, stating that a female leader's focus tends to centre on creating change through participatory processes. Damons (2008) notes that women leaders' collaborative framework involves sharing of management, vision, mission and other strategies in order to benefit the purpose of the school. Collaboration includes sharing of management roles and the formulation of vision and mission through participation of other stakeholders. Eagle & Carli (2003) agree that the greater social skills of women result in collaboration and democratic leadership behaviour. Bush (2005) also notes that women implement a collegial culture that focuses on collaboration which also emphasizes the individual. Damons (2008) emphasizes the fact that the school with a woman manager and a leader can be

identified as an organization with a culture of cooperation, co-ordination and commitment.

The above perceived female leadership traits increase more willingness and commitment to the stakeholders in terms of participation (Damons, 2008). However, the stakeholders do not always build ownership and commitment (*ibid*). Sometimes the stakeholders do not commit themselves to their decisions. Damons (2008) is advising that even though women's leadership traits are appreciated for increasing involvement to attain successful decision-making, bureaucracy, orderly administrative procedures and control must not be ignored because they assist where necessary.

The next section discusses the emotional intelligence skill of the female principal.

2.5.4 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SKILL

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognise your own feelings and those of others so as to be able to manage these emotions well in yourself and in your relationships (Damons, 2008). "Emotional intelligence is a group of capabilities, competences and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with the environmental demands and pressures that directly affect the overall psychological well-being" (Damons, 2008:29). Mestry & Schmidt (2012) describe emotional intelligence as the intelligent and skilled use of emotions in different situations.

The principals need the ability to manage their emotions, allowing them to relate sensitively to people whose assumptions might be different from others (Mestry & Schmidt, 2012). The calmness and the patience of the principal when dealing with staff members are crucial for effective management. This means that the principal must have an ear to listen to what the teachers are saying. Emotions are feelings experienced, interpreted, controlled or expressed (Lazanyi & Azaola, undated).

Lazanyi & Azaola (undated:104) insists that “emotions are displayed through many channels, including kinesics (such as bodily posture and hand gesture), prosodic (such as vocal intonation and pitch) and facial expression.” Lazanyi & Azaola (undated) maintained that emotions are categorised into negative and positive emotions. Negative emotions are fuelled by the fear of the unknown or other people’s actions. Positive emotions are fuelled by the desire for unity and enjoyment and they enhance creativity, encourage helping behaviour and cooperation, and reduce aggression against the organization or people. Leaders who feel excited, enthusiastic and energetic are likely to energise their followers, and leaders who feel distressed and hostile are likely to negatively activate their followers (Lazanyi & Azoala, undated). The best way to maintain healthy emotions is to develop what Mestry & Schmidt (2012) calls emotional intelligence.

People can intentionally make their emotions work to their advantage. Emotionally intelligent leaders are thought to be happier and more committed to their organization (Gardner & Stough, 2002). Emotionally intelligent leaders achieve greater success and perform better in the workplace. They take advantage of and use positive emotions to envision major improvements in organizational functioning, and use emotions to improve their decision-making and co-operation in other employees through interpersonal relationships (Gardner & Stough, 2002).

Women principals are characterized by intelligent use of emotions in different situations where they make their emotions work for themselves (Damons, 2008). “The findings revealed that women leaders are reported to have more positive emotions than men; more likable than male leaders; and were rated as competent and just as willing to contribute as men leaders.”,(Mestry & Schmidt (2012:538).

Mestry & Schmidt (2012) found, however, that South African women struggle with personal internal issues such as professional experiences, conflicts, emotions, aspirations, ambitions and confidence. They maintain that when women become weighed down with these issues, they are perceived to be lacking the self-esteem

required to become successful leaders. In other words, sometimes female principals are unable to control their emotions and that can result in low self-esteem.

The next section explores how the female principals resolve conflicts at school.

2.5.5 CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict can be defined as the difference of opinion that influences the interaction between independent parties or as an open disagreement between two parties who have different goals and values (Geber, Nel & van Dyk, 1997). Kgomo (2006) describes conflict as a condition which results when two or more people's ideas clash and when people compete over scarce resources. Conflicts occur when people have difference of opinions and when there is a limited number of resources to use. Research suggests that conflict may have both functional and dysfunctional impacts (Kgomo, 2006). Conflict is not always bad, but when it leads to a deterioration of cooperation, trust and loyalty among the personnel, it becomes bad. Conflict can have a negative effect on the smooth running of the school as well as the actualization of teaching and learning because teachers have their own different personalities, agendas and experience of life (Untiedt as cited in Damons, 2008). Therefore, the ability to handle conflict is a key factor in management and leadership. Kgomo (2006) also notes that, after the principal has identified the conflict and its respective causes, the next step will be the provision of mechanism towards the solution. If constructively handled, conflict may lead to valuable insights, new ideas and creative situations (Damons, 2008). A problem solver is a practitioner who is capable of utilizing diverse methods of solving the conflict (Kgomo, 2006).

The female principals who are perceived as having interpersonal skills, communication skills and problem-solving skills, have the courage to defuse potential explosive situations among the staff (Damons, 2008). This means that

the female principals are able to minimise conflicts that can divide the school.

The next section discusses the teacher's attitudes, prejudice and gender stereotypes.

2.6 THE TEACHER'S ATTITUDES, PREJUDICE AND GENDER STEREOTYPES

The literature indicates that the under-representation of women in leadership posts is caused by prejudice and stereotypes (Kawana 2004; Eagle & Carli 2003). Myths, stereotypes and prejudice related to the abilities and attitudes of women are seen as obstacles to the representation of women in leadership and management positions (Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango, 2009). Some of these stereotypes are that women are perceived as being too weak and submissive to be leaders (Mestry & Schmidt, 2012). Sebakwana as cited in Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango (2009) observed that, although gender socialization creates discrimination between men and women, it takes place in such a manner that men and women accept it without force, in other words, gender socialization grows naturally in them. According to Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango (2009: 244), "one's sex does not necessarily matter as far as work in the school is concerned... Gender, which is socially acquired and, in some cases, riddled with stereotypes, influences the capabilities and aspirations of individuals. Therefore, due to the way they are socialized, women just assume that they cannot operate in the so-called male territories." Daft as cited in Damons (2008) defines stereotypes as widely held generalizations about a group of people that are based on a limited number of categories.

Prejudice is an unfair evaluation of a person based on stereotypes rather than the behaviour or qualifications, and the people in the community expect this person to possess the characteristics of the stereotypes and exhibit the behaviour that is consistent with the stereotypes (Eagle & Carli, 2003). Mathipa & Tsoka as cited in

Damons (2008) define prejudice as the act of forming an opinion about a particular condition without gathering facts. People are judged on assumptions and preconceived ideas. Damons (2008) argues that the concepts of prejudice and stereotypes cannot be separated. Prejudice may be caused by stereotypes coming from culture, customs and beliefs (*ibid*). Stereotypes are narrow ideas that are applied to all members of a group without allowing any variations (Kawana 2004).

One of the stereotypes that is identified by literature is that of authoritarian leadership that is expected by the communities, and that gives credit to masculinity (Neidhardt, 2009). Traditional stereotypes associate the principalship with masculinity which hampers women's career progress in education management (Mestry & Schmidt, 2012). "Gender stereotypes, and their application to the female sex, were generally acquired at a very young age due to childhood socialization and the labelling of certain psychological characteristics as either 'masculine' or 'feminine' means that sex-role identities and expectations tend to be formulated on the basis of these attributes" Burns, (undated: 1). Women in leadership are experiencing the problem of being expected to adopt masculine traits and must, according to Kawana (2004:68), "become abnormal women; they must transcend the social expectations of femaleness in order to aspire to the socially prescribed role of a leader." Growe & Montgomery (undated) support this by saying that some women believe that they are compelled to lead in the manner that is considered the norm, the men's method of leadership which is the easiest way for a woman to be hired in any leadership position, because this approach is acceptable in terms of public recognition. This is what Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango (2009: 246) refer to as 'androcentrism' which is defined as "the elevation of the masculine to the level of the universal and ideal and the honouring of men and the male principle above women and female."

Kawana (2004) also identifies the stereotype that men are perceived as being competent, skilful, aggressive and instrumental while women are perceived as

warm, quiet, gentle, incompetent and lacking confidence. Greyvenstein cited in Mestry & Schmidt (2012) also agrees by saying that stereotypes based on gender have historically placed women in a nurturing, submissive role, weak, highly emotional and unfit to be leaders, while men are seen as the more dominant, more aggressive gender. Women with doctorates are not hired at an equal rate as men because of the stereotypes that they are not task-oriented enough and that they are too independent (Grove & Montgomery, undated). Some myths suggest that women cannot discipline older students, especially males, because they are too emotional, too weak physically, and that males dislike working with females (Grove & Montgomery, undated). Van Eupen (undated: 9 & 10) concurs by saying, "Argentic attributes such as assertiveness, control and confidence are much more often ascribed to men than woman. Communal attributes, however, are mainly ascribed to women, who are seen as friendly, helpful and concerned with compassionate treatment of others. People use these stereotypes unconsciously as shortcuts for judgement making."

Barriers from home and ways women are perceived culturally and historically are regarded as barriers to women's advancement to higher positions (Moorosi, 2006). According to Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango (2009), women have the natural role of looking after children, husbands and the home at the expense of career advancement and their perceived role in the family is driven by conformity with social norms and stereotypic gender roles. Women managers have additional difficulty in performing their management roles because of the conflicting attitudes and the stereotypes regarding what it means to be a manager. Women who are managers and have children, therefore, straddle the dual words of parents and working and are usually not successful in balancing the two (Moorosi, 2006). Grove & Montgomery (undated) also agree by adding that women in leadership positions work more hours that conflict with family responsibilities and that they are reluctant to relocate.

Men, who are viewed as superior in the society, exclude women in the area of

power and that they do not support women for leadership roles in the family and in the workplace. This is because of stereotypical attitudes that have a negative influence even on the selection, placement and promotion of women to management positions. The male dominance in key leadership positions is linked to the traditional perspective of the position of women in society which had men controlling the highest administrative jobs within the school district (Moorosi, 2006). Menstry & Schmidt (2012) support this by saying that cultural beliefs and practices play a major role in the acceptance of women principals, and that some men do not accept women as the head of their institutions (Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango, 2009). Growe & Montgomery (undated) agree by saying that the lack of support from the school board, the attitudes of even the few women administrators, isolation related to minority status, sex-typed expectations and gender bias are barriers that women experience.

Poor self-esteem is one of the results of traditional stereotyped feminine traits which is referred to as an intrinsic barrier that is believed to be psychological and personal (Peterson & Runyan & Greyvenstein as cited in Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango, 2009). "These intrinsic barriers are said to manifest as deficiencies and inadequacies inherent in women" (Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango, 2009: 244). Mestry & Schmid (2012) agree by stating that the stereotypes manifest themselves in the form of low self-esteem, lack of confidence, the perceptions that women's role in the family overrides all other roles, and lack of support from the home and the workplace.

Trends on women leadership are explored in the next section.

2.7 TRENDS ON WOMEN LEADERS

Literature shows that the issue of under-representation of female principals in leadership positions is not only confined to South African schools, but it is also a global issue. "The scarcity of women in the role of secondary principal is a

phenomenon worldwide... supported by statistics from New Zealand, Australia, the USA, the UK, Germany, Africa, Central America and India” (Wrushen & Sherman, 2008:456). Statistics from New Zealand show women constitute only 40% of the principals in the schools whilst they comprise 82% of teachers in primary schools (Neidhardt, 2009). The majority of staff in schools in many countries are females, but only a small percentage of these females are school principals (Shum & Cheng, 1997). By the time of their research, there were 301 secondary schools in Hong Kong and only 77 were administered by women, and 23 of them were girls’ school. In the International Business and Career Community, Hudson & Rea (1998) have noted that 66% of the teaching force is female and that 30% of female teachers occupy leadership posts. The reason for the under-representation is the negative attitudes of stakeholders on women's leadership that women do not have what it takes to be principals (Eagle & Carl, 2003).

Research conducted in mainland China revealed that the female principals use their influence and interpersonal relationships with others as a means of achieving their goals (Zhong & Ehrich, 2010). Research conducted by Hudson & Rea (1998) reveals that theories and studies of leadership indicate that the characteristics of the leadership style used by most women, such as collaborative and participative leadership styles, are becoming the dominant model of leadership.

Nationally, the under-representation of female teachers in leadership positions is also shown by Kawana (2004) when researching about inspectors’ perceptions of female leadership in Namibia. Tope (2010) has conducted research on students’ perceptions of female school teacher leadership behaviour in Nigeria. South Africa is not different from other countries; it is also characterized by under-representation of female teachers in leadership positions (Coombs, 2004; Kawana, 2004).

The next section discusses theoretical framework on which the study is based,

namely, distributed leadership.

2.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

This study explores the perceptions of teachers on female principal leadership and the theoretical framework on which it is based is distributed leadership. During the time of apartheid, before the arrival of democracy in 1994 in South Africa, decision-making in schools was bureaucratic(van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008). Those who were in top positions made decisions themselves and instructed those at the bottom to conform to those decisions. The principals had to work in a regulated environment and had to become accustomed to receiving direct instructions from the Department officials (DoE, 1996). In other words, the principals had to implement what their superiors instructed them to do without giving them a chance to use their own innovations to develop the schools. After 1994, there was a shift from top-down leadership to leadership which involved the participation of all stakeholders in decision-making. “There is significant evidence to support the notion that hierarchical, top-down structures are not appropriate for school leadership and management,” according van der Mescht & Tyala (2008:221). As a result of that shift, approaches such as distributed leadership emerged.

Distributed leadership is the sharing of leadership roles or responsibilities by all stakeholders in school. This means that the school management team and teachers work together and participate jointly in making decisions in school. According to Spillane (as cited in Harris, 2005:163), “A distributed view of leadership ‘incorporates the activities of multiple groups of individuals in a school who work at guiding and mobilizing staff in the instructional change process.’ It implies a social distribution of the leadership where the leadership function is stretched over the work of a number of individuals where the leadership task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders. Interdependency rather than dependency embracing leaders of various kinds and in various roles share

responsibility.” This means that distribution of responsibilities is different from delegation of responsibilities which involves just giving others work to perform without helping each other. In distributed leadership there is interaction between teachers in that school in carrying out these responsibilities. This is in agreement with Rogers (as cited in MacBeath, 2005:354) when he describes symbiosis as a term used to describe a form of reciprocal relationship in which there exists an implicit give and take and a level of mutual respect. The delegation is expressed in giving responsibility to others. Distributed leadership is related to site-based management and decentralization.

Site-based management involves broader participation by those on site dealing directly with issues that need to be resolved, people who potentially have on site expertise (van Mescht & Tyala, 2008). Site-based management involves participation by educators who are in that particular school in solving the problems of the school. “Decentralized systems devolve significant powers to the subordinate level” according to Bush & Middlewood (2005:5). Both approaches emphasize distribution of roles to all people in the school. Therefore, distributed leadership encourages cooperation, sound relationships and acceptance of one another’s potentials.

Distributed leadership can work effectively in the school where the staff, learners and parents work towards common goals, values and vision. Harris (2005:163) emphasizes that, “It is the ‘glue’ of a common task or goal, improvement of instruction and a common frame of values for how to approach that task.” This means that all stakeholders are being involved in the formulation of the vision and their inputs are taken into consideration. “Distribution also implied teacher’ mutual acceptance by staff of one another’s leadership potential...a coherent staff pulling in the same direction could only function in an environment of reciprocated trust” MacBeath (2005:353). Distributed leadership is also based on sound relationships of trust and openness among the staff so that they can take leadership roles. This means that teachers should be able to accept each other’s competences.

Therefore, the principal as the head of the institution should be able to solve problems and build strong relationships and trust among staff members.

Distributed leadership encourages those staff members who have skills and expertise in certain areas to use them for the benefit of the school.

Williams (2008:7) states that “The concept of distributed leadership extends the boundaries of leadership insofar as it entails high levels of teacher involvement and utilizes a wide variety of expertise, knowledge and skills.” Therefore, the principal needs to allow the staff to use their skills and support them in all ways. This leads to the development and empowerment of staff members because the teachers who are not in senior positions are given a chance to lead in spheres where they have strengths. MacBeath (2005) identifies different stages of implementing distributed leadership.

The stages of implementing distributed leadership are distribution formally, pragmatically, strategically, incrementally, opportunistically and culturally.

Distribution formally: In the initial stages of implementing distributed leadership, the principal should follow the prescribed leadership and management roles. The principal is expected to fulfill the formal structure of responsibilities given to him or her by the Department of Education. The principal also expects the teachers to accept their responsibilities as they are formally given. The top down approach is used to accomplish work. There is order in working relationships and that leads to effective leadership and management (MacBeath, 2005).

Distribution pragmatically: The principal delegates work to those teachers who are willing to work. The principal focuses on the staff members who he or she can trust and cooperate with, and ignores those who are not willing to take leadership roles (MacBeath, 2005).

Distribution strategically: In this stage, the principal moves from focusing on

those who are willing to work and focuses on sharing expertise with those who have less expertise. In this way, there is development and empowerment of the whole staff and everyone becomes an expert. Emphasis is put on team leadership rather than individual leadership (MacBeath, 2005).

Distribution incrementally: In this stage, the leadership role is given to anyone who is willing to lead from any direction, top down or bottom up. Leadership is no longer hierarchical; everyone can be a leader as long as he or she is willing to be capacitated. In order to do this, teachers and leaders need to learn from each other so that they grow professionally (MacBeath, 2005).

Distribution opportunistically: The principal should go through these stages until the teachers are keen to take on leadership roles on their own. In this case, there is no delegation of leadership roles, it happens voluntarily. Everyone is willing to take initiatives, see what needs to be done and make it happen. In this stage, distribution of leadership roles is characterized by a bottom up initiative. The role of the principal and the heads of department is to encourage the staff and support them in doing their responsibilities (MacBeath, 2005).

Distribution culturally: When everybody is willing to take leadership roles, distributed leadership becomes the culture of the school. Togetherness, teamwork, communication, collective decision making, listening to each other, respect of others' opinions, trust and honesty within the members of the staff, all form part of culture of the school. Therefore, it is the duty of the principal and his or her management to try by all means to maintain that culture of leadership which is not based on status, but on shared leadership (MacBeath, 2005).

In order to implement distributed leadership, the principal needs to take into consideration all these different stages. The principal may have to start slowly from formal distribution to a shared form of distribution because distributed leadership is a process. This does not mean that the principal is compelled to

follow a linear process of distribution; it depends on the context of the school. Each stage of distribution can suit a particular context of a school at a particular time. For instance, in a laissez-faire school where everyone does things as he or she wants, the principal needs to choose the type of distributed leadership that can take things back to normal in that particular school at that particular time. This means that the method that is applied in one school may not be appropriate in another school (MacBeath, 2005).

Williams (2008) states that the idea of distributed leadership is good but needs the conducive atmosphere where teachers are empowered to implement. The principals, as well as heads of departments, act as barriers to implementation of distributed leadership because they limit teacher participation because of the fears of losing their positions (Williams, 2008).

2.9 CONCLUSION

Chapter two has provided literature written by other researchers that is relevant to this study. It has included a basic explanation of leadership and management was also given to describe the differences and relationship between these two concepts. Although leadership and management are two different concepts, they are interdependent. A good leader needs a good manager. The concept of leadership implies influencing the other people's actions in order to achieve the goals. The concept of management implies that the policies of the Department of Education are carried out efficiently and effectively.

Leadership styles associated with female principal leadership were also discussed. These leadership styles include autocratic and democratic leadership styles, task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership styles, and transformational and transactional leadership styles. Hersey-Blanchard's situational leadership theory was also discussed in this chapter. The theory suggests that the leader adjust his or her leadership style to the situation at that

particular time.

Leadership traits associated with the female principal leadership were discussed. These leadership traits are interpersonal skills, communication skills, skills of collaboration, emotional intelligence skills and conflict resolution.

The teachers' attitudes, prejudice and gender stereotypes which contribute to under-representation of female teachers in leadership positions were also discussed. Women leaders are perceived as warm, gentle, weak and submissive as compared to men leaders.

It has also included the theoretical framework that guides the study. The theoretical framework is based on distributed leadership which emphasises the distribution of leadership roles to those teachers who have expertise in certain areas.

The following chapter will discuss the research methodology and research approaches that were used in this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter reviewed the literature based on the teachers' perceptions of female principal leadership. In this chapter the research methodology that was used by the study is discussed. Research methodology considers and explains the logic behind a wide range of research methods and techniques (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). The research methods and methodology respond to the following research questions:

The main research question:

- What are the perceptions of teachers of the leadership of female principals at primary school level?

Sub-questions:

- What do teachers consider as the limitations of female principal leadership?
- What do teachers consider as the successes of female principal leadership?
- What are the leadership and management implications of the teachers' perceptions?

This chapter explores the research approach and research design of the study, and the research paradigm that guided the study. Data gathering instruments that were used to collect data in the study are also discussed. Sampling, sample size and data analysis of the study are discussed too. This chapter also explores the ethical issues which were considered when conducting the study. The details of the pilot study and the main study are also explored here.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The study was based on qualitative research. Qualitative research is an approach to the study of the social world which seeks to describe and analyze the culture and behaviour of humans and their groups from the point of view of those being

studied (Bryman, 1988). Welman, Kruger & Mitchell (2005) agree that qualitative researchers try to achieve an insider's perspective by talking to the participants, and that the researchers believe that the first-hand experience of the object under investigation produces the best data. In this study, the researcher tried to achieve the insider's perspective by conducting interviews where the participants share their own perceptions and experiences on female principal leadership.

Sharan & Merriam (2002) explain qualitative research as an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there to understand the nature of that setting. Qualitative research explores what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what is going on for them, what their meaning are, and what the world looks like in that particular setting. In the case of this study, the researcher allowed the participants to discuss what they had experienced in their journey under a female principal.

Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings in an attempt to make sense of and to interpret the phenomena in terms of the meaning the people bring to them (Denzil & Lincoln, 1998). This means that qualitative approach explains the information from the respondent's point of view. Hakim (1987) also notes that qualitative research offers richly descriptive reports of individual's perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, views and feelings. Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than outcomes or products (Creswell, 1994). Qualitative researchers are interested in meaning, that is, how the people make sense of their lives, experiences, and their structures of the world (Creswell, 1994). Sharan, Merriam & Associates concur and note that the researcher in qualitative research strives to understand the meaning people have constructed about their world and their experiences. The researcher's interest is on what the respondents are saying about what they have experienced. The role of the researcher in the qualitative research is discussed below. In this study, the researcher allowed the respondents to articulate their own views on the leadership of a female principal.

Creswell (1994) asserts that the qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. This means that the researcher is physically involved in the research process by not calling or posting the interview schedule, but by contacting the respondents personally. Data are mediated by this human instrument rather than by inventories, questionnaires or machines. Qualitative research involves fieldwork. The researcher physically goes to the people, setting, site, or institution to observe or record behaviour in its natural setting (Creswell, 1994). The researcher can expand his or her understanding through non-verbal as well as verbal communication, process information immediately, clarify and summarize material, and check with respondents for accuracy of interpretation (Sharan & Merriam, 2002). In the case of this study, the researcher was physically involved by visiting the schools and conducting interviews personally.

Creswell (1994) also notes that qualitative research is descriptive in that the researcher is interested in the process, meaning and understanding gained through words or pictures by giving explanations and interpretations of the data. Qualitative research is accompanied by descriptions of the context and the participants involved, data from interviews, documents, field notes, in support of the findings of the study (Sharan & Merriam, 2002). In this study, the context of the respondents, the research sites and data from the respondents were described in words and in tables.

Qualitative approach was relevant to this study in the sense that, firstly, it tried to investigate the in-depth insights, understanding, as well as the perceptions of teachers on female principal leadership in two primary schools, hence Damons (2008) explained that a qualitative study enables the researcher to gather knowledge so that the concept, in this case, female principal leadership, is explored and understood. Secondly, the qualitative approach emphasizes the processes and meanings that are not strictly examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency, as compared with quantitative research which does not involve the investigation of process but emphasizes the measurement and analysis of casual relationships between variables within a

value-free context (Denzin & Lincoln as cited in Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). In the case of this study the teachers were giving their own perceptions of female principal leadership.

Furthermore, the researcher in this study acted as the primary instrument and as a fieldworker because of her physical involvement, visiting the schools and the respondents, and collecting the data herself. The researcher minimized the influence of bias

by sticking to the questions in the interview schedule and by avoiding personal experiences.

The qualitative research approach was chosen in this study because of the following advantages which Hakim (1987) also outlines:

- Qualitative research involves small numbers of respondents. In the case of this study, only eight respondents were involved because it took a long time to interview each respondent as the researcher was looking for in-depth information.
- The validity of the data obtained: the individuals were interviewed in sufficient detail for the results to be taken as true, correct and complete reports of their views and experiences. The researcher used follow up questions to make sure that the data collected was valid. The respondents described their own perceptions and experiences of working with a female principal.
- It studies motivations and other connections between factors, meaning that research is valuable for identifying patterns of associations between factors on the ground, as compared with abstract correlations obtained from the analysis of large scale surveys. The study involves a small number of respondents, and therefore the researcher was able to identify common issues from the data collected.
- It can be done with relatively small budgets of time and money. The study was

conducted within the East London district and that saved a lot of money and time.

The qualitative approach also possesses some weaknesses (Hakim, 1987):

- Collecting data in qualitative research is time-consuming as compared to quantitative research (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). In the case of this study, the researcher had set time limits for the data collection process. The researcher had planned to take not more than one hour for interview and three to four months to complete the data collection process.
- In qualitative research, data analysis is also time-consuming (Henning *et al.*, 2004. MacMillan & Schumacher (2001) concur by adding that open-ended questions can sometimes create lots of data, which can take a long time to analyze. In this study, the researcher was well prepared to conduct interviews and knew what she was looking for. This assisted the researcher to focus on the point of discussion.
- The qualitative researcher can influence the results of the qualitative research through her own personal biases (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). In this study, the researcher tried to minimise the bias.

The next section explores the research design of the study.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Mouton (1996) explains a research design as a set of guidelines and instructions on how to reach the goal that the researcher has set for herself or himself. Yin (2003) concurs by stating that a research design is a plan that guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting observations. Terre Blanche & Durrheim (1999) also agree by saying that a research design is a plan that guides the arrangement of the condition for collection and analysis of data and it serves as a bridge between the research questions and the implementation of the research. Welman, Kruger & Mitchell (2005) also support

this by stating that a research design describes what the researcher is going to do with the participants, with a view to reaching conclusions about the research problem.

The research study adopted a case study as its research design. According to Welman, Kruger & Mitchel (2005) a case study pertains to the fact that a limited number of units of analysis (often only one) are studied intensively. In case study we are directed towards understanding the uniqueness of a particular case in all its complexity. According to Sharan & Merriam, the case study is an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit such as an individual, group, institution or community and seeks to describe the phenomenon in depth. Denscombe (1998) concurs by stating that the characteristic that defines the case study is its focus on one instance of the thing that is being investigated.

The case study was chosen because it allowed the researcher to concentrate in one instance or situation with a view to providing an in-depth account of events, relationships and experiences that were taking place in that particular instance (Denscombe, 1998). This study used teachers as a case of investigation and the main focus was on the teachers' perceptions of female principal leadership, not on the female principal's perceptions. Therefore, in this study the researcher investigated deeply the perceptions of teachers on female principal leadership so as to get the insights, the meanings and the understanding of these perceptions (Saran & Meriam, 2002). The purpose of the case study was not to represent the world, but to represent the case (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

The next session explores the research paradigm which guides the study.

3.4 RESEARCH PARADIGM

All the qualitative researchers approach their studies with a certain paradigm or world of view that guides their studies (de Vos, Strydom, Fourchie & Delport, 2002). Therefore, a paradigm can be explained as the fundamental frame of reference the researchers use to organize their observations and reasoning

(Barbie as cited in de Vos, Strydom, Fourchie & Delport, 2002). Terre Blanche & Durrheim (1999) concur and state that a paradigm acts as a perspective that provides a rationale for the research, and provides the researcher with particular methods of data collection, observations and interpretation.

The research paradigm for this study is the interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm is the approach that describes and interprets people's feelings and experiences in human terms rather than through quantification and measurement (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). In this study, the researcher relied on first-hand accounts, and tried to describe what she saw in rich detail. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000) agree that the world should be studied in its natural state, rather than in controlled laboratory-type experiments and with minimum intervention by the researcher. In the case of this study, the interpretive paradigm allowed the researcher to study the respondents and to understand the respondents' point of view on how they perceived female principal leadership. Denzin & Lincoln (1998: 384) state " ... what constitutes an appropriate and legitimate focus for social inquiry, is the phenomenological meaningfulness of experiences-people's interpretations and sense making of their experiences in a given context. Understanding meaning as the goal of interpretivist inquiry is not a matter of manipulation and control, but rather is a question of openness and dialogue."

This paradigm was relevant to this study because the study investigated female principal leadership based on the perceptions of teachers and how teachers make sense of dealing with female leaders in the two selected primary schools. The respondents were able to share their thoughts and feelings about female leadership with the researcher.

The next section explores the data gathering instruments that were used to collect data in the study.

3.5 DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS

Interviews were used as methods of collecting data. Interviews are data gathering instruments that create a listening space through exchanging verbal viewpoints between the researcher and the respondent (William, Miller & Crabtree, 2004). De Vos & Durrheim (2002) define qualitative interviews as an “attempt to understand the world from the participants’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of the people’s experiences and to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanation.” The interviews provide access to the mind of the interviewee and makes it possible to understand the perceptions, opinions and thoughts of the interviewee (Cohen & Manion, 1994). Denscombe (2003) identifies three different types of interviews, namely, structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews.

For this study, one-to-one semi-structured interviews were used as qualitative research tools to collect data from the teachers. De Vos, Strydom, Fourche & Delport (2002) defined semi-structured interviews as those organized around areas of particular interest while still allowing flexibility in scope and depth. Researchers use semi-structured interviews to gain a detailed picture of the participants’ belief, perceptions and accounts of a particular topic (de Vos, Strydom, Fourche & Delport, 2002). The respondents’ view-points are more likely to be expressed in relatively informal interview situation than in a standardized interview and a questionnaire (Flick, 2002).

In the case of this study, semi-structured interviews were used to obtain specific information about the teachers’ perceptions of female principal leadership. The semi-structured interviews allowed the respondents freedom to talk and give their views in their own time. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to be flexible in terms of the order in which the topics were considered and the interviews allowed the researcher to ask probing questions where necessary and to follow up particular interesting avenues that emerged in the interview. The interviewee was also able to ask for clarity where necessary (Bell 1999; de Vos,

Strydom, Fourche & Delport 2002).

The interview schedule which consisted of a list of open-ended questions was used to cover the themes of the research study. The open-ended questions in the interview schedule attempted to respond to the research questions of the study.

The interviews were conducted in English and isiXhosa so as to make the respondents more comfortable and to express themselves freely. This was done to enable the researcher to get as much information as she could. The interviews were recorded so as to store the responses. This was done after permission was granted by the respondents to enable the researcher to listen to the tape several times for analysis, and to check the wording of any statement the researcher wished to quote and to check if the notes were accurate (Bell, 1999).

Field notes were taken during the interviews to accommodate the non-verbal behaviour such as pauses in the conversation, seating arrangements, and body gestures (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). Field notes can be defined as detailed notes and observations that are made by the researcher (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005).

Bell (1999) also highlights the following benefits of using interviews:

- A researcher can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings which a questionnaire can never do.
- The tone of the voice, facial expressions, hesitations and gestures used by the respondent can provide information that a written response cannot.
- Responses can be developed and clarified as the interview progresses, and things are not taken at face value.

The disadvantages of using interviews as set out by Bell (1999) are as follows:

- Using interviews is time-consuming: A researcher can take an hour for an actual interview, and there is also travelling time and time lost through mishaps such as lateness of the respondent and interruptions. The researcher made sure that she arrived on time at the interview site so that we could start on time. The researcher was also willing to work extra time for the study.
- It also take time to consider what has been said during the interviews, to go through notes, and to extend and clarify points that may be hastily noted. The researcher took three hours of her time after school to transcribe the data and to go through the notes.
- Time is required, too, for planning and conducting interviews, coping with cancelled arrangements, second visits and finding replacements for people who drop out. The researcher had set aside three to four months for data collection to accommodate cancellations and the replacement of respondents.
- An interview is highly subjective technique and therefore there is a danger of bias. In the case of this study, the researcher carefully prepared the questions to minimise bias.

The interviews were conducted in two primary schools in the district of East London. The interviews were conducted after school hours to avoid the interruption of classes. The interviews took about thirty to sixty minutes per respondent. The interviews were conducted in English and isiXhosa so that the participants were able to express themselves comfortably.

The next section discusses sampling and the sample size of respondents.

3.6 SAMPLING AND SAMPLE SIZE

Sampling is the process of making a selection from the population in order to identify the people who are going to participate in the research study (White,

2004). Flick (2002) adds that in an interview study, sampling is connected to the decisions about which persons to interview and from which group these should come. The main concern in sampling is representativeness. The aim is to select a sample that will be representative of the population from which the researcher aims to draw conclusions (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Mouton (1996) agrees by saying that the aim of sampling in social research is to produce a representative selection of the population elements.

Two primary schools were selected as research sites for this study on the basis of availability, time and accessibility (Denscombe, 2003). This meant that the schools that were selected were in the East London district and therefore, the access to the respondents was made easier for the researcher. The schools which were selected were those that were led by female principals.

Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents so as to produce valuable data since they were relevant to the topic of investigation (Denscombe, 2003). Purposive sampling involves the research participants who contain the most characteristics of the study (de Vos, Strydom & Fouche, 2002). The participants were chosen because they had particular features which enabled detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles the researcher wished to study (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

Eight participants were selected for this study, six post level one teachers and two Heads of Department (HODs). The researcher chose two respondents from each phase, that is, foundation phase, intermediate phase and senior phase. The purpose of doing that was to get data across the phases. The researcher had planned to balance the genders to make sure that the views balanced. In terms of gender, six teachers were females and two teachers were males. The gender balance which the researcher was aiming for did not work out because of the shortage of male teachers in these two schools. The table below shows the distribution of the respondents in the sample.

Table 3.6.1: The distribution of respondents in the sample

SAMPLE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Educators from foundation phase	2
Educators from intermediate phase	2
Educators from senior phase	2
SMT members	2

3.7 NEGOTIATION OF ENTRY

3.7.1 NEGOTIATING WITH THE PRINCIPAL

Permission for conducting the interviews was requested by the researcher from the principal of each school through a formal letter from the University of Fort Hare (See Appendix C). The purpose of asking for permission was to get access to teachers who were going to participate in the study. The principals of both schools granted the researcher verbal permission to conduct the interviews.

3.7.2 NEGOTIATING WITH THE RESPONDENTS

The researcher met with the respondents of each school after tuition time on separate days. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the respondents of each school and how the interviews were going to be conducted. The researcher also gave the respondents the consent form to read and sign (see Appendix A). The consent forms were read and signed by all the respondents.

The next section discusses data analysis.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

“Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data” (de Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2002:339). According to Creswell (1994) qualitative data analysis primarily entails classifying things, persons, events and properties which characterize them. The researcher seeks to identify and describe patterns and themes from the perspective of the respondents, and attempts to understand and explain these patterns and themes (Creswell, 1994). Mouton (1996) says that in qualitative research, the researcher works with a wealth of rich descriptive data, collected through methods such as participant observations, in-depth interviews and document analysis. Therefore, the analysis in these cases means constructing the inherent significant structures and the self-understanding of individuals by staying close to the subjects. Yin (2003) says that data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing, or recombining both quantitative and qualitative evidence to address the initial proposition of a study.

The data collected were organized logically according to the research questions (Babbie & Mouton, 2004). The data collected from interviews were transcribed and sorted according to commonalities and interconnections (Denscombe, 2003). The data were organised into themes and sub-themes from the perspective of the respondents as suggested by (Denscombe, 2003; Creswell, 1994). According to Welman, Kruger & Mitchell (2005) theme identification is one of the most fundamental tasks in qualitative research, and they describe themes as umbrella constructs that are usually identified by the researcher before, after and during the data collection process. The data was analysed and interpreted so that it made sense according to agreements and contrasts, and conclusions were made according to the data that was collected (White, 2004).

The ethical issues regarding the respondents are discussed in the next section.

3.9 ETHICAL ISSUES

In the practice of research, like all other fields of human activities, a researcher has to consider the acceptable standards for research on human subjects (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). Ethical issues are there to protect the welfare and the rights of research participants (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Creswell (1994) concurs by saying that the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informants.

Creswell (1994) has outlined some safeguards to protect the respondents.

- The objectives will be articulated verbally and in writing so that they are clearly understood by the informants.
- Written permission to proceed with the study as articulated will be received from the informant.
- The informants will be informed of all data collection devices and activities.
- Verbatim transcriptions and written interpretations and reports will be made available to the informants.
- The informant's rights, interests and wishes will be considered first when choices are made concerning reporting the data.
- The final decision regarding informant's anonymity will rest with the informant.

The relevance of the above safeguards to the study is discussed below.

The study used the teachers as participants, and therefore, permission to conduct a research was requested from the principal of each school, as well as the respondents, through a formal letter (Bell, 1999) from the University of Fort Hare (see Appendix C). The principals of both schools gave the researcher a permission to conduct the interviews verbally. Secondly, the researcher gave

respondents the letters of consent (Appendix A) to read and after that to sign the consent form (Bell, 1999). The respondents from both schools read the letters of consent from the researcher and signed the consent form. Permission to record the interviews was requested from the respondents and they agreed.

Flick (2002) advises the researchers that open interviews need closer involvement of the researcher and the participants than do questionnaires. Therefore, the researcher made the actual contact in person after the formal letters to negotiate access and to build relationships with the participants, and to give information about the aims, nature and procedures of the research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

Subjects can be harmed physically or emotionally by the researcher (de Vos & Durrheim (2002). The respondents in social science are mainly harmed emotionally rather than physically and therefore, the researcher had an obligation to protect them from physical and emotional harm (Dane as cited in de Vos & Durrheim (2002). Welman, Kruger & Mitchell (2005) concur by stating that the respondents should be given the assurance that they would be indemnified against any physical and emotional harm. The researcher explained the aims of the research and the procedures that would take place, and then informed the respondents thoroughly of the impacts of the study so that they would be able to withdraw in the early stages of the study if they wished to do so. The respondents were told that they could participate according to their free will and that they had a right to refuse (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998).

“The right to privacy is the individual’s right to decide when, where, to whom, and to what extent his or her attitudes, beliefs and behaviour will be revealed” (Singleton as cited in de Vos & Durrheim, (2002:67). Therefore, the researcher has a duty to safeguard the privacy and identity of the respondents (Yegidis & Weinbach as cited in de Vos & Durrheim (2002).

The respondents that participated in this research were assured that the research study would maintain anonymity and confidentiality of information by not including

the name of the school and the names of the respondents; only pseudo names would be used.

Anonymity means that the identity of those taking part are not known outside the research (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Babbie & Dane as cited in de Vos & Durrheim (2002) believe that anonymity implies that no one should be able to identify the participants afterwards, including the researcher. The researcher made sure that the tapes and transcripts were not labelled in a way which comprised anonymity.

Anderson & Arsenault (1998:20) say, "Confidentiality involves a clear understanding between the researcher and participant concerning how the data provided will be used. Confidential information implies that the identity of the individual will remain anonymous. It assumes that the reader of the research will not be able to deduce the identity of the individual." De Vos & Durrheim (2002) explain confidentiality as the continuation of privacy that refers to the agreement the persons take that limit other's access to private information. Babbie as cited in de Vos & Durrheim (2002) believe that confidentiality implies that only the researcher and a few members of the staff are aware of the participants' identities.

The respondents in this study were assured that the data collected from them would be treated with strict confidentiality.

The information on how the study was conducted is discussed in the next section.

3.10 CONDUCTING THE STUDY

The study was divided into two phases. The first phase was the pilot study and the second phase was the main study.

3.10.1 PHASE 1: PILOT STUDY

De Vos, Strydom Fourche & Delport (2002: 211) define a pilot study as "a small study conducted prior to a larger piece of research to determine whether the methodology, sampling, instruments and analysis are adequate and appropriate."

Saslow (2002) concurs that any proposed procedure should be given a dry run with subjects whose data will not be used in the final analysis in order to ensure that everything is running smoothly. Piloting involves a selection of a few people where the researcher tries out the study on them (McLeode, 2007).

The researcher developed a pilot study to uncover the problems that may emerge from the study in advance of the proper research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007). No matter how carefully a data gathering instrument is designed, there is always a possibility of error, and protection against such error is achieved by pretesting the instrument (de Vos, Strydom Fourche & Delport, 2002). Best & Kahn concur that no matter how perfect the researcher has been in wording the interview questions, it is essential to try them with respondents prior to the commencement of the actual study. In qualitative research, the pilot study is informal and the participants to be used must possess the same characteristics as those of the main investigation (de Vos, Strydom, Fourche & Delport (2002).

The purpose of the pilot study is to determine whether relevant data can be obtained from the respondents, and to improve the success and effectiveness of the investigation, and therefore, a pilot study can be viewed as the dress rehearsal of the main study and it forms an integral part of the research process (de Vos, Strydom, Fourche & Delport).

According to de Vos, Strydom, Fourche & Delport (2002) the pilot study possesses the following advantages:

- The pilot study assists the researcher by ensuring that the chosen procedures are suitable, valid, reliable, effective and free from errors, and therefore, enable the researcher to take necessary precautions to avoid any problems that may arise during the study. Panza (2007) concurs that a preliminary trial of the research study be undertaken to evaluate the validity and relevance of the research instrument.

- The pilot study offers an opportunity to test the interview schedule with the kind of respondents that will be utilized in the main investigation.
- The pilot study enables the researcher to make modifications with a view to quality interviewing during the main investigation.
- The pilot study assists the researcher in estimating the time and costs that may be involved. The pilot study also provides an idea of the responses that the researcher could get from participants (McLeod, 2007).

Welman, Kruger & Mitchell (2005) identify the following advantages:

- The pilot study assists the researcher to identify unclear or ambiguous items.
- The pilot study offers the researcher the opportunity to notice non-verbal behaviour on the part of the participants that may possibly signify discomfort or embarrassment about the content or the wording of the questions.

A pilot study possesses the following disadvantages:

- A pilot study is smaller than the main study and can provide limited information (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). In this study the researcher tried to ask follow up questions to get more information.
- The sample size of the pilot study is likely to be smaller than that of the main study and that can be misleading (*ibid*). In this study the researcher focused on the questions on the interview schedule.
- There is a possibility of making inaccurate predictions on the basis of the pilot study (McLeod, 2007). The researcher also tried to focus on the questions on the interview schedule to minimize inaccurate predictions.
- The completion of a successful pilot study does not guarantee the success of the main study (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). The researcher ensured that she learnt from the mistakes she made in the pilot study to strengthen the main study.

In the next session the lessons that were learnt from the pilot study are discussed.

3.10.1.1 LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE PILOT STUDY

The pilot study involved two respondents, a post level one teacher and an SMT member. The pilot study was conducted over two days. The interviews were presented in English by the researcher, but the respondents used English and isiXhosa so that they were comfortable to express themselves. The researcher had to translate the responses in isiXhosa to English.

The first respondent did not want to be interviewed; she wanted to be given questions to answer on her own, and then be asked to explain her responses to me later where necessary. The lesson that the researcher have learnt from such response was that the researcher had to explain a lot prior to the interview to make sure that the participants understands. As a researcher you do not need to rush into the interview.

The second lesson that the researcher had learnt is the importance of follow-up questions in an interview. The researcher had noticed that the respondents tended to generalize in their responses and that could drive away the focus of the study. The follow-up questions would help generate more information that was relevant to the focus of the study. The respondent complained that if she had been given questions before, she could have given me more information.

The other lesson that the researcher had learnt was that the researcher needed to give the respondents the interview schedule prior to the day of the interview so that they could familiarize themselves with the questions. The pilot study taught the researcher that interviews took a lot of time to conduct and that as a researcher you have to be prepared to spend some time on them. The pilot study also gave the researcher a chance to ensure that the recorder was working properly to avoid disappointment during the main study. Lastly, the pilot study gave the researcher a chance to review the questions on the interview schedule to avoid ambiguity.

The information that the two respondents in the pilot study gave was relevant to the study, but needed more flesh. In the actual study the researcher asked more follow-up questions.

The next section provides the discussion of the main study.

3.10.2 PHASE 2: THE MAIN STUDY

The study used semi-structured interviews as data gathering instruments. The study targeted two primary schools in the district of East London. One-to-one semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the respondents during break and after school. The aim of conducting interviews during the break and after school was to avoid the interruption of the tuition time. The interviews took place in each of the two selected schools because it was convenient for the respondents not to use too much of their time. For instance, after school we used their preparation time, that is, from two to three o'clock in the afternoon. Eight respondents were interviewed individually.

The interviews took about thirty to sixty minutes per individual respondent. The interviews were conducted in English but the respondents were allowed to mix English and isiXhosa so that they could be confident in expressing themselves. That led to the translation of isiXhosa into English.

The next section discusses trustworthiness of the study.

3.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry supports the argument that the inquiry's findings are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:290). Krefting (1990) identifies four aspects of trustworthiness that are relevant to both quantitative and qualitative research. This study focused on the qualitative view of these four aspects of trustworthiness. The three aspects of trustworthiness are credibility,

dependability and confirmability (Shenton, 2004) and are discussed below.

3.11.1 CREDIBILITY

Lincoln & Guba (1985) argue that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. Credibility can be described as how congruent the findings are with the reality. Krefting (1990) calls credibility the truth value which establishes how confident the researcher is with the findings based on the research design, informants and context. Lincoln & Guba (1985: 296) explain credibility as “an evaluation of whether or not the researcher’s findings present a ‘credible’ conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participants’ original data”.

In qualitative research, truth value is obtained from the discovery of human experiences as they are lived and perceived by the respondents (Krefting, 1990). This study is relevant because it is about the perceptions of teachers on female principal leadership. To ensure credibility of the study, the researcher has to utilize the techniques which are recommended by Shenton (2004):

The development of an early familiarity with the culture of the participating organization. Shenton (2004) recommends a prolonged engagement between the investigator and the participants in order for the researcher to gain an adequate understanding of the organization and to establish a relationship of trust between the parties. The researcher created the relationship with the principals of the two schools as well as the participants by making visits to the schools explaining the aim of the study.

Tactics to help ensure honesty in informants when contributing data. Shenton (2004) recommends that each respondent should be given an opportunity to refuse to participate in the project to ensure that the data collection

sessions involve those who are genuinely willing to participate and who are prepared to offer data freely. In addressing ethical issues of this study, it was said clearly that the respondents had a right to refuse and to withdraw from the study at any time.

Iterative questioning. Iterative questioning implies that the researcher probes questions to uncover the deliberate lies by the respondent and further explanation on the issue by rephrasing the questions previously asked. In the case of this study, semi-structured interviews were used as data gathering instruments which allowed the researcher to ask follow up questions and ask for clarity from the data given where necessary.

Frequent debriefing sessions between the researcher and the superiors.

Shenton (2004) states that collaborative sessions by the researcher and those who are in a supervisory capacity may assist the researcher to discuss alternative approaches and to identify the flaws of the study under investigation. In the case of this study, the researcher made a constant contact with the supervisor so as to monitor and strengthen the process of investigation of this study.

Peer scrutiny of the research project. Opportunities of scrutiny by colleagues, peers and academics should be welcomed (Shenton, 2004). The feedback offered to the researcher at the presentations over the duration of the project assisted the researcher to refine the methods, develop a greater explanation of the research design and strengthen the arguments through the comments made (*ibid*). The sessions for the presentations of our studies were scheduled by the supervisor throughout the process of developing this study. That played a significant role in the improvement of the study in all sections.

3.11.3 DEPENDABILITY

Dependability describes whether the findings would be consistent if the inquiry was replicated with the same subjects or in a similar context (Krefting, 1990). According to Shenton (2004), dependability is employed to show that if the research was repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained.

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument through which the data is collected and a “Person as Instrument Statement” normally provides enough explanation of this issue (Fenton & Mazulewicz, 2008: 3). Krefting (1990) agrees by saying that instruments that are assessed for consistency in qualitative research are the research and the informants. Dependability was addressed in this study because the researcher was collecting the data from the respondents herself.

3.11.4 CONFIRMABILITY

The concept of confirmability is the qualitative researcher’s concern with objectivity (Shenton, 2004). Guba as cited in Krefting (1990) describes confirmability as the degree to which the findings are a function solely of the participants and the conditions of the research and not of other biases, motivations and perspectives. Sandelowski as cited in Krefting (1990) describes confirmability as freedom from bias in the research procedures and results.

Shenton (2004) suggests that steps must be taken to ensure that the research findings are the results of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. Krefting (1990) suggests that the qualitative researcher must try to increase the worth of the findings by decreasing the distance between the researcher and the informants. The researcher in this study had familiarized herself with the respondents by engaging with them before the interviews took place by explaining the purpose of the study.

The validity and reliability of the research instruments are discussed in the next section.

3.12 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Reliability refers to the demonstration that the operations and procedures of the research inquiry can be repeated by other researchers and yield the same findings, provided that the interviewing techniques and procedures remain consistent (Riege, 2003). A pilot study was also conducted to make sure that the methods and data gathering instruments were appropriate to the study, and to determine if the data-gathering instruments would yield the same results as the actual interviewing process. The researcher also used a semi-structured interview schedule so that the respondents responded to the questions in a similar manner. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, and interpretations of reality are accessed directly through observations and interviews (Sharan, Merriam & Associates, 2002). Therefore the researcher becomes a more reliable instrument and that is the strength of qualitative research. In the case of this study, the researcher was the primary instrument because the interviews were done personally by the researcher. The validity of the research instruments is discussed in the next paragraph.

Validity is considered to be more important in a qualitative research because the objective of the study must be representative of what the researcher is investigating (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). To ensure the validity of the study, the researcher conducted the pilot study with the view to reducing the errors, such as ambiguity of the questions, which might occur.

A tape recorder was used to capture the information that was provided by the respondents as it was and that that ensured the reliability and validity of the study.

The summary of the main issues of this chapter are discussed in the next section.

3.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the methods and approaches used in this study. This study adopted a qualitative approach which was based on the depth of investigating the topic. This study focused on the case of two schools in the District of East London. The research paradigm which guided the study was the interpretive paradigm. This chapter highlighted the data-gathering instruments, semi-structured interviews, which were used to collect data from the respondents. Negotiation of entry and data analysis were also explained in this chapter. The ethical considerations to protect the welfare and rights of the respondents were also discussed. The summary of the pilot study was highlighted as well. The trustworthiness of the study, reliability and validity were also discussed.

The following chapter will provide the presentation and analysis of findings from the data collected.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the presentation and discussion of data. The aim of this chapter is to present and discuss the data that emerged from the respondents of this study. The other aim of this chapter is to see if the data collected is relevant to the research title of the study which is the perceptions of the teachers on female principal leadership. The research questions were as follows:

The main research question:

- What are the perceptions of teachers of the leadership of female principals at primary school level?

Sub-questions:

- What do teachers consider as limitations of female principal leadership?
- What do teachers consider as successes of female principal leadership?
- What are the leadership and management implications of the teachers' perceptions?

The data were collected through individual interviews. Two schools were selected to be research sites. The respondents in the research study were eight, four respondents from each school. The eight respondents included six post level one teachers and two SMT members.

The chapter is divided into the following sections:

4.2 The profiles

4.2.1 Profiles of the respondents

4.2.2 Profiles of the schools

4.3 Themes that emerge from the data and the analysis of data

4.2 THE PROFILES

4.2.1 PROFILES OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 4.2.1 The respondents' profiles

School	Respondents	Gender	Age	Qualifications	Position	Phase	Experience		Years under female principal
							Educator	SMT	
A	Respondent 1A	Female	37	JPTD and ACE	Teacher	Foundation	6	Nil	6
	Respondent 2A	Female	41	SPTD, B.Ed, ACE and B.Ed Hon.	Teacher	Intermediate	21	Nil	12
	Respondent 3A	Male	42	SPTD and ACE	Teacher	Senior	12	Nil	7
	Respondent 4A	Female	54	PTC, Matric, PTD and HPTD	HOD	Intermediate	8	20	12
B	Respondent 1B	Female	47	JPTD and FDE	Teacher	Foundation	15	Nil	11
	Respondent 2B	Female	46	SPTD, FDE and ACE	Teacher	Intermediate	23	Nil	20
	Respondent 3B	Male	46	SPTD and ACE	Teacher	Senior	11	Nil	11
	Respondent 4B	Female	53	JPTD and B.Ed	HOD	Foundation	21	12	15

Table 4.2.1 above represents the two schools which were named school A and school B. The table shows eight respondents from both schools, four from each

school. The respondents that were selected were one post level one teacher from each phase of each school, that is, foundation phase, intermediate phase and senior phase; and one SMT member from each school. The aim of choosing these respondents was to get data from a variety of respondents across the phases so as to find different perspectives on the perceptions of teachers on female principal leadership.

The ages of the respondents ranged from 37 to 54 years. This meant that the respondents were matured enough to produce a valuable amount of data for the study.

The respondents' teaching experiences ranged from 6 to 32 years. All respondents had above 5 years of experience. This meant that they had enough experience for the study to produce valuable data. The number of years the respondents served under the female principal ranged from 5 to 20 years. This meant that the respondents had enough experience of working under the female principal. This ensured that the respondents would produce enough data for the study.

In terms of gender, two male teachers and four female teachers were available for interviews. Unfortunately, the gender balance which the researcher was aiming for did not work out well because of what could be explained as the scarcity of male teachers in primary schools.

4.2.2 PROFILES OF THE SCHOOLS

The two schools that were chosen as research sites were in the East London District. Both schools were in a township area and were called school A and school B. Table 4.2.2 below shows the profiles of the two schools. Both schools were led and managed by female principals.

Table 4.2.2 The profiles of the schools

Topic	School A	School B
Background	Established in 1961 Township area East London District	Established in 1992 Township area East London District
School building	Two blocks of permanent structure One block of prefabricated temporal structure Administration block Grounds	Four blocks of permanent structure Administration block No grounds
Learners	Grade R to grade 7 1 231 learners	Grade R to grade 7 996 learners
Staff	28 teachers including SMT members 7 male teachers 21 female teachers	30 teachers including SMT members 4 male teachers 20 female teachers
Socio-Economic	Informal settlement Unemployment Government feeding scheme No-fee school	Informal settlement Unemployment Government feeding scheme Assistance from churches No-fee school

4.2.2.1 PROFILE OF SCHOOL A

School A was reportedly established in 1961 with a staff establishment of ten teachers including the principal. School A is situated in the township area in the

District of East London. It is about 30 kilometres from East London.

In 2012, the building of school A consisted of three blocks, including the administration block. Two blocks consisted of permanent structures and one block was a prefabricated temporal structure. The permanent classrooms were reportedly built by a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) called Independent Development Trust (IDT) and the Department of Education assisted with temporary structures. During the time of this research in 2012, there were twelve permanent classrooms and five temporary classrooms. The administration block consisted of the principal's office, one staffroom and the kitchen. The school consists of grounds for extra-mural activities.

School A started from grade R to grade seven. During the time of this research, the enrolment of learners was one thousand two hundred and thirty one. The learners were reportedly coming from the surrounding townships, as a result the learners walked to school.

In 2012 School A consisted of twenty eight teachers including the SMT members. There were twenty two post level one teachers and six SMT members. The SMT members included four heads of department, one deputy principal and a principal. There were seven male teachers and twenty one female teachers.

School A was surrounded by poor communities within an informal settlement. Most of the parents were unemployed and depended on the social grant for a living. The school was assisted by the Department of Education with a feeding scheme.

In 2009 the school was declared a no fee school. The DoE (2009) states that the parents of learners at no-fee schools are exempted from the payment of school fees. Setaoba (2011) explains a no-fee school as a school where parents pay no school fees, since government pays for every child who goes to that school. The

schools serving the poorest communities in the country were declared no-fee schools as from 2006 with the aim of alleviating poverty and redressing the imbalances of the past.

4.2.2.2 PROFILE OF SCHOOL B

School B was reportedly established in 1992 due to overcrowding of learners in one of the neighbouring schools in this township. School B is situated in the township area in the East London District. School B is about 20 kilometres from East London.

During the time of this research in 2012, the building of School B consisted of four blocks, including an administration block. The administration block consisted of the principal's office, the deputy principal's office, offices for HODs, the clerk's office, a strongroom, a cleaning materials room and the staffroom. The school was built with permanent structures. The school consisted of twenty-five classrooms for learners. The school accommodated learners from grade R to grade seven. There was shortage of classrooms for foundation phase because the teachers taught about forty to fifty learners in each class. The condition of the buildings was of a good standard. The environment was conducive and attractive for teaching and learning. The school had no grounds for extra-curricular activities as a result the school was using the nearby community grounds.

School B started from grade R to grade seven. In 2012, the enrolment of the school was nine hundred and ninety-six learners. Most of the learners came from the surrounding households; as a result they travel on foot to and from their homes. There were few learners who travelled by bus or taxis.

In 2012 School B had thirty educators including the SMT and the principal. There were twenty-four post level one teachers, four heads of department, one deputy principal and a principal. School B consisted of four male teachers and twenty-six

female teachers. The school consisted of eight non-teaching staff which included one clerk, one caregiver, one caretaker and five cooks.

School B was surrounded by poor communities within an informal settlement. Most of the households of this area were unemployed and illiterate. Some of the learners in this school were being assisted by the Baptist Church, the Nahoon Methodist Church and the Roman Catholic Church for school uniform and food parcels. The Department of Education also provided learners with a feeding scheme for poor areas.

In 2009, school B was also declared a no-fee school.

4.3 THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE DATA

The aim of the study was to investigate the teachers' perceptions of the female principal leadership. The study also aimed at identifying the perceived limitations and the perceived strengths of female principal leadership. This study also wanted to identify the implications of leadership and management of the teachers' perceptions. The themes that emerged from the data were responding from the following research questions:

The main research question:

- What are the perceptions of teachers of the leadership of female principals at primary school level?

Sub-questions:

- What do teachers consider as the limitations of female principal leadership?
- What do teachers consider as the successes of female principal leadership?
- What are the leadership and management implications of the teachers' perceptions?

The study was conducted in two selected schools and consisted of eight

participants.

The data that were collected from the respondents show that the teachers perceive the female principals as demonstrating two sides, the positive side and the negative side. The female principal was reported to possess the ability to manage relations, both internally and externally. On the other hand, the female principal was reported to show favouritism in treating teachers. The data were presented and analyzed in a manner that showed these two sides. The data collected from eight teachers were categorized into the following themes.

4.3.1 Personal qualities of female principals

4.3.2 The female principals' ability to manage internal and external relations

4.3.3 Leadership styles associated with female principals

4.3.4 The female principals have a challenge of controlling emotions

4.3.5 The attitudes of teachers to female principal leadership

4.3.6 Conclusion

4.3.1 PERSONAL QUALITIES OF FEMALE PRINCIPALS

The majority of the respondents (75%) from both schools indicated that the female principals demonstrate warm personal relationship with them. That constitutes 75% of teachers (6 out of 8 respondents). The female principals are leaders at school but they are also mothers to the staff. The female principals show understanding, care and love to the teachers when they have personal problems. The female principals can go an extra mile by using their own assets in order to help the teacher or the parent or the learner who is in need of help. The female principal are perceived as having sympathy, humanity and warmth when a teacher is experiencing some problems. It was reported that the female principals will be there for you and show interest in how you are feeling.

Respondent 4A (HOD from school A): *"...Sometimes she understands and understands our problems. She loves us at the same time she expects us to love*

her... When you have a personal problem she helps you, and she can....She is sympathetic....She is a human. She is a mother, she is a parent. She can be there for you if you are sick, bereaved or have any problem. She visits you and she can help even with money when necessary. If the parent has a problem, she helps if she can. There was a parent who lost two kids in an accident; she helped there as if she is a family member. We say she is a social worker."

Respondent 3A (Teacher from school A): *"...you know, I see her as person, as a mother figure. When I have a problem, she can help."*

Respondent 2B (Teacher from school B): *"She is somebody who is accommodative. She treats us equally and she is able to deal with us as we are different and coming from different backgrounds."*

Respondent 3B (teacher from school B): *"She is a human being, she felt for us. She has that feminine feeling when you have a problem. She will be there for you and willing to know how you are feeling. She is like a parent to us ... She has sense of humanity, she is good in that."*

Respondent 4B (HOD): *"She is warm and understanding when you have a personal problem. She is sympathetic more than males. She feels for us."*

In the literature review, it was indicated that women generally have an ethical and caring approach as they demonstrate qualities such as warmth and empathy and they pay special attention to honesty, gentleness, compassion and trust (Bush as cited in Damons, 2008). Female leaders are perceived to demonstrate compassion, collaboration, nurturing, sensitivity and sound communication (Neidhardt, 2009).

As a result of the warmth she showed to the teachers, they are not reluctant to go to the female principal because she can listen and give advice where she can. For

instance, respondent A from school A reported that because of her sympathy they avoid doing things that may upset her, things such as fighting and bad publicity. The teachers try and make what they do good at school.

Similarly, Respondent 4A, an HOD from school A, as well as respondent 3B from school B, maintained that they do not expose their fights to the outside world.

This is in agreement with Evarard & Morris as cited in Damons (2008) when saying that the ability to handle conflict is a key factor in management and leadership and Damons (2008) when saying that the female principals have the courage to defuse potential explosive situations among the staff. Kawana (2004) also agrees that a leader who can solve problems without too much reliance on others is effective.

However, to respondent 2A, a teacher from school A, personal relationship refers to social relationship between them and the principal. According to respondent 2A, social relationship refers to other activities that do not include curriculum, things such as taking teachers to the beach and organizing refreshments for them on their birthdays. For instance, in the closing day of the school in December, she told the teachers not to come to school, and that she would go to school alone that day. When the principal bought a new car, she took them to the beach.

This is what Barth (2003) calls congenial relationship, the relationship that is personal and friendly, and he cautions us that we should not take it lightly because it is the one which encourages teachers to be willing to go to school.

Despite the fact that 75% of respondents from both schools viewed the female principals as mother figures, there were 25% of respondents from school B who felt that the female principal lacked that quality of being mother. Respondent 1B reported that the female principal showed little interest in learners' wellbeing with regard to issues such as bursaries and the involvement of social workers. Respondent 2B also reported that the female principal does not protect teachers

from angry parents.

Respondent 1B (teacher): *“...She is lazy to manage the teachers in classes and to understand the problems in our classes. Learners have learning barriers, for example, child headed families, drugs, ten learners living in one house. If you advise her to go to social workers, she shows no interest in something that can help learners, like bursaries, sponsors like uniform, shoes for the vulnerable.”*

Respondent 2B (teacher), *“...you cannot get security from her against the parent. She just calls you and lets you be confronted by the parent.”*

The above findings indicate that the majority of teachers agree that the female principal is demonstrating some qualities of warmth when the teacher is encountering personal problems. These qualities include motherhood, understanding, care, love, sympathy and humanity.

Although the female principals demonstrate the qualities of warmth, sometimes they lack that quality of being a mother figure.

4.3.2 THE FEMALE PRINCIPALS' ABILITY TO MANAGE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The three respondents from school A (3 out of 4) felt that the female principal is able to manage relations, both internally and externally. This was the view from 75% of respondents in school A. The three teachers reported that the female principal is able to talk to teachers in a proper manner. The female principal is perceived as being able to communicate information from EDOs with the teachers. These teachers felt that the female principal is capable of going places for the betterment of the school. Anything that can bring development of the school is being grabbed by the female principal. The female principals are able to look for better opportunities that can lead to the growth of the school.

Respondent 1A (teacher): *“The female principal can communicate well with teachers and parents. She is able to talk to us in a proper way, in a convincing manner.*

Respondent 3A (Teacher): *“She is a good leader, She comes with everything to the teachers so that we can discuss it. If she comes up with something from the EDO, we sit down it, coming into the common understanding...having different opinions because sometimes we do not see eye to eye. The best way of dealing with that is sit down and solve the problem, analyse the problem, come with the solution... She is able to beg for assistant for the benefit of the school and learners. She makes sure that she does not miss the opportunity that can uplift the school. We have partnership with Clarendon, she is the one who built that relationship. Today we get books, photocopier, computers and clothes for learners.”*

Respondent 4A (HOD): *“She can talk, she can beg she can write, she can do anything to seek for help... She is so thankful, she can thank a person who gives help here so that he or she can come back and give more. If she is not at school, the people who visit the school that day will feel that she is not there because nobody can thank them the way she does... She is head of permaculture and environment here at school. She is from Pretoria with learners in Permaculture competition, as you see there on the wall (showing me permaculture certificates and photos of learners who went to Pretoria... Permaculture is an organisation which promotes development of gardens in schools where needy learners are fed and also helps the struggling families. This project is done with the help of parents... She can go place, she go far for the betterment of the school. She can talk, she can beg she can write, she can do anything to seek for help. We got sponsor the other year from Woolworths (pointing on the picture where she was receiving a cheque). As we speak we are twinning with one former model C school because of her and they help us a lot. They give us books and computers they do not use.”*

Van der Westhuizen as cited in Damons (2008) agrees by saying that the principal spends 80% of his/her day communicating. The respondents in this study have revealed that the female principals are good in communication in both written and oral form of communication. The respondents are saying that this communication opens doors for the school. Damons (2008) agrees by saying that, "There are a few management skills as important to the education manager as the ability to communicate effectively-both in writing and orally".

The three respondents from school A (3 out of 4) agree that their principal also demonstrates the negative side in terms of managing relations, especially internal relations. The teachers were of the view that the female principal talks to teachers in an inappropriate manner. The respondents who share this view form 75% of the teachers in school A. This included respondents 1A and 4A who earlier claimed that their principal was able to manage relations. This meant that these respondents (1A and 4A) revealed two different sides of the female principal in managing relations. These respondents reported that the female principal had a tendency of shouting at teachers and approaching the teachers carelessly. One of the respondents (respondent 2A) claimed that the female principal likes to behave like a lady approaching another lady, forgetting that she is a leader. Respondent 4A (HOD from school A) complained that the female principal has a tendency of insulting them in front of the teachers. This may lead to teachers not showing respect to them as superiors. The following are the extracts showing the dissatisfaction of the respondents:

Respondent 1A (teacher): *"She does not have a proper approach. She lacks communication. She even shouts at us in front of learners."*

Respondent 2A (teacher), *"When a female principal talks to you, you become defensive even if there is no need to be defensive because of the way she talks. She approaches you carelessly. I noticed that if someone is a female teacher, she*

does things as a female... As females we like to approach each other carelessly. That's what I've noticed. Sometimes she forgets that she is a leader, and behaves as any lady approaching another lady."

Respondent 4A (HOD), *"Sometimes the way you talk matters. You will see that she does not see that what she said is wrong. I go to her and tell her she was not right. She does not treat us with respect in front of teachers. She insults you in front of others. They are my teachers, she cannot shout at me in front of them."*

Damons (2008) agrees with the respondents that the female principals also display some emotions such as anger and that they show their anger by being sharp-tongued, annoying and by crying.

Besides the inappropriate approach, 50% of the respondents from school B noted that the female principal is subjective in handling the relations with teachers by showing favouritism. The respondents were of the idea that the female principal does not treat the teachers in the same way. For instance, respondent 2B (a teacher in school B) felt that the female principal is likely to favour male teachers above female teachers. This respondent is saying that the female principal is submissive to the males because of culture whereby males are perceived as leaders. There was contradiction of views in respondent 2B because in personal qualities of female principal, she claimed that the female principal treated them equally while in managing relations, she claimed that the female principal did not treat them equally by having favours.

Respondent 2B (Teacher): *"She is biased. She is not treating the people equally, she has favours. They are doing anything they like as if they are not working. You are supposed to be in school from Monday to Friday...If something is like that, it is like that with her, especially with females. She tends to favour male teachers, they are the ones to convince her. She is submissive to males may be because of culture that men are leaders. If something comes from a male, she respects that."*

Mavin (2006) further explains this by saying that the 'queen bee' will sting if her power is threatened by other women, and that she prefers to work with men and tends to reward them, support and promote them ahead of females. This is what Peterson, Runyun & Greyvestein as cited in Chabaya, Rembe&Wadesango, (2009) called the 'intrinsic barrier of low self-esteem' which portrays female principals as not having confidence in themselves and other female teachers. They have confidence in males because of traditional stereotypes.

On the other hand, respondent 4B observed that the female principal prefers inputs from certain teachers than others. This respondent reported that if they have made the same mistake as teachers, the female principal will confront some and not confront others. Contrary to respondent 2B, respondent 4B is convinced that the favouritism is not associated with gender or age but just come out of love. The following are responses from the two respondents:

Respondent 4B (HOD): *"The principal treats people differently. What I have noticed is that my principal does not treat people the same way, she has favours. There are things that are better off when they are said by a particular person, but when they are said by the other person, they are not regarded as important. I notice that even here in leadership there are people the principal favour the most. There are people whom the principal treat well than others. For example, in a meeting situation, a teacher comes up with the idea and the principal rejects that idea because it was you who said it, but if the person whom she favours comes up with the same idea, she will accept it. Even we teachers, we make the same blunders, because we make mistakes as teachers. I have noticed that she does not treat you the same way as someone else who did the same mistake...You get out of school earlier without asking permission. She will bypass others. If you are not her favourite, she will attend your problem and even confront you. Some people are confronted and some are not...I can't associate it with gender. I think that goes with love. There are teachers whom she loves them and she has that*

bond with them. She is not related to them, she just has that special bond with them and she respects them. I don't know may be it is the way they talk, the way they do things. It does not necessarily have gender."

Contrary to the statements above, Bush (2005) says that women implement a collegial relationship that focuses on collaboration while also emphasizes the individual and Damons (2008) emphasizes the fact that the school with a woman manager and a leader can be identified as an organization with a culture of cooperation, co-ordination and commitment.

As a result of the favouritism, the majority of the respondents (75%) from school B felt that the female principal lacks the ability to build teamwork at school. For instance, respondent 4B from school B complained that their principal does not take advice from the SMT and that sometimes she does not consult them before making decision. Respondent 1B and respondent 4B from school B were of the opinion that the principal of school B does not have the ability to implement decisions that were taken at meetings and, as a result there is no progress. Respondent 3B revealed that that the female principal is unable to implement her own dreams.

Respondent 1B (Teacher): *"...We discuss problem and dwell in it, when the next meeting come, she forgot all what was said. We repeat the same thing in all terms...We discuss and discuss, no implementation of what was discussed. She does not accept suggestions. There is no teamwork. By the end of the year, we elect committees, but these committees are not functioning because she does not monitor them...For instance, this year there is music committee, the conductors started practices for music competitions at the beginning of the year, and just dropped them, but the principal did not bother to call the music committee and asked what happened."*

Respondent 4B (HOD): *"She has no listening skill. She does not take advice from*

us as SMT members. She does not involve us in decision making. Sometimes she comes up with something to teachers without discussing it with us first. This approach embarrasses us because we do not support each other in front of teachers. We become so frustrated that we discuss our dissatisfaction with post level one teachers, which is wrong.”

Respondent 3B (Teacher): *“She has that dream, big dreams...She is having big dreams but these dreams are like smoke in the air, they will just vanish...She is an autocratic person, doing things in her own way. We wait for her, she wants to do them herself. You won’t see these dreams, she is sitting on top of them.”*

Contrary to what the respondents has said above, Wylie as cited in Neidhardt (2009:18) states the fact that educational leadership involves facilitating change, providing vision and establishing progress. While on the other hand, Damons (2008) is advising that leaders need to change their visions into reality.

These findings revealed that the teachers agree that the female principals are able to manage relations, both internally and externally. The female principals are able to look for opportunities that can help learners and grow the school. The teachers revealed that the female principals are able to communicate with teachers in a proper manner.

On the other hand, the female principals show the negative side in managing internal relations. These include inappropriate approaches when talking to teachers and HODs, and different treatment of teachers or favouritism.

4.3.3 LEADERSHIP STYLES ASSOCIATED WITH FEMALE PRINCIPALS

The teachers were of the view that the female principals make use of a combination of different leadership styles. This includes the combination of democratic and autocratic leadership styles.

4.3.3.1 DEMOCRATIC AND AUTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP STYLES

The majority of the respondents from both schools (63%) felt that the female principals use a combination of democratic and autocratic leadership styles. Respondent 4A (HOD) from school A said, *“She is democratic. She is autocratic. Sometimes she is democratic and sometimes she is autocratic.”*

Hersey & Blanchard (1977) in their Hersey– Blanchard situational theory concur by saying that there is no single best style of leadership. Different situations require different approaches to leadership. They say that the effective leader is task relevant and the most successful leaders are those that adapt their leadership style to the demands of the situation. DoE (2003:B5) also agree by stating that “a good leader chooses the right kind of leadership for the situation...the most effective leaders tend to be highly flexible and able to adapt their styles of leadership to the demands of the situation.” In order to implement distributed leadership, the principal needs to take into consideration all these different stages. The principal may have to start slowly from formal distribution to a shared form of distribution because distributed leadership is a process. When MacBeath (2005) explains the different stages of distributed leadership, he or she mentions the fact that the principal is not compelled to follow a linear process of distribution but it depends on the context of the school. Each stage of distribution can suit a particular context of a school at a particular time. In their study, Mestry & Schmidt (2012) articulates women were perceived to be flexible and adaptable according to the situation.

The respondents felt that the female principals are sometimes democratic because they want the teachers to come up with their opinions when there is a discussion and the decision made is then based on these discussions. Secondly, these respondents are saying that in their schools there are different committees and the female principals are able to give these committees a chance to draft their

policies and year programmes and let them present these to the entire staff. This is in agreement with Cuadrado, Morales & Recio, (2008) when they say that democratic leadership allows and encourages the group members to participate in decision-making. Paulsen (2009) also agrees by saying that a democratic approach implies that the leader of the school involves all stakeholders in the decision-making process. "A democratic leader can be described as someone who delegates authority to others, encourages participation, relies on subordinates' knowledge for completion of tasks, and depends on subordinate respect for influence" (Paulsen, 2009: 21). The theory of distributed leadership also supports the idea of giving different committees a chance to formulate their own policies by stating that the leadership role is distributed over a number of individuals to perform (Harris, 2005)

The minority of the respondents (25%) from school B felt that the female principal is transparent with regard to the finances of the school. For instance, respondent 3B from school B felt that the female principal is good at managing the finance of the school and that the female principal is open about the monies of the school and that she does the budget together with the staff. The following are the extracts from the respondents which show that the female principal is utilizing both democratic and autocratic leadership:

Respondent 2A (Teacher): *"...But sometimes she can be democratic. For instance she can say that we must draft policies or programmes as we have committees here and present them to the whole staff...Like fundraising, I am in fundraising committee, she let us draft programme of the year, admission committee to draft admission policy."*

Respondent 4A (HOD): *"...She gives us report from EDO or from the meeting, she will ask us to discuss it. Then she will ask us how tackle it. Then we give our opinions. Sometimes we elect the committee to do the task as we are many here."*

Respondent 1B (Teacher): *“Democratic, she is democratic. She is able to let us discuss anything that we bring to her. She listens to our opinions.”*

Respondent 3B (Teacher): *“She let us work freely. She listens to us. She is a good listener. We work as team here. Her financial management style, she is good in that. She is transparent about the school monies. Budget is done by everybody.”*

However, to one HOD (25%), respondent 4B from school B, their principal becomes democratic when she needs assistance or a favour from them. This is what respondent 4B (HOD) said, *“She becomes democratic when she needs help... For example there are teachers whom she is afraid of, those who are rude, we are not the same here and we come from different homes, she comes to us so that we can approach that teacher. The other time one of the teachers didn’t want to write a combined schedule which was requested by the department, she came to me for help.”*

According to the respondents from the two schools (63%) the female principals sometimes became autocratic. These respondents viewed autocratic in different ways. To respondent 2A from school A autocratic means using the top down approach where authority comes from the principal down to the teachers. This respondent explained that the female principals want the teachers to do what they say and do not want them respond to what they are saying.

Respondent 2A (Teacher): *“...The principal is using top down approach. By top down I mean the authority comes from the above, the principal is above and you as teachers are down and you do what the principal is saying...”*

The respondents felt that the female principals wanted the teachers to feel that the principals are in authority and possess the power. The female principals wanted to instil in teachers that they are the ones who are in authority. The female principals want things to be done their own way. The respondents felt that the female

principals do not allow free participation and do not accept suggestions from them because they have fears of their positions as principals. The male teachers felt that the female principals are harsh to them because of the fears that they are going to undermine them. Here are their responses from these respondents:

Respondent 1B (Teacher): *“She always has queries and fears of being undermined by teachers. She always wants to be known that she is the principal. She is not allowing free participation and does not accept suggestions. Yet in our days it’s wise to listen to others’ ideas. She has fears about her position that you are going to take her position if you are eager to work.”*

Respondent 3B (Teacher): *“She is very harsh to us because she is a female. She feels so intimidated by you if you develop yourself. You have to hide your knowledge, your feelings. Whenever you advise of something she thinks you are undermining her, especially if you are a male. She will end up saying ‘I am the leader here, you are to follow, you have to obey.’”*

The theory of distributed leadership holds the notion that hierarchical, top-down structures are not appropriate for school leadership and management (van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008:221). This means that the principal is supposed to be less authoritative and tries to distribute the responsibilities to all teachers. Williams (2008) concurs with the respondents by saying that the principals act as barriers to the implementation of distributed leadership because they limit teacher participation because of the fears of losing their positions.

The respondents felt that the female principals becomes autocratic when work is not done by giving instructions to the teachers and when the teachers delay a meeting by not coming up with solutions. Secondly, the respondents were of the view that the female principals become autocratic when they feel threatened by the teachers because they are perceived as incompetent by the teachers and that the female teachers like to undermine them.

The majority of the respondents from school B (75%) observed that their female principal feel threatened because of low level of education. The teachers felt that the female principal was lacking the passion to develop herself. The female principal was not willing to learn new things; as a result the teachers had more information than them. These respondents claimed that the female principal was even lazy to attend the departmental workshops and that retarded development of the school. If a teacher was eager to work or was developing himself/herself or was trying to advise the female principal, she became intimidated. Below are the responses from these teachers:

Respondent 1B (Teacher): *“She is reluctant to learn. Our principal does not read about her profession. It is not enough to get information from the EDO. She lacks development...That retards the development of the school and she ends up not allowing people to participate freely.”*

Respondent 2B (Teacher): *“She is not willing to develop herself, not willing to learn. As a principal, you should go out, look for new ventures in your field. Things change. She has fears if a teacher is enriching herself. ”*

Respondent 3B (Teacher): *“She is not willing to develop herself. We have more information than her. She feels intimidated if you develop yourself. If there is a workshop, she will not be there or she will go out earlier...She is not willing to learn and there are changes in education.”*

In contrary to this statement, Williams (2008:7) says that “...the concept of distributed leadership extends the boundaries of leadership insofar as it entails high levels of teacher involvement and utilizes a wide variety of expertise, knowledge and skills.”

Respondents 4A and 4B (25%) who are HODs from both schools were of the

opinion that the female principals are not transparent to them as SMT members because they take most of the decisions without consulting them. Respondent 4A claimed that the female principal had a tendency of bypassing them and went straight to the teachers and reported without informing or consulting the SMT. The two respondents said that this lack of consultation caused tensions between the female principal and the HODs, as well as between the female principal and the teachers.

Similarly, a minority of the respondents (25%) in school A (respondent 3A) felt that sometimes the female principal makes an announcement to learners without informing teachers first when there is an emergency case. The following are the responses from respondents:

Respondent 2A (Teacher): *“A female principal avoids being democratic in her leadership style because democracy will make people open up their views which she may not be able to deal with. I cannot say she is totally autocratic but she lies on the autocratic side because of insecurity. She wants us to listen to her. It may be because the female principals are perceived as incompetent in their work, and that could lead to her being autocratic. Also, females like to undermine other females, and that could lead to her being autocratic. When she says something, she does not want you to respond, she does not expect you say anything. She forgets that everybody has rights. She will accuse ‘the above’ (EDO) as if the above authority is forcing the things, knowing very well as teachers that she is the one who is forcing things...”*

Respondent 3A (Teacher): *“She does not consult the teachers before taking decision. The other day here, there was breaking of the office and the gas stoves and gas cylinders were stolen. The principal just got to the classes and tell the learners to go and fetch their parents while we were teaching without calling the staff and ask for our opinions.”*

Respondent 4A (HOD): *“...She can be democratic in her leadership, but becomes autocratic when teachers do not perform their duties. When work is not done she gives instructions. It depends on the situation at that time.*

Respondent 1B (Teacher): *“She can be autocratic where she sees that teachers do not come up with something common in a meeting, in that case she takes decision by herself.”*

Respondent 3B (Teacher): *“Sometimes teachers we can be impossible and in that case she become strict and give instruction to us...After long break we used to stay in the staffroom while it is time to go to class, she become autocratic and tell us to go to classes.”*

Respondent 4B (HOD): *“The principal is autocratic because there is no transparency here in our school. She mostly takes decisions on her own without consulting the SMT. Sometimes she just call a staff meeting without consulting us first and we end up having different opinions in front of teachers. Sometimes we end up telling the post level one teachers about our problem, which is not right because we are the SMT here... We are supervisors, we have our teachers. Each HOD has six teachers. The principal has a tendency of taking my duty, going straight to teachers. Most of the time she just rushes to teachers and tells them what to do. You will hear her saying that the teachers are ignoring her because they did not do what she told them to do.”*

According to the DoE (:B5), “In crisis situations the principal may have to make decisions urgently. Even when there is no crisis, there will be times when the final decision rests with the leader.” Van der Mescht & Tyala (2008) concurs that there are tensions that exist between the principal and the teachers because sometimes the principal feels accountable and act independently of the other’s inputs.

The above findings indicate that the majority of teachers agree that the female principals use a combination of democratic and autocratic leadership styles in their leadership. The female principals become democratic when they accommodate the views of teachers in a meeting situation and allow free participation of teachers in different committees.

The female principals become autocratic in different ways. The female principals are perceived as using the top down approach because of fears for their position. The male teachers perceive female principals as being harsh to them because they feel intimidated by men. The female principals feel threatened by teachers who develop themselves academically.

4.3.4 THE FEMALE PRINCIPALS HAVE A CHALLENGE OF CONTROLLING THEIR EMOTIONS

The respondents (50%) from both schools perceived the female principals as having a challenge of controlling their emotions. According to the respondents, the teachers had to look at the mood before approaching the female principal. When the mood is right, the female principal approached them with a smile and greets them loudly, but when the mood is wrong, the female principal does not even greet them; she keeps quiet and is sensitive to petty things. The teachers felt that the female principals took their frustrations out on learners and teachers. The following are the teachers' responses:

Respondent 2A (Teacher): *"The female principal is sensitive to us. As teachers, we have to look at her mood before approaching her. If the mood is right, things will go well, if the mood is wrong, things will go wrong."*

Respondent 4A (HOD): *"She can keep quiet if she likes, going round and round not talking, for a long time, sweeping the floor. She is the principal, she is not supposed to sweep the floor. You don't know when she is going to be well in that"*

mood.”

Respondent 1B (Teacher): *“If she is frustrated, you will notice that she wakes up with the wrong side, takes all her frustrations to you. She answers you with anger. Some of the teachers fire back to her, exchanging words with her, because here we are not the same, we come from different homes.”*

Respondent 3B (Teacher): *“Whenever she is in a fighting mood, she takes that to learners... When she has a problem within herself, she will come with that mood, shouting at learners and everybody, calling you to the office, bully you, wasting your time, sitting in the office doing nothing. When she is smiling, you know everything is well. You just look at her face and you know what will be happening in that day.”*

Mestry & Schmidt (2012) found that South African women struggle with personal internal issues such as professional experiences, conflicts, emotions, aspirations, ambitions and confidence. They maintain that when women become weighed down with these issues, they are perceived to be lacking the self-esteem required to become successful leaders.

On the other hand, Damons (2008) is saying that women leaders possess emotional intelligence which refers to the ability to recognise your own feelings and those of others so as to be able to manage these emotions well in yourself and in your relationships.

According to respondents 2A, 3A and 4A (75%) from school A, the female principal lacks critical thinking because of an inability to control her emotions. These respondents feel that their principal does not think before taking actions. The female principal was reported to be easily convinced and confronts the teachers without further investigation. The respondents further explained that by saying that their female principal does not think of the consequences of something

before doing or saying something and that she realizes at a later stage that she has done something wrong. It was reported that sometimes the female principal ends up the victim of the situation, being compelled to apologise, and that lowers her status. The responses from these three respondents explain this well:

Respondent 2A (Teacher): *"...she attends to problems immediately. She does not go to the root cause of the problem. She lacks the listening skill. She is easily convinced and confronts the person without investigating further and she ends up the victim of the situation. She will sometimes notice later that something was not like that, and ends up apologising, and that lowers her status."*

Respondent 3A Teacher): *"The challenge that I see is that sometimes she does not think thoroughly before doing things. She does not think of the consequences of her actions before saying or doing things. When we confront her, she will apologise as she always does."*

Respondent 4A (HOD): *"...She is trying to be quick. She wants things to be done fast. She only sees when there is a quarrel that she has done something wrong. She does not think before doing it."*

The above statements from the respondents show that female principals display negative emotions which bounce back at them. Lazanyi & Azoala (undated) says that leaders who feel distressed and hostile are likely to negatively activate their followers (Lazanyi & Azoala, undated).

As people in leadership, the principals need the ability to manage their emotions, allowing them to relate sensitively to people whose assumptions might be different from others (Mestry & Schmidt, 2012). The calmness and the patience of the principal when dealing with staff members are crucial for effective management.

The view that female principal end up apologising to the teachers is advocated by

Paulsen (2009) when stating that women leaders are able to apologize if there is a misunderstanding. Damons (2008) agrees by stating that women in their communication have a good sense of humour and the ability to confess to making mistakes.

Respondent 4A (HOD) in school A reported that the female principal lacks trust in them as SMT. That constitutes 25% of the respondents. This respondent felt that the female principal does not trust them in her absence. When the female principal is not at work because of sickness, she gives instructions and supervises them over the phone. Respondent 4A was of the opinion that the female principal does not let them manage the school using their own capabilities as SMT members.

Teacher 4A (HOD): *“Another challenge is that she does not trust us as SMT. I can do work without supervision. If she is not here, she will phone us and instruct us. She does not understand that this is not nice to us. She has fears that work will not be done. That is not good to me as the person who is in charge in her absence...I don't know because we do our work .She is seen as a good person by her superiors because of us, it's because of our work. I've been an HOD for twenty years, I can do everything. I do not feel good about this.”*

The above findings show that the respondents perceived female principals as having a challenge of controlling their emotions by taking their personal frustrations to the teachers and learners. The female principals lack critical thinking because of an inability to control their emotions. These female principals are easily convinced and confront teachers without further investigations and they manage the school over the phone while they are sick.

4.3.5 THE ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS ON THE FEMALE PRINCIPAL

In the above discussion, the teachers from both schools portrayed the female principals as possessing two sides, the positive side and the negative side. These positive and negative attributes have an impact on the attitudes of teachers about female principal. Teachers demonstrate positive and negative attitude about female principal.

4.3.5.1 POSITIVE ATTITUDE

The respondents from both schools felt that the attitude of teachers about female principal is positive. These respondents explain these positive attitudes in different ways.

Respondent 2B and 3B (50%) from school B were of the idea that although their female principal displayed some weaknesses and challenges, they maintain a positive attitude about female principal by doing what they are supposed to do, that is, teaching and learning. These respondents were explaining that they are making sure that learners are not suffering, and that they do not look at the principal as a female, but they take her as a principal. The following are the responses from the respondents:

Respondent 2B (Teacher): *"We do not look at gender, we look at her as a principal. We take her as a principal."*

Respondent 3B (Teacher): *"We are good at her, we are positive towards her. We are like soldiers sometimes, irrespective of her funny faces. We do what we are here to do. We realised that she has a problem, we sat down and talked together to model the school. We created the atmosphere where everybody formulated a policy to solution to the shortfalls of her and do them ourselves She is fortunate to be surrounded by people who can do the work, who have the mood to uplift, to*

build the school. We are all SMT's, HOD's and principals. We are respecting each other."

The respondents (50%) from school A revealed that, as a result of these positive attributes demonstrated by the female principal, they learn from her. The female principal was perceived as being exemplary to the teachers. The teachers were proclaiming that the female principal made sure that teaching and learning was taking place by going into the classroom herself. The teachers felt that because of her dedication to their work, they become dedicated to their work by making sure that they are teaching.

Respondent 4A from school A explained further by stating that the female principal guides them as HODs on how to lead their teachers by showing them how to approach teachers. According to respondent 4A the female principal taught them (HOD's) the importance of recording and having evidence of whatever you are doing as an SMT member. As SMT members, they apply these things to the teachers they are leading. The following are responses from respondents:

Respondent 1A (Teacher): *"They are opposite of men, they are passionate and dedicated to their work. She wants to see to it that work is done, teachers are teaching learners. She always reminds us that we are here for these learners...She likes to teach and we all end up work in our classes because of her."*

Respondent 4A (HOD): *"She likes recording. Even if she gives instructions, she writes down that she wants this and that. She records so that there is evidence. She likes evidence, she signs and we sign. She give you guidelines, she guides and shows us how to approach the teachers. As an HOD, she is my supervisor, she supervise me so that I know what to do with my teachers. She is exemplary to us."*

The respondents from both schools felt that the strengths of the female principals

contribute towards good performance of teachers and learners and that forms 63% of the teachers. Teachers felt that they were encouraged to improve their performance in teaching and learning, as well as in extra-mural activities and that they make sure that they meet the due dates. The following are the responses from the respondents:

Respondent 1A (Teacher): *"...the teaching and learning is done easily with peace and harmony."*

Respondent 2A (Teacher): *"That also has a good impact on the way we perform. As much as she has her bad side, she likes good things like winning in music, sport, etc. She appreciates winning choirs and that brings intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is that inside motivation that comes from you, not coming from the department or incentives."*

Respondent 4A (HOD): *"We feel very happy. She is exemplary. How I wish I can be her. We end up doing good work. We become dedicated to our work, that is teaching and office work. We strive to observe and meet her due dates all the time. I feel like not to fail her because she is always willing."*

Respondent 3B (Teacher): *"We are happy to be part of the institution because we get more experience, we understand how to do certain things around the school. We have no threatening mood to go to her for money to use for the benefit of the school. She can say 'you can do this, you cannot do that'. She teaches us how to use the money, when, where, no arguments about the money. For example, trip for sport, we understand we have much money for sport. We do not go beyond our budget."*

Respondent 4B (HOD): *"We are motivated by her actions and the learners perform well because of that."*

According to Kawana (2004) the principals have a high concern for their work as playing a major role in boosting students' achievement because they instil commitment in their teachers and learners.

These findings indicate that the majority of respondents agree that the successes demonstrated by the female principals lead to improvement of performance in learners and teachers.

These findings show that the teachers demonstrate a positive attitude to the female principal.

4.3.5.2 NEGATIVE ATTITUDE

The respondents from both schools were of the idea that teachers also demonstrate negative attitudes towards the female principals because of the culture and their traditional customs. That forms 63% of the respondents. These teachers had different views on these negative attitudes.

Respondent 2B from school B (25%) felt that the female principal has a tender treatment instead of being firm.

Respondent 2B (Teacher) said: *"They have a tender treatment. Leadership needs somebody who can be firm. You can easily change a female person."* This is in agreement with van Eupen (undated) when saying that communal attributes are mainly associated with women, who are seen as friendly, helpful and concerned with compassionate treatment of others, and with Coleman & Pounder as cited in Kawana (2004) when saying that women in leadership are experiencing a problem of being expected to adopt masculine traits and must thus become abnormal women.

Respondent 1A from school A and respondent 2B from school B (25%) felt that teachers do not have confidence in female leaders because of the belief that they are not strong in character.

Respondent 1A (Teacher): *"Females were taken as weak to be leaders. It came after democracy that females can be leaders."*

Respondent 2B (Teacher): *"The people do not have confidence in female leadership. They say they are not strong in character...Teachers see a female as weak. It's a culture thing."*

Coombs (2004:14) agrees by saying that women are under constant public scrutiny due to the perception that women are less able to cope with crises and are not capable of leading.

Respondent 2A (25%) from school A was of the idea that teachers have a view that men are perceived as leaders and the females are perceived as weak and soft for leading, and that they can cry.

Respondent 2A (Teacher): *Their sensitivity to things and their weakness of crying at things is another barrier female leadership."*

Grove & Montgomery (undated) supports this by saying that women are too emotional, too weak physically, and that males dislike working with females. A successful manager is seen to be assertive and self-reliant. If the female principal is unable to fulfil this role, she is perceived as weak and passive and more capable of being led than leading (Damons, 2008).

Respondent 1A and 3A (38%) from both schools felt that the female principals are being undermined by the teachers. These teachers were of the view that the males do not listen to the female leaders and that they think that a female does

not have the guts to lead.

Respondent 1A (Teacher): *“Traditionally, a principal is a leader. Leaders are perceived as males.”*

Respondent 3A (Teacher): *“It’s because of stereotypes that men are the ones to lead and that they are meant management.”*

Respondent 1B (Teacher): *“The females cannot be leaders because they are undermined as if God created them to be submissive. People have perceptions that you cannot give orders, you listen to a male. Males do not listen to female leaders.”*

Coombs (2004) agrees by saying that women are seen as representatives of their gender, that is, without the ability to be leaders or managers.

Respondents 2A (25%) from school A felt that females do not trust each other because of having inferiority complex. According to this respondent the females do not want to see other females taking the upper position; as a result they vote against one another.

Respondent 2A (Teacher): *“The other reason is that we do not trust each other as females. We feel inferior to take up these positions.”*

Grove & Montgomery (undated) are likely to support this by saying that there are few women who have good attitude on the appointment of females.

However, Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango, (2009) disagree with the statement above by saying that men, who are viewed as superior in the society, exclude women in the area of power and that they do not support women for leadership roles in the family and in the workplace because of stereotypical attitudes that

have a negative influence on the selection, placement and promotion of women to management positions.

The minority of the respondents (25%) from school A also mentioned the fact that the females are under-represented in leadership positions because of their behaviour such as being sensitive to minor things. The female from school A is also perceived as being bossy by this respondent. This teacher was saying that even the SGB is reluctant to appoint a female as a principal because of them being bossy.

Respondent 2A (Teacher): *“Another thing is that females want to feel that they are in charge and that leads to the School Governing Body (SGB) being reluctant to select female as a principal.”*

Grove & Montgomery (undated) agree by saying that the lack of support from the school board is a barrier that women experience on the selection of female in leadership positions.

Respondent 2A (25%) from school A was of the idea that the parents are reluctant to appoint a female as a principal because of the fear that she is entitled to maternity leave and what is going to happen in her absence.

Respondent 2A (Teacher): *“Since the females are entitled to maternity leave, the parents would ask what would happen if the principal is in the leave.”*

Contrary to all these negative attitudes of teachers, Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango (2009: 244) say, "One's sex does not necessarily matter as far as work in the school is concerned. Gender, which is socially acquired and, in some cases, riddled with stereotypes, influences the capabilities and aspirations of individuals."

The above findings indicated that although the teachers are showing positive attitudes, they also demonstrate a negative attitude to the female principal through their cultural beliefs. The teachers are positive to the principals by doing what they are supposed to be doing, teaching and learning. These teachers also demonstrate the negative attitude towards female principals through their cultural beliefs. The female are perceived as weak and soft for leadership and that men are perceived as leaders.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter was on the presentation of data collected from the respondents. The data collected was presented, analysed and interpreted. The findings that emerged from the data indicate that the teachers have different perceptions on female principal leadership. The teachers perceived the female principals as having two sides, the positive side and the negative side of every aspect.

The teachers perceived the female principals as demonstrating warm relationships with teachers by being a mother to them, while, on the other side, they demonstrate inability to hold that motherhood against angry parents. The female principals were perceived as being adopting both democratic and autocratic leadership styles in their leadership. The application of these leadership styles depends on the situation at that particular time.

The teachers were of the view that the female principals are able to manage relations internally and externally, although sometimes they show lack of managing these relations by favouring some of teachers and by using unacceptable approaches when talking to teachers. The teachers also revealed that the female principals have a challenge in controlling their emotions.

The teachers demonstrated positive and negative attitudes towards the female

principals. Although the female principals possess some weaknesses, the teachers maintained a positive attitude by ensuring that teaching and learning is progressing. On the other hand, the culture and traditional customs result in negative attitudes. The female principal was viewed as having a tender treatment instead of being firm.

The following chapter will discuss the summary of findings, recommendations, conclusion and suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study focused on the perceptions of teachers on female principal leadership. The problem that prompted the researcher to undertake this study was stated in chapter one. The background to the study and the research questions were also presented in chapter one. The review of literature that could be used to support the study was presented in chapter two. Chapter three presented the methods that could be used to support the study. Chapter three also presented the research approach, research design and research paradigm that guided the study. Chapter three discussed data gathering instruments which included semi-structured interviews. The sampling of the research site and participants, as well as sample size, were also discussed in this chapter. Chapter four focussed on the presentation and discussion of the findings. The data collected from participants were also analysed so that it made sense.

The purpose of chapter five is to present the critical overview and the reflections on the main findings of the study. The recommendations based on the findings, the conclusion and suggestions for further studies are also discussed in this chapter.

The structure of this chapter is as follows:

5.2 Discussion of findings

5.3 Recommendations

5.4 Conclusion

5.5 Suggestions for further research

5.2 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings that were presented in chapter four indicated that the teachers had different perceptions of female principal leadership. The findings revealed that the female principals are perceived as demonstrating two sides, the positive side and the negative side. The findings that came out were:

5.2.1 Personal qualities of female principals

5.2.2 The female principals' ability to manage internal and external relations

5.2.3 Leadership styles associated to female principals

5.2.4 The female principals have a challenge of controlling emotions

5.2.5 The attitudes of teachers on the female principal leadership

5.2.1 PERSONAL QUALITIES OF FEMALE PRINCIPALS

The findings in chapter four highlighted that the majority of the respondents were of the view that the female principals are demonstrating some qualities of warmth when the teacher is encountering personal problems. These qualities included motherhood, understanding, care, love, sympathy and humanity. This warmth also referred to collegial relationships where the female principal was able to socialise with the teachers. Women generally have an ethical and caring approach as they demonstrate qualities of warmth and empathy (Damons, 2008).

Although the female principals demonstrate the qualities of warmth, sometimes they lack that quality of being a mother figure. The female principals do not protect the teachers from angry parents and they show little interest in the wellbeing of the learners with regard to clothing donations, bursaries and issues like child-headed families. This is contrary to what Damons (2008) is stating that female principals care about the well-being of staff members, learners and parents.

5.2.2 THE FEMALE PRINCIPALS' ABILITY TO MANAGE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The findings revealed that the respondents agreed that the female principals were able to manage relations, both internally and externally. The female principals were able to look for opportunities that can help learners and grow the school. The teachers revealed that the female principals are able to communicate with teachers in a proper manner.

On the other hand, the female principals showed the negative side in managing internal relations. These included inappropriate approaches when talking to teachers and HODs. The teachers highlighted the fact that the female principals had a tendency of shouting at them and insulting HODs in front of teachers. Contrary to this, Kgomo (2006) observes that women principals have a good command of communication and they maintain healthy relationships in the school environment.

The respondents complained that the female principal had an element of favouritism. The respondents noted that the female principal did not treat them in the same manner; she listened to some while, on the other hand, she ignored the views of the other teachers. Some of the respondents complained that the female principal used to favour male teachers above female teachers because of culture saying that males are leaders. To some of the respondents favouritism had nothing to do with gender or age; the female principals favoured teachers out of love and had a special bond with them. As a result of favouritism, the female principals are not able to build teamwork.

The SMT members highlighted the lack of consultation where the female principals took decisions without informing them. The respondents had also mentioned that female principals had a weakness of not implementing what was discussed in a meeting and of implementing their own dreams. Contrary to this,

Thakathi & Lemmer (2002) highlighted that female principals are consultative and considerate in their communication because they give others the opportunity to participate.

5.2.3 LEADERSHIP STYLES ASSOCIATED WITH FEMALE PRINCIPALS

The findings indicated that the majority of teachers agreed that the female principals were using a combination of democratic and autocratic leadership styles in their leadership. Sometimes the female principals became democratic and sometimes they became autocratic depending on the situation at that particular time.

The female principals became democratic by accommodating the views of teachers in a meeting situation and allowing free participation of teachers in different committees. The teachers viewed the female principal as being transparent in terms of the finances of the school. Sometimes the female principals became democratic when they wanted assistance and favours from the SMT members.

The female principals become autocratic in different ways. The female principals were perceived as using the top down approach because for fears of their positions. The male teachers perceived the female principals as being harsh to them because they felt intimidated by men. The female principals felt threatened by teachers who develop themselves academically and that made them authoritative.

Hersey & Blanchard (1977) concur that leaders should adjust their leadership style to the situation of the organisation. There is no one correct leadership style; different people in different situations use different styles (Mestry & Schmidt, 2012).

5.2.4 THE FEMALE PRINCIPALS HAVE A CHALLENGE OF CONTROLLING EMOTIONS

The findings in chapter four showed that the respondents perceived the female principals as having a challenge of controlling their emotions by taking their personal frustrations to the teachers and learners. The respondents were complaining that they had to look at the mood of the female principal before approaching her.

The female principals had a lack of critical thinking because of their inability to control emotions. The female principals were easily convinced and confront teachers without further investigations. The SMT members were complaining that the female principals had a tendency of managing the school over the phone if they are not at school because of sickness.

This is in agreement with Mestry & Schmidt (2012) when articulating that South African women struggle with personal internal issues.

5.2.5 THE ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS ON FEMALE PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP

The findings indicated that although the teachers were showing a positive attitude, they also demonstrated a negative attitude to the female principal through their cultural beliefs.

The teachers seemed to be positive to the female principals by doing what they are supposed to be doing, teaching and learning. Even though the female principals demonstrated some weaknesses, the teachers maintained the positive attitude by working like soldiers.

The teachers also demonstrated their negative attitude towards female principals through their cultural beliefs. The female principals were perceived as weak and

soft for leadership and that men were perceived as leaders. The male teachers undermined the female principals because they think that the female principal does not have the guts to lead. On the other hand, the female teachers also voted against other female teachers because of their inferiority complex; they do not want to see the other female teachers taking the upper position.

The stereotypes have made a contribution to underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. Barriers from home and ways women are perceived culturally and historically are regarded as barriers to women's advancement to higher positions (Moorisi, 2006).

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has shown that the female principals demonstrated two sides in their leadership, a positive and a negative side. The following are the recommendations that are significant to this study.

Continuous support from the Department of Education in the form of training and workshops should be provided so that the female principals can have the ability to deal and to cope with the challenges they encounter as leaders in their schools.

The attitude of teachers which emanates from culture, such as perceiving the female principals as weak vessels in leadership, leads to the development of low self-esteem in female principals. The fact that the female principals are intimidated by the male teachers also contributes to low self-esteem. The female principals should learn to boost their self-esteem by believing in themselves.

The female principals should not rely on the Department of Education for training; they should also develop themselves through further studies so that they can be more informed in terms of knowledge and become more confident.

The female principals should have regular communication with principals of the other schools, both males and female, by having meetings where they share ideas so as to overcome their fears.

Motivational speakers should be organised by the school, including the SGB so that the teachers, both males and females, can be capacitated in terms of accepting female leadership in schools.

The challenge of female principals that they are unable to control their emotions should be overcome by separating their personal life from their professional life.

5.4 CONCLUSION

Teachers in this study came up with different angles of perceiving the female principals in their schools. They had identified two opposite sides of the way the female principals operate. The teachers perceived the female principals as having both a positive side and a negative side.

The female principals were able to demonstrate warm personal qualities by being mothers to teachers while, on the other hand, they showed inability to protect the teachers from angry parents.

Sometimes the female principals become democratic and sometimes they become autocratic because of the situation at that particular time.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study was limited to only two schools. Further research can be done with more than two schools so as to get more information that can enable the researcher to come up with similarities and differences.

Further investigation on the other stakeholder's perceptions of female leadership, such as SGB and parents, can be useful to determine whether they share the same views or not.

Another area of research that can be undertaken could be to determine the factors that contribute to the low self-esteem once the females become principals.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

RESEARCHER: Kiki C. Webu

This serves to request you to take part in the research project that is on **The teachers' perceptions of the female principal leadership in primary schools**. I would like to conduct an interview with you so as to explore the above topic further.

For ethical reasons, I guarantee confidentiality and anonymity to you. However, participation in this study is not compulsory; you have a right to refuse the interview or withdraw from participation at any time whenever you wish. Should you choose to participate, you are free not to respond to any question you do not wish to respond to.

In terms of the ethical requirements of the University of Fort Hare, I now invite you to complete the consent form below as an indication of your voluntary acceptance to take part in this research. If you have any further questions before signing the consent form, you can contact me on the following cell number: 0839268008

I....., hereby give my consent to become a participant in the study that investigate **The teachers' perceptions of the female principal leadership in primary schools**. I fully understand the procedures of the study as explained to me. I am aware that I am under no obligations to participate in this study and may withdraw at any time without negative consequences to me.

SIGNATURE OF THE PARTICIPANT :.....

DATE :.....

SIGNATURE OF THE RESEARCHER:.....

DATE: :.....

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

RESEARCH TITLE

THE PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS ON THE FEMALE PRINCIPAL
LEADERSHIP: A FOCUS ON DUNCAN VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question:

- What are the perceptions of teachers of the leadership of female principals at primary school level?

Sub-questions:

- What do teachers consider as the limitations of female principal leadership?
- What do teachers consider as successes of female principal leadership?
- What are the leadership and management implications of teachers' perceptions?

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

AGE :

GENDER :

QUALIFICATIONS :

EXPERIENCE AS AN EDUCATOR:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

My name is Kiki Webu. I am a Fort Hare University student doing Master of Education. I am doing research on the perceptions of teachers of female principal leadership under the supervision of Professor Duku. Can you please introduce yourself to me as a teacher?

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How long have you been teaching?
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How long have you been a teacher in this school?
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Was the principal a male or female on your arrival?
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As I have said before, I am doing a research study on the perceptions of teachers of female principal leadership. Recent research shows that women are under-represented in leadership positions because of the challenges the female principals experience from both male and female teachers. The aim of this study is to investigate the perceptions of teachers of female principal leadership. In other words, this study seeks to hear from the side of teachers, how you perceive a female principal leader. To you as a teacher in this school, what does it mean to have a female school principal?
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How do you view a female principal as a leader?
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How does the female principal leadership style differ from that of males?

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Which leadership styles do you associate with a female principal?

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What do you mean by each leadership style?

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Please elaborate how these leadership styles are associated with the female principal?

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What challenges do you experience being led by a female principal?

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What do you consider as the successful role played by a female principal?

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Explain how these successes impact on your perceptions of the female principal?

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What are your attitudes to the female leader?

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What do you consider as weaknesses of the female principal?

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Is there anything that you would like to ask me?

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Thank you very much for your time. I really appreciate your effort, participation and contribution to this study. Thank you again.