Females' experiences of school and family level attitudes that impact their role as principal: A case study of three female principals in primary and secondary schools in Cape Town

MASTER OF EDUCATION

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Shaheeda Davids, hereby submit this thesis for the Master's degree and I declare that its contents have not been previously submitted, in whole or in part, for the award of any other qualification. Each significant contribution to and quotations cited in this thesis from the work, or works, of other people has been acknowledged, cited and referenced. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted in Cape Town, where females in leadership positions experience various challenges not only from the school level but from their families as well. This study therefore explored how female principals experience positive and negative attitudes from the school and family levels and how these factors impact their role as principal at both primary and secondary schools.

The study used a qualitative research approach and case study design. A sample of three principals were purposely selected one of which is a deputy principal based on the specified sample criteria. Interviews with each participant were conducted face to face, and thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

The attitudes varied from positive to negative and the findings of this study suggest that female principals do experience attitudes from the school and family that serve as factors that impact how they carry out their roles and responsibilities. Female principals in this sample find that the encouragement they receive from their teachers makes them confident and capable of fulfilling their role as principal. Female principals find that the need for mentorship is an important factor that would motivate them in their role as principal. However, they also find that the demands from their family to do domestic duties such as looking after children demotivates them and limits the time they can spend on being an effective principal. Despite this, female principals find that the support and understanding from their family play an integral role in their ability to delegate their principal role.

On the basis of this, this study expanded on knowledge about how attitudes from school and family actors impact females' entry into educational leadership roles. Therefore, this study suggests that policies around gender and promotion should be consistently implemented, achieved and maintained.

Keywords: attitudes, attitudinal factors, females, principal, deputy principal, principalship, educational leadership, women, school and family.

DEDICATION

Firstly, I dedicate this research to my husband, Shadeed Taliep, my sons, Umair Taliep and Taha Taliep and my mother, Fairooz Ismail. Secondly, to my late grandfather, Moegamad Yusuf Ismail, I know he would have been extremely proud of me. Finally, to my late principal, Mr Matthew David Blaauw, who was my gatekeeper to the participants who participated in this study, and very supportive toward this research.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DBE	Department of Basic Education
GH	Grade Head
DH	Department Head
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RESEP	Research on Socio-Economic Policy
SASA	South African Schools Act
SASP	South African Standard for Principalship
SGB	School Governing Body
SH	Subject Head
SMT	School Management Team
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
UCT	University of Cape Town
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the background of this research including the rationale. The chapter also states the problem statement and the overview of the research, as well as the aims, objectives and research questions of this study. Additionally, this chapter includes definitions of key concepts and the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background

Due to negative stereotypes about potential female leaders, women in South Africa were not given many opportunities to hold leadership positions in the workplace or in educational institutions during the apartheid era as such positions were appointed by authorities rather than being advertised (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021:2-3). Even though the new Constitution (RSA, 1996b) emphasises equality for all, it is still uncommon for women to hold positions of authority (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021:2-3). Females experience resistance not only from the school but also from the family level. Females, in comparison to their male colleagues, are not respected in leadership positions. Males believe that women perform motherly and domestic roles at home therefore they are preferred as teachers instead of leaders in schools. The notion that women are not fit for leadership roles, based on gender stereotypes, a lack of support from decision-makers and the disinterested attitude of community members, make it difficult for females to enter or carry out leadership roles within education (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021:3). It is imperative to understand attitudinal factors from both the school and family level that impacts female principal's ability to carry out their role.

According to Eagly and Karau's (2002) attitudinal factors toward female principals can be understood as beliefs, biases, stereotypes, and expectations that shape how people perceive and respond to women in leadership roles. In the context of educational leadership, these attitudes often stem from deeply embedded cultural and social norms that associate leadership qualities with masculinity (Eagly and Karau, 2002: 573-598). Attitudinal factors can be explicit (openly discriminatory or dismissive behaviours) or implicit (unconscious biases that influence judgments about competency and authority) according to Heilman, (2012: 113-135)**.** As for this study these factors can operate at multiple levels:

School level: from staff, learners, and SMT, where female leaders may be perceived as less authoritative or competent.

Family level: from husbands/ partners, children, and extended family, who may expect women to prioritise domestic responsibilities over professional commitments.

Furthermore, a notable topic that underlies most studies on gender and leadership in education is the ongoing trend toward minimisation of continuing forms of discrimination against women. Nonetheless, females are still under-represented in positions of leadership in the educational sector (Schmidt & Mestry, 2015:1). This study explored the experiences of female principals in selected schools in the Western Cape. This study looked closely at factors, such as attitudes from school and family actors including teachers, learners, parents, husbands, children etc. that impact females in their roles as principals. In South Africa and many other countries, "women were regarded as people who cannot lead and manage schools as men can do" (Maime, 2011:1). Maime's study reveals that, in primary schools, School Management Teams (SMTs) prefer male principals over females even though females may be more qualified for the principal post (Maime, 2011:22). Although much has been done to rectify gender inequalities, there are still more male principals than female principals in South Africa. This study therefore touched on gender inequalities specific to educational leadership. It also investigated and revealed statistics of females in principal positions globally. Sinyosi and Potokri (2021) reveal that, regardless of the post-apartheid government's efforts to promote gender equality by placing more women in high administrative and leadership roles, activists are still unconvinced of their effectiveness (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021:2). Due to historical and cultural prejudices, the system's failure to enact laws requiring gender equity and affirmative action, and other factors, the majority of South African women have been restricted to intermediate or lower levels in the education division. (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021:2). Consequently, there is a substantial disparity between the numbers of male and female secondary school principals (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021:2).

With only 36% of women taking up principal positions in South African primary schools, the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) reported that South Africa has gender imbalances within educational leadership (Davids, 2018:1). As the above statistics show, women form the minority within principal positions in South African schools as they are confronted with many issues that prevent their growth and development within their leadership

roles (Davids, 2018:4). Davids (2018:3) also reveals that female principals acknowledge the positive and negative attitudes toward them and feel that they are not valued in comparison to their male counterparts. Davis (2018:3) believes that this indicates that females are not very confident in their principal roles and they may feel like they are being judged. This means that the number of females entering into principals roles matches the number of females leaving principal roles in South Africa (Davids, 2018:3).

On a global scale, Davids (2018:3) shows that female principals experience gender inequalities within educational leadership around the world. According to Davids (2018), there is a model of leadership that exists throughout cultures that excludes females. An Israeli study on educational leadership revealed the repressive conditions Arab women endure in a patriarchal, age- and gender-based society. (Davids, 2018:3-4). Further, Davids (2018) explains that research found that, in contrast to women, men in state primary schools in Turkey are seen as "naturally" competent leaders. Turkish society still believes that women care for and teach children, but do not to hold positions of leadership (Davids, 2018:4). As stated by Davids, female leaders are experiencing patriarchal attitudes from within the workplace to the society at large. School and family levels across the globe associate women with domestic and motherly roles. This means that males mostly lead schools in other countries including South Africa.

Despite the fact that the Constitution (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1996b) mentions gender equality, Sinyosi and Potorkri (2021:2) contend that women in the field of education still do not have equal rights. Consequently, the dominance of men in positions of educational leadership continues to shape South African culture (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021:2). Further, Sinyosi and Potorkri (2021) explain that, although women hold the majority of teaching positions in South Africa, there are still too few women in positions of leadership. For instance, according to 2018 figures, in the Vhembe area of the Limpopo Province, females make up 13.5% of all secondary school principals in the province (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021:2). Moreover, approximately 68% of South Africa's teachers are female but only 36% of principals are female (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021:2). These figures reflect the current nationwide under-representation of women in leadership roles in educational institutions. Therefore, this study will explore attitudinal factors from school and family actors including teachers, learners, parents, husbands, children etc. that female principal's face. My research contributes to this much needed area of focus as the attitudes from school and family actors impact women's

experiences of principalship.

Furthermore, female teachers are typically overlooked when applying for principalship positions due to a bias that learners perceive female authority differently from that of males. A gender-centred perspective sees women as possessing skills and abilities despite a variety of behaviours, including submissiveness, achievement anxiety, a fear of taking chances, and a failure to develop managerial skills that are suitable for management (Nyoni & He, 2019:3). Men, on the other hand, according to Nyoni and He (2019:3), possess the traits that are necessary for managerial roles, such as aggression, power, competition, self-confidence, and individuality that affect managerial results differently for men and women; where learners would adhere to the instructions and presence of a male principal but take a female authoritative presence for granted. With this being a defined challenge, female principals have sought alternative behavioural approaches using various methods (Nyoni & He, 2019:3). Mnisi (2015) believes that female school principals are effective because they are able to reform their institutions and enhance student achievement as a result of their propensity to lead from the middle. Mnisi (2015:36) shows that accomplished female principals brought their school and the community together around a shared vision of fostering a sense of belonging, emphasising the value of teaching and learning, enhancing behaviour through effective behaviour management, developing creative curricula, and being visible and attuned to the community.

Mnisi (2015) exposes biases such as the tendency to view women as inferior to males as the male principal's opinion carries more weight than the female principal. This makes it difficult for female school principals to demonstrate that they are qualified to lead in their schools (Mnisi, 2015:65). The inference is that women must overcome opposition from other educators and the community and must put in more effort than their male counterparts to establish their leadership abilities (Mnisi, 2015:4). Women principals are judged according to the male norm (Nyoni & He, 2019:4) which may be related to why female principals experience negative and positive attitudes towards their roles.

1.3 Rationale of the study

The aim and motivation for this dissertation stem from recent studies showing that women

continue to face gender discrimination in educational leadership. Sinyosi and Potokri (2021) explain that leadership roles are often associated with masculinity, leading to female principals being systematically overlooked, underappreciated, and unsupported by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) officials—positions largely held by males. These officials frequently perceive female principals as lacking experience, technical skills, and managerial capabilities, while male principals are acknowledged, visible, and supported (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021:13). This study is significant because it addresses not only the systemic gender biases present within educational leadership structures but also the complex, intertwined attitudes female leaders encounter at both school and family levels, which affect their ability to lead effectively.

While much research has explored gender inequities in leadership, few studies investigate the specific impact of school and family-level attitudes on the effectiveness and authority of female principals (Meng and Berger, 2019: 401-416). This gap is critical because these attitudes often shape how female principals are perceived and can directly impact their day-to-day roles, decision-making, and overall career progression. Additionally, research on educational leadership often overlooks the additional layer of challenges that female principals face from family and societal expectations. This study aims to bridge this gap by examining how societal norms around traditional family roles, combined with professional responsibilities, create unique pressures that influence female principals' leadership capacity and choices (Meng and Berger, 2019: 401-416).

Moreover, there is limited comparative research that explores these experiences across various school contexts—such as primary versus secondary school environments—and no longitudinal studies that assess how gender-based challenges evolve over time in a female principal's career (Eagly and Heilman, 2016: 349-353). Another notable gap is the intersectional analysis of gender discrimination in educational leadership, considering other identity factors like race and socio-economic background. Addressing these aspects could reveal additional barriers faced by female principals and provide a deeper understanding of the compounded challenges that shape their experiences (Eagly and Heilman, 2016: 349-353).

This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on educational leadership and gender studies by highlighting the societal, institutional, and familial pressures that female principals encounter. For the researcher, who works within the education sector and aspires to a leadership position, this study also serves to understand and, eventually, help inform policy and practice changes aimed at achieving equity and inclusivity in educational leadership.

Ultimately, these findings could guide the development of policies and support systems tailored to empower female principals and mitigate the effects of gendered biases at multiple levels within the school and community.

1.4 Problem statement

Despite South Africa's constitutional commitment to gender equality, women remain underrepresented in educational leadership, with female principals constituting only 36% of all principals in South African primary schools. Historical biases and enduring stereotypes continue to portray women as suited to nurturing roles rather than leadership, which affects their progression into and success within principal roles (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021; Davids, 2018). Female leaders face resistance both within schools and at home, where traditional family expectations and cultural norms reinforce the belief that women are better suited as teachers than as leaders. Even when women pursue training and qualifications for principal roles, they encounter attitudes that question their authority and capability, affecting their confidence and often leading them to leave leadership positions at rates matching those entering them (Davids, 2018).

Research suggests that while female principals employ collaborative, community-oriented leadership styles that effectively foster school improvement, they still face biases and must exert more effort to gain respect and prove their competence relative to their male counterparts (Mnisi, 2015; Nyoni & He, 2019). This study examines the attitudes from both school and family actors that impact females' experiences in their role as principals.

Davids (2018:4) also reports that, in South Africa, the demands placed on female principals have fostered in women a motivation not merely to achieve, but also to train themselves to become principals. Even when women show determination to educate themselves and succeed in becoming principals, the question is why so few females are in educational leadership positions in South Africa. This may be because females are seen as nurturers, caregivers, and motherly figures who are more suited to being teachers rather than managers or leaders (Davids, 2018:4).

Mnisi (2015) exposes biases such as the tendency to view women as inferior to males as the male principal's opinion carries more weight than the female principal. This makes it difficult for female school principals to demonstrate that they are qualified to lead in their schools

(Mnisi, 2015:65). The inference is that women must overcome opposition from other educators and the community and must put in more effort than their male counterparts to establish their leadership abilities (Mnisi, 2015:4). Women principals are judged according to the male norm (Nyoni & He, 2019:4) which may be related to why female principals experience negative and positive attitudes towards their roles.

This study critically discusses the attitudes from the school and family actor's that impact a female principal's ability to carry out her roles and responsibilities and to link these attitudes to the under-representation of females within educational leadership positions.

1.5 Overview of the study

This research explored the experiences of three female principals at three schools in Cape Town. Their experiences included attitudes of the school and family actor's that impact how they carry out their roles and responsibilities. Further, these experiences also have an impact on females entering into or aspiring to become principals. This study specifically looked at how the school actors' (learners, teachers, parents, SMT, SGB and mentors) and attitudes impact females' ability to carry out their roles and responsibilities as principals. It also looked at how the family actors' (children, husbands, ex-husbands and extended family) and attitudes impact females' ability to carry out the roles and accountabilities of a principal.

Specifically focusing on female principals, this research expands our knowledge about how school leadership influences teaching and learning. As the accomplishment of the school depends on the way females lead the school, the attitudes of both the school and the family actor's play an important role in the female principal's ability to carry out her duties. Negative attitudes from actors within the school and the family level will affect the school's successes and achievements but if the female principal receives positive attitudes from the school and family actors, more females would be open to take on leadership positions within education.

Lastly, this was a qualitative study and therefore a case study approach was chosen to conduct the investigation for the study. Case studies are beneficial because they are linear but iterative, requiring a logical design, pre-defined data gathering methodologies, and predetermined data analysis methods (Yin, 2009:1-2).

1.6 Research questions and objectives

The main research question was:

What are the attitudes of actors including teachers, learners, families etc. towards female principals and how does it influence their work?

This question was addressed with the following sub-questions:

1. How do female principals experience the positive and negative attitudes of school actors (principals/school leaders, teachers, learners, parents and SGBs) in their current role as principal?
2. How do female principals experience the positive and negative attitudes of family actors (husband/partner, children and extended family) in their current role as principal?

The key purpose of this research was to explore the attitudinal factors that have positive and negative impacts on how females carry out their role as principals. More precisely, the objectives of the study were:

1. To better understand the attitudes of school actors that affect females in how they carry out their role as principal.
2. To better understand the attitudes of family actors that affect females in how they carry out their role as principal.

1.7 Definition of key concepts

Attitudes

Our attitudes aren't just thoughts and feelings; they influence how we act, according to Meyers (2010:36). Liking something makes us approach it, while disliking it makes us avoid it. It's like a compass guiding our behaviour. In this study, female principals experienced attitudes from school and family. Attitudes are a social orientation – an underlying proclivity to react

positively or negatively to something (Meyers, 2010:36). The way in which female principals respond to the attitudes they are faced with from the school and the family determine how they will lead the school and care for their families.

Attitudinal factors

According to Eagly and Karau's (2002) attitudinal factors toward female principals can be understood as beliefs, biases, stereotypes, and expectations that shape how people perceive and respond to women in leadership roles. In the context of educational leadership, these attitudes often stem from deeply embedded cultural and social norms that associate leadership qualities with masculinity **(**Eagly and Karau**,** 2002: 573-598). Attitudinal factors can be explicit (openly discriminatory or dismissive behaviours) or implicit (unconscious biases that influence judgments about competency and authority) according to Heilman, (2012: 113-135)**.**

Gender

Maime (2011:18-19) reveals that gender is observed not simply as a biological classification, but also as an assortment of standards and beliefs that influence the attitudes, emotional state, behaviours, resources, and treatment that both men and women get on an individual and societal level. In this study, the experiences of female principals were examined through the perspective of gender. As there is a low total of females in principal positions, it is important to understand the gender inequalities that exist in the profession.

Principal and deputy principal

A principal is defined as a teacher selected or functioning as the head of a school in the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1996a). A deputy principal also falls within this role and may be defined as an "assistant principal or deputy head; the second position in the bureaucratic structure of the school, and someone delegated administrative duties by the principal" (Chitamba, 2019:25). In order to build and carry out a mutual visualisation, mission, and intentional strategy that will uplift and encourage all individuals associated with the school and offer guidance for its future growth, a principal collaborates with the SGB, SMT, and parents in the school community. (DBE, 2015:15).

Principalship

The Department of Basic Education developed a policy in 2015 called the South African

Standard for Principalship (SASP) which articulates the roles and responsibilities of principals (DBE, 2015:3). The principal's job and responsibility are to guarantee that all scholars have the opportunity to participate in appropriate and significant educational activities.

Educational leadership

According to Ngcobo (2015:15), leadership is a characteristic of connections between members who manage the work of diverse people in an organisation to guarantee that the organisation's main aim is met. In schools, the main aim is teaching and learning. Leadership may also be understood through the influence it has on people's willingness to work and strive to achieve a school's goals (Ngcobo, 2015:15). Furthermore, the act of persuading others to take necessary activities to accomplish goals in educational settings is known as educational leadership. Those who bear an assigned responsibility act in a way that reflects that responsibility; this is how they exercise influence and leadership. Although responsible leadership in education is desired, this does not always imply that the influencer bears responsibility for the way the educational system functions (Connolly et al., 2019:1). Therefore, in a single vision, all those who are invested with the bonds formed in collaboration give rise to the ongoing commitment to completing the agreed upon goals, guided by their leader (Connolly et al., 2019:1).

Women

According to Mikkola (2008:1), "women are human females". Mikkola (2008:1) explains that "in a provisional sense, 'gender' refers to women and men according to social elements (social role, position, behaviour, or identity); 'sex' refers to human females and males depending on biological features (chromosomes, sex organs, hormones, and other physical features)." Additionally, interpreting "woman" as a sex term and using it to identify human females based on a variety of biological and anatomical characteristics (such as genitalia) is one approach to interpret this claim (Mikkola, 2008:1). Furthermore, Mikkola (2008) adds that many feminists have historically interpreted "woman" in a different way, viewing it as a gender term that is dependent on social and cultural elements rather than as a term for sex (such as social status). By doing this, they set sex (being male or female) apart from gender (being a woman or a man), even if the majority of people who use everyday language seem to confuse the two (Mikkola, 2008:1).

School

According to the South African Schools Act (SASA), a public or private school that accepts pupils in one or more grades, ranging from grade R to grade 12, is referred to as a school. (RSA, 1996a). Schools are manned by a principal who is responsible for the entire school, followed by a deputy principal, school management team, SGB and support staff.

Family

According to Scabini and Manzi (2011), the unique interpersonal setting that constitutes a family has an impact on the processing and expression of identity. A person's sense of self is influenced, at least in part, by their familial relationships. Furthermore, the family environment influences other aspects of an individual's identity in addition to how they form their sense of self as a family member. The family is not a place where identity emerges passively. Rather, it has a major effect on the personal process that starts in adolescence and leads to the development of a person's identity (Scabini & Manzi, 2011:1).

1.8 Structure of the thesis

The goal of this investigation was to understand female experiences of attitudinal factors from the school and family levels that impact how they carry out their role as principals. In this study, the researcher recommends ways in which females may aspire to leadership roles and to provide information and further insight about gender bias and discrimination for females already in leadership roles. This thesis consists of six chapters which are briefly discussed below:

Chapter 1: Introduction, background and rationale of the study

This section presents the topic and describes the context, the problem statement as well as the rationale of the study. This section also provides the objectives, aims and research questions that this study addressed.

Chapter 2: Context of the study

This section addresses the political, social and economic characteristics of the South African education system. It further contextualises what has been happening in South Africa with regards to females in principal positions, specifically looking at gender imbalances within

educational leadership.

Chapter 3: Literature review

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework that guided the study, which is feminist theory. It also presents the literature that was consulted to explain the practices of female principals. The literature in this study was specific to the topic and is located within South Africa and globally. The conceptual framework used in this study is also illustrated visually with a diagram designed from the literature found.

Chapter 4: Methodology and design of the study

This section describes the methods and research approaches used to collect the data and provides an explanation for their use. A detailed explanation of the data collection techniques, which included document reviews and semi-structured interviews, is also provided. It also draws on how the data was analysed.

Chapter 5: Findings and discussion

The two interconnected research sub-questions that led this study were used to report and write up the findings. Thus, Chapter 5 presents an analysis and discussion of the findings, focusing on the themes that surfaced from the gathered data. Based on the conceptual framework that guides the study, themes from the literature are also examined.

Chapter 6: Study conclusions and recommendations

The thesis is concluded in this chapter. Chapter 6 provides an overview of the research, suggestions for further research and application, and contributions of the findings.

Chapter 2: Context of the study

2.1 Introduction

The background for the study's foundation is recognised in this chapter. It outlines and highlights the political, social, and economic background of South Africa as a whole, the history of leadership within South African education, the country's educational system, educational leadership, the situation of women in educational leadership in the Western Cape as well as gender disparities within educational leadership.

2.2 Political, social, and economic background of South Africa

According to Heaton and Amoateng (2007), the socioeconomic situation that the African National Congress ANC-led government inherited in 1994 was marked by a high level of poverty, limited access to essential services, and extreme inequality in the distribution of resources among households. The subsequent years saw the adoption of numerous programmes and policies targeted at enhancing the well-being of the formerly oppressed due to the new government's pressing need to confront this apartheid legacy (Heaton & Amoateng, 2007:61).

As stated by Dubow (2005), in the years after the National Party's election to power in 1948, the contemporary apartheid state was developed. Apartheid, as a system, condensed the beliefs and actions that resulted from almost 300 years of racial segregation dating back to the start of the European settlement at the Cape in the middle of the 17th century (Dubow, 2005:1). According to Mayer and Sabie (2015), South Africans were divided into four racial groups during apartheid: African, Coloured (described as an interracial mix), Indian and White.

According to Tewolde (2021), those with European heritage and diverse national backgrounds have a "White identity". In South Africa, the term "Black identity" refers to individuals who identify as belonging to different African ethnic and cultural groupings. The term "Coloured"

refs to people who are thought to be of mixed-race ancestry. People with Indian or Asian origin are referred to as Indian/Asian (Tewolde, 2021:89).

Whites were seen to be superior to other racial groups and dominated the political and economic power in the nation for a number of decades. These racial classifications were revised under the Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998) of the post-apartheid era. Twenty years later the end of apartheid, South Africa is still going through difficult social change processes, including redefining the ideas of race and gender (Mayer & Sabie, 2015:613).

According to Dubow (2005), apartheid subjected the majority of the black population to a level of institutionalised racism for almost 50 years. Every area of Black life was examined and controlled during the apartheid era. Blacks were prohibited access to the majority of public services and amenities, denied the most fundamental civil rights, such as a right to education, forced to work under harsh conditions, and allowed to live and work in urban areas only under very specific restrictions (Dubow, 2005:1). Dubow (2005) maintains that the apartheid bureaucracy's systematic and all-encompassing treatment of the majority of South Africans included an implicit or explicit presumption that Blacks and Whites represented distinct forms or branches of humanity.

Furthermore, Schmidt and Mestry (2015) explain that the politics, history, culture, and identity of Coloured individuals in South Africa are still complicated and stem from a clear division between their identity before and after apartheid. They are the offspring of marriages between White settlers, African locals and Asian slaves. Employment as farm labourers, housekeepers for White people, and skilled tradespeople (such as masons, engineers, seamstresses, diamond polishers, and tailors) was widespread (Schmidt & Mestry, 2015:2). In addition, Schmidt and Mestry (2015) reveal that, regardless of the fact that Coloured people were never fully incorporated into White culture, there was always a tight bond between White and Coloured people. Most Coloured people wanted to integrate with White people and wanted to have the same economic status and educational opportunities. Due to these viewpoints, which frequently resulted in colour gradation, a lack of coherence, togetherness, and a crippling identity crisis, a "caste" system developed among Coloured people (Schmidt & Mestry, 2015:2). However, due to their inadequate education and absence of skills restricting their entry to occupations, Coloured people had fewer opportunities for employment and education (Schmidt & Mestry, 2015:2). Policy implementation, such as the Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour,

1998), enforced equal opportunities for employment and promotion irrespective of age, sex and race (Moorosi, 2010:4). With this policy in place, Coloured people now have equal opportunities within education.

2.3 South Africa's educational system

Jansen and Kriger (2023) explain that four racially segregated education departments existed in South Africa at the outset of the country's 1994 transition from apartheid to democracy: one for Whites, one for Indians, one for Coloureds ("mixed race"), and one for Africans, who were further divided ethnically into ten rural Bantustan (homeland) departments and one department for urban dwellers (Jansen & Kriger, 2023:2). According to Jansen and Kriger (2023), principals, instructors, and students in each of the four segregated departments often belonged to the officially recognised racial group (for example, White teachers taught White students at schools led by White principals). Nonetheless, after the end of apartheid, all teachers were free to apply for open posts at any school of their choosing, and no student could be lawfully refused entrance to any school (Jansen & Kriger, 2023:2-3). Post-apartheid political pressure was put on schools to ensure that there is no racial segregation present within the appointment of principals or teachers (Jansen & Kriger, 2023:3).

According to the DBE (2018), over 12 million children enter South Africa's 24,000 ordinary public sector schools during the academic year with the hope and expectation that their formal education will alter their life paths. De Bruyn and Mestry (2020) explain that one of the best ways for South African children to escape the cycle of poverty and alter the "current patterns of poverty and privilege" is through these 12 years of school, during which time 400,000 teachers work with the students (De Bruyn & Mestry, 2020:1). De Bruyn and Mestry (2020) reveal that any self-reinforcing process that perpetuates poverty is called a "poverty trap" and this includes dysfunctional education brought on by "institutional failure" (De Bruyn & Mestry, 2020:1).

Furthermore, De Bruyn and Mestry (2020) report that the existing reality and the division of the educational system between wealthy and poorer areas, along with the severe socio-economic issues affecting schools, are both manifestations of the systemic apartheid's long-

lasting legacy (De Bruyn & Mestry, 2020:1). De Bruyn and Mestry (2020) state that there is a correlation between money and education; poorer students generally still struggle academically and have "low educational outcomes" (De Bruyn & Mestry, 2020:1).

A recent TALIS survey revealed that, for 49% of teachers in South Africa today, teaching was their first career choice. This amount is relatively low compared to other schools across the globe (TALIS, 2018:1). Further, TALIS (2018) explains that at least 97% of teachers in South Africa list the chance to impact adolescents' progress or to add to society as a primary incentive for entering the profession. Less, but still a significant number of teachers, cited the economic aspects and working circumstances as essential reasons for entering the field, particularly the fact that teaching offered a secure career path (TALIS, 2018:1).

Additionally, TALIS (2018) reveals that the average age of teachers in South Africa is 43, which is younger than the global average across all economies. In addition, 32% of South African teachers are 50 years of age or older. Accordingly, if all other factors remain constant, South Africa will need to replace around one in three of its teaching staff during the course of the ensuing 10 to 15 years (TALIS, 2018:2). Furthermore, TALIS (2018) disclosed that principals in South Africa are, on average, 51 years old, which is younger than principals in other nations and economies. In addition, 6% of principals in South Africa are 60 years of age or older, compared to 20% globally. There are 22% female principals in South Africa and 60% female teachers (TALIS, 2018:2).

2.4 Educational leadership in South Africa

It is significant to understand the history of leadership within South African education. The Research on Socio-Economic Policy (RESEP) explains that gender inequalities are still present within educational leadership in South Africa and globally. According to Wills and Böhmer (2023), gender disparities in the hiring of school principals have been well-documented on a global scale. This is not different in South Africa. Previous studies have shown how underrepresented women are in school leadership roles using South African payroll data and extensive surveys (Wills & Böhmer, 2023:1). Wills and Böhmer (2023) used recent data from the South African anonymous public payroll from 2012 to 2021. The data reveals gender imbalances within educational leadership in South Africa. On a broad scale, we discover that in South Africa in 2021, 70% of teachers were female whereas only 39% of principals were female. In the past ten years, there has hardly been any improvement in the main gender

disparity (Wills & Böhmer, 2023:1). Therefore, it is important to ensure that policy implementation takes place and is monitored for consistency.

Furthermore, Will and Böhmer (2023) reveal that all school leadership levels have gender inequalities, but the principal level has the largest and most enduring imbalances. Seventy percent of all teachers who received public funding in 2021 were female. If women held the same proportion of managerial positions in schools, such as 70%, then gender equality in school promotions would be attained. Sadly, and throughout the past ten years, the South African educational system has remained firmly entrenched in the preferential recruitment of men to managerial roles, particularly principal jobs (Wills & Böhmer, 2023:2).

Moreover, women are more likely to hold middle management positions in educational institutions than senior management positions, which reflects progress toward gender equality in this sector (Wills & Böhmer, 2023:3). Wills and Böhmer (2023) state that although they have improved since 2012, gender disparities in principal appointments in 2021 remained most severe in the wealthiest Quintile 5 schools. In comparison to Quintile 1-3 or even Quintile 4 schools; Quintile 5 schools have a higher proportion of female educators overall. In 2021, there were around 76% of female educators in Quintile 5 schools and 68%–71% of female educators in Quintile 1-3 schools. However, just 29% of Quintile 5 school principals will be female in 2021. In Quintile 5 schools, the gender difference favouring males in principal roles is as high as 47 percentage points, compared to 28–32 percentage points in Quintile 1-3 schools (Wills & Böhmer, 2023:3).

Recent research shows that South Africa is one of the republics who has the most females under-represented within educational leadership positions. Bush et al. (2022) reveal that several articles from various nations and scholars, discuss the low number that females represent in headship roles. The descriptions for the under-representation contain nationwide and local contextual variances as well as some comparisons, but these findings recommend that this could be a continent-wide issue (Bush et al., 2022:10). Furthermore, Bush et al.'s (2022) study shows that there are inhibiting factors that are preventing females from entering into leadership positions. Obstacles on the levels of self-image, organisations, and society all prevent talented women from holding leadership positions in schools. At the self-image level, obstacles like females' continued acceptance of the world as manly, their anxiety of juggling specialised obligations and parental responsibilities, their lack of mentors and role models, their hesitancy to hold positions of power, and their ignorance of organisational values, are all preventing

females from assuming leadership roles (Bush et al., 2022:10).

Additionally, Bush et al.'s (2022) study reveals that cultural issues, such as the belief held by some in culture and religion that women are inferior to men, male prejudice reflecting these beliefs, the socialisation of girls and boys into different roles, and societal expectations, significantly impede women's participation in school leadership (Bush et al., 2022:10). Research shows that female principals are facing challenges not only making it difficult for them to carry out their role but to enter into principal positions as well. Therefore, for this study, the researcher found interest in investigating the experiences of female principals to gather data on what factors negatively and positively impacts their roles and responsibilities.

Furthermore, Bush et al. (2022) list social, organisational, and individual barriers to leadership entry in South Africa. She discusses the professional paths taken by South African female principals who now lead secondary schools. According to her theoretical framework, women face more challenges in the workplace than do men. Social practices both inside and outside of schools are influenced by personal, organisational, and social factors. Central to these interactions is the primary masculine standard of who is better suited for the role of secondary school principal (Bush et al., 2022:11). The issue of gender comes up as Bush et al. (2022) explain that women feel inferior to men. The fact that stereotypes of males being better for leadership positions than females are still present in society today. This highlights the issue of masculinity in educational leadership, where males are more suited for leadership especially in secondary schools (Bush et al., 2022:11).

Regardless of the issue of masculinity in educational leadership, De Bruyn and Mestry (2020) explain that despite having some of the most progressive laws in the world on gender equity, South Africa does not currently have de facto (practices that exist in reality) equality. Equity in school principalships at the national and local levels—despite the de jure (equality is achieved) policy—remains elusive (De Bruyn & Mestry, 2020:2).

According to the Western Cape Government (2020), the deputy principal is responsible for administration of the school as well as finance. They also have duties that include teaching and participating in extra- and co-curricular programmes. Further, they need to manage staff, interact with stakeholders and communicate with parents, departmental officials and sporting and cultural organisations (Western Cape Government, 2020:2-3).

On the other hand, the DBE (2021) explains that the principal is accountable for the entire school. According to the DBE (2021), the principal of the school has eight important areas to guarantee the smooth run of the school. They are as follows:

1. Guiding teaching and learning in the school;
2. Establishing the course and growth of the school;
3. Controlling quality and ensuring accountability;
4. Growing and enabling oneself and others;
5. Leading the school as a whole;
6. Managing the school's human resources (staff);
7. Working with and for the community; and
8. Overseeing and promoting extracurricular activities (DBE, 2021:1).

2.5 Females in leadership positions in the Western Cape

According to Schmidt and Mestry (2015), the teaching profession in South Africa has historically been dominated by women, yet there are still few women in positions of leadership (Schmidt & Mestry, 2015:1). For instance, the figures (2014) from the Gauteng Department of Education discovered that 201 men and 84 women presently hold principal positions in the Johannesburg Central area of the Gauteng Province (Schmidt & Mestry, 2015:1). According to Schmidt and Mestry (2015:1), the majority of men in educational leadership positions carry on to shape South African culture in both primary and secondary schools.

According to Lumby and Azaola (2011:1), gender forms part of one of the categories related to inequalities and inequitable opportunities within a South African context. The Constitution of South Africa indicates that women have equal rights, and it also stipulates equal access to employment and promotion (RSA, 1996b:8). The Bill of Rights (RSA, 1996b:12) assures equal treatment for all citizens, whereas the Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998) assures equal opportunities to employment and promotion irrespective of age, sex and race (Moroosi, 2010:4). Despite such guarantees of equal treatment and equal opportunity between men and women, women do not have an equivalent playing field, and do not benefit from the same opportunity interventions for their career growth (Moroosi, 2010:4). Among the fundamental reasons for gender gap and inequity in their workplaces are, as Moroosi explains, that various laws within South Africa do not address the stereotypes that exist within a workplace in relation to various practices and the discriminations experienced by women. This

in particular causes discrimination against women (Moroosi, 2010:4). With reference to the above, each citizen in South Africa has the right to employment and promotion. However, females remain within the minority within educational leadership positions. It is important to understand why there are gender gaps within leadership which links to the points to follow.

The problem of gender unfairness amongst female leaders in Western schools, according to Schmidt and Mestry (2015), is more of a pandemic. Researchers in South Africa discovered that many South African female principals experience triple oppression—race, class, and gender (Schmidt & Mestry, 2015:1). According to Schimdt and Mestry (2015), South Africa remains to advance the government's conversion agenda despite a lack of evidence regarding its efficacy in advancing gender equality or an open action plan to satisfy democratic and transformative imperatives (Schmidt and Mestry, 2015:1). Despite the "gender equality" initiatives of the post-Apartheid administration, such as the appointment of more women to key management and leadership roles, activists are divided about their effectiveness (Schmidt & Mestry, 2015:1).

Helterbran and Rieg (2004) identify several internal and external challenges that either facilitate or hinder a female's journey in becoming principals. The challenges faced include time and little encouragement to assume leadership roles as females are not equipped with appropriate social activities to make them more comfortable in their role. There is also a lack of female role models as not all females are not willing to avail themselves as mentors to other females entering the principal role. The perceived requirement to be 'better qualified,' as women are expected to put in greater effort to demonstrate that they can handle the rigors of the primary role (Helterbran and Rieg, 2004:2-9). Furthermore, Helterbran and Rieg (2004) explains that it is a generally held belief that women are unable to punish older male students, and that their leadership styles differ because males are thought to discipline more effectively. Other variables include males' dislike of female employees, as well as the preference of some educators, both male and female, for male principals. Some females are also reluctant to relocate and leave their family and friends behind. Lastly, some females lack the desire for power because it is perceived that people in power should be a certain physical size and have a certain personality (Helterbran & Rieg, 2004:2-9).

Research shows that the majority of teachers in South Africa, particularly those who teach at primary schools, are female, but females form a minority in principal positions. Davids (2018) reports that since 1994, "women form 68% of the teaching force in South Africa, and within

primary schools specifically, 36% of women have taken up principal positions in South African schools" (Davids, 2018:1). The data shows that 14 337 of the 119 579 male teachers in the country are principals. However, just 8 210 of the 257 633 female teachers are principals across provinces in South African schools (Davids, 2018:4).

With only 36% of women taking up principal positions in South African primary schools, the TALIS reported that South Africa has gender imbalances within educational leadership (Davids, 2018:1). As the above statistics show, women form the minority within principal positions in South African schools; they are confronted with many issues that disturb their growth and development within their leadership roles. According to Davids (2018), women who rise to positions of leadership encounter several hurdles and demands (Davids, 2018:4). Davids (2018) goes on to say that in South Africa, the demands placed on female principals have fostered in women a motivation not merely to achieve, but also to train themselves to become principals (Davids, 2018:4). Even when women show determination to educate themselves and succeed in becoming principals, the puzzle that needs inquiry is why so few females are in educational leadership positions in South Africa. My research will shed light on this problem by investigating school and family attitudes as factors affecting females and their pursuit into leadership roles.

2.6 Gender disparities in educational leadership

TALIS (2018) explains that it is feasible to assess the extent of gender differences in the teaching profession and in prospects for advancement to leadership positions by examining the gender makeup of the workforces of principals and teachers. In South Africa, only 22% of principals and 60% of teachers are female. This can be compared to other countries where the average percentage of female principals and teachers is 47% and 68%, respectively (TALIS, 2018:2). Thus, there is a big discrepancy within educational leadership when it comes to promotions. If 22% of females are principals in South Africa, this means that 78% of principals are males. In other countries across the globe that participated in the TALIS survey, 47% of the principals are females, which once again indicates that the majority of the principals across the globe and South Africa are males (TALIS, 2018:2).

Therefore, it is important to look at factors from the school and family level that impacts female principals and how they carry out their role. It would also be of great significance to understand different leadership roles and to identify what leadership styles are preferred by male and

female. This will allow for the distinction to be made of which style works best for which situation and setting.

Consequently, the next chapter will discuss attitudes of school and family actors that may have a negative and positive effect on how female principals carry out their roles and responsibilities. As well as discussing leadership styles used and preferred by female and male principals. The theoretical framework associated with the literature of this study will also be outlined as it will be discussed first.

Chapter 3: Literature review

3.1 Introduction

A thorough assessment of the literature is given in this chapter and is divided into several related sections. An historical synopsis of the term "leadership" in South African education is given in the first section. The section also looks at the different definitions of educational leadership, principal, deputy principal, women/female, school, family, attitudes and leadership styles. The second part focuses on instructional and transformational leadership styles, followed by differentiating how females lead compared to male principals. This is followed by gender and power.

Thirdly, this chapter focuses on theories on leadership and key approaches which has four sub-divisions. The first sub-division looks at how female principals empower others. The second sub-division looks at how female principals deal well with conflict in schools. The third sub-division looks at how male principals react to challenges via a democratic approach.

Lastly, attitudes from school and family actors are critically discussed. This section has four sub-divisions, namely: Attitudes from school actors that negatively impact female principals, Attitudes from school actors that positively impact female principals, Attitudes from family actors that negatively impact female principals, and Attitudes from family actors that positively impact female principals. This chapter ends off with a conceptual framework that supports the investigation of this study.

3.2 History of leadership within South African Education

As discussed in Chapter 2, the context, it is imperative to understand the history of leadership within South African education. According to Research on Socio-Economic Policy (RESEP) worldwide and in South Africa, there are still gender disparities in educational leadership (Wills & Böhmer, 2023:1). Further, Wills and Böhmer (2023) explain that, on a global level, gender differences in the hiring of school principals have been well-documented at primary and secondary level. South Africa is not an exception to this. Using South African payroll data and extensive surveys, previous studies demonstrated how underrepresented women are in positions of leadership in educational institutions (Wills & Böhmer, 2023:1). The policy also reported that 39% of principals and 70% of teachers in South Africa in 2021 were female (Wills

& Böhmer, 2023:1).

Additionally, Will and Böhmer (2023) reveal that gender disparities exist at all levels of school leadership, but they are most pronounced and persistent at the principal level. In 2021, women made up 70% of all teachers who received public money. Gender parity in school promotions would be achieved if women occupied the same percentage of executive positions, say 70%. However, for the past ten years, the South African educational system has been strongly established in hiring men over women for managerial positions, especially for principal positions (Wills & Böhmer, 2023:2).

Consequently, in primary and secondary schools, women are more likely to hold middle management roles (Department Head) than senior management ones (Deputy Principal, Principal), reflecting progress toward gender equality in this industry (Wills & Böhmer, 2023:3). According to Van Wyk (2015) a Quintile is the indication of the socio-economic status of the school. Schools are ranked according to poverty of the school community (Van Wyk, 2015: 3-4). Wills and Böhmer (2023) state that the wealthiest Quintile 5 schools continue to have the most pronounced gender discrepancies in principal appointments in 2021, despite improvements from 2012. Schools in Quintile 5 have an overall larger percentage of female teachers than schools in Quintiles 1-3 or even 4. Around 76% of teachers in Quintile 5 schools and 68%–71% of teachers in Quintile 1-3 schools were female in 2021. But, in 2021, only 29% of Quintile 5 school principals were female. In Quintile 5 schools, the gender gap favouring men in leadership positions is as high as 47%, whereas in Quintile 1-3 schools, it is just 28–32% (Wills & Böhmer, 2023:3). The figures show that there are gender disparities within educational leadership across Quintiles. There are more female teachers than female principals. Female principals remain in the minority.

Next, definitions and key concepts such as educational leadership, principal, deputy principal, women, school, family, attitudes and leadership styles are discussed to better understand the factors that influence females in their role as principals.

3.3 Definitions of key concepts: educational leadership, principal, deputy principal, women, school, family, attitudes and leadership styles

To delve deeper into the experiences of female principals in Cape Town, it is crucial to establish a common understanding of the key terms that will shape this research. The following key concepts and definitions provide a framework for exploring the multifaceted roles of educational leaders.

The idea of leadership is framed by the necessity to shape employees' behaviour in an organisation so that they voluntarily work to attain organisational goals (Maree, 2007). To be more specific to females in leadership, Sanchez and Thornton (2010) highlight four key features of successful female leadership: creating a collaborative environment guided by a shared vision, valuing individuals and their contributions, embracing shared power structures, and resisting distractions from the school's core goals. In this way, they confront issues in their roles as educational leaders (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010:7). Connolly et al. (2019) explain that educational leadership is the act of encouraging people to take the appropriate actions to attain goals in educational environments. People who have been given a responsibility behave in a way that fulfils that obligation; this is how they demonstrate their influence and leadership. Although responsible leadership in education is desirable, this does not always imply that the influencer bears responsibility for the way the educational system functions (Connolly et al., 2019:1).

According to Ngcobo (2015), leadership is a characteristic of connections between members who manage the work of diverse people in an organisation to guarantee that the organisation's main aim is met, which in schools is teaching and learning. Leadership may also be understood through the influence it has on people's willingness to work and strive to achieve a school's goals. That is why leadership is so vital; it is through leadership that the school's lifespan and path are provided and realised (Ngcobo, 2015:15). Therefore, it is important to understand what a principal is and to highlight the roles and responsibilities of a principal to gain a better understanding of what their leadership entails.

According to the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996a), a principal is defined as an educator appointed or functioning as the head of a school. A deputy principal also falls within this role and may be defined as an "assistant principal or deputy head; the second position in the bureaucratic structure of the school, and someone delegated

administrative duties by the principal" (Chitamba, 2019:25). Building a shared roadmap for success, the principal, SGB, SMT, and parents join forces to craft a compelling vision, mission, and strategic plan that ignites the passion of all stakeholders invested in the school's progress. The principal also provides direction for the school's future development and, along with the SMT and SGB, is accountable for safeguarding the school's teaching and learning quality (DBE, 2015:15).

The Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2015:3) developed a policy in 2015 called the South African Standard for Principalship (SASP) which articulates the roles and responsibilities of principals. The principal's job and responsibility is to guarantee that all students have the opportunity to participate in relevant and meaningful learning activities. Principals must ensure that the school community has the right to participate actively in the school's activities. Principals are responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect, and that their unique personalities are recognised. It is important that the principal creates a safe and secure learning environment for the entire school community and ensures that all learners' well-being is promoted in the classroom and across the community (DBE, 2015:5-6).

Mikkola (2008:1) explains that one approach for interpreting "woman" is as a sex term that identifies human females based on a variety of biological and anatomical characteristics, such as genitalia. Mikkola (2008:1) adds that many feminists have historically interpreted "woman" in a different way, viewing it as a gender term that is dependent on social and cultural elements rather than as a term for sex (such as social status). By doing this, they set sex (being male or female) apart from gender (being a woman or a man), even if the majority of people who use everyday language seem to confuse the two (Mikkola, 2008:1).

According to the South African Schools Act (SASA), a school is defined as a public or private school that enrols students in one or more grades from grade R to grade twelve (RSA, 1996a). Female principals spend most of their time at school; they are moulded and shaped by the school environment and the people involved, which include teachers, learners and parents. The attitudes of the school as a whole impact a female principal's development and ability to fulfil her leadership roles.

Scabini and Manzi (2011) argue that the family serves as a distinct relational context that exerts a considerable influence on the processing and expression of individual identity. Membership

within a family unit contributes significantly to the construction of one's sense of self. Importantly, the family environment impacts not only the development of an identity as a family member but also the shaping of other facets of the individual's overall identity. Rather than functioning as a passive setting for the emergence of identity, the family actively participates in the personal process of identity formation, particularly during adolescence (Scabini & Manzi, 2011:1).

Meyers (2010:36) defines attitudes as a person's internal evaluation of something or someone, shaped by their beliefs, feelings, and potential actions. Think of it as a mental weighing scale tipping towards favour or disfavour. Furthermore, attitudes are a social orientation – an underlying proclivity to react positively or negatively to something (Meyers, 2010:36). In this study, female principals experienced attitudes from school and family that had an impact on how they led the school and what leadership styles best suited different situations. Female principals carried out their roles and responsibilities according to how they felt and how they were treated. The way in which female principals responded to the attitudes of the school and the family determined how they led the school and cared for their families. Therefore, attitudes may serve as a facilitating or hindering factor for females in principal positions. Leadership styles impact how teaching and learning takes place. Using the correct leadership styles may impact the attitudes of teachers, learners, parents, SMT and the SGB toward females in leadership. There is also a difference between male and female leadership styles. The following styles will be discussed below; instructional and transformational leadership styles.

3.4 Instructional and transformational leadership style

Two important leadership styles are reported in the literature. These include instructional and transformational leadership. Both will be discussed and defined below.

3.4.1 Instructional leadership

At the heart of every school's purpose lies quality teaching and learning. Costello (2015) reminds us that any action taken by a leader to directly enhance this core aim is what we call "instructional leadership" (Costello, 2015:1). Whereas Skaalvik (2020:1) characterises the original instructional leadership concept as a hierarchical approach in which the principal is positioned at the apex. In this model, the principal is viewed as the primary knowledge holder

and decision-maker, exerting significant influence over instructional practices (Skaalvik, 2020:1). The complexity of instructional leadership varies depending on the setting, the members, and personal preferences. The core principles of instructional leadership, according to researchers, are teaching, student achievement and the development of a good teaching and learning environment (Costello, 2015:1). Instructional leadership may be seen as an effective yet efficient style as its focus is on the teaching and learning process. As this is the business of the school, the outcome of teaching and learning is the priority of a leader. Costello (2015) further explains that a challenge principal's face when adopting instructional leadership is the realisation of the demands principals experience on a daily basis (Costello, 2015:1). The academic and behavioural challenges range from WCED demands to teacher and learner challenges. Notably, males prefer this type of leadership style.

The underlying premise of instructional leadership is that leaders ought to closely monitor the actions of educators while they are involved in activities that directly affect the growth of a student (Childers, 2013:27). Standardising instructional practices is intended to raise student achievement. With teachers serving in the function of principals, this leadership model puts principals at the top of the organisational ladder of supporters (Childers, 2013:28). Therefore, adopting this style will enable both male and female principals to make teaching and learning a priority.

3.4.2 Transformational leadership

According to Atsebeha (2016:36-37), transformational leadership entails strengthening, inspiring, and motivating followers to work towards common goals which include an organisation's vision and direction. Each school has a vision and mission that they instil in staff, learners and parents. This will enable them to work together toward achieving one common goal. Furthermore, transformational leadership has four features (Atsebeha, 2016), namely:

- To inspire respect, trust, and confidence in followers; an idealised influence that offers a vision and a feeling of purpose;
- The capacity to inspire personnel to commit to the vision established by their leaders;
- Intellectual stimulation that encourages followers to alter their perception of issues and improves their capacity to address issues; and
- Individualised consideration that provides individualised care to help each person feel valued (Atsebeha, 2016:36-37).

Notwithstanding the ability of a male principal to adapt to the social-behavioural climate within the school, female principals may be more adept at identifying the social nuances and implementing a strategy to proactively handle situations that may arise from this type of leadership style. According to Childers' (2013:26) definition, transformational leadership is a partnership between leaders and followers when a leader sees and takes advantage of an existing need or demand of a potential follower. A transformational leader looks for potential motives in followers, engages the follower as a whole, and makes an effort to satisfy deeper desires. Transformational leadership results in a relationship of reciprocal stimulation and elevation that changes followers into leaders and may even quietly change leaders into moral beings (Childers, 2013:26). Childers (2013:28) demonstrates that due to the principal's status as the foremost authority, there is no other source of leadership in the school; schools thus tend to favour the male dominant approach and overlook a female-structured approach.

Some male principals prefer to deal with one aspect of social issues, or managerial interactions, at a time. Mdluli (2002:21-22) indicates that the male leadership profile emphasises winning and completion as the objectives of leadership. Male principals prefer to approach, unpack and progress through the components of leading others as unrelated and separate elements using an authoritarian style. However, in transactional leadership, the leader "rewards" his subordinates for acting in a certain way (Mdluli, 2002:20) despite the clear divide in the power dynamics of a leader and a follower. In contrast, women, as transformational leaders, demonstrate the ability to delegate and tie together various aspects of a project or undertaking to resolve a bigger problem in an inclusive manner. Mdluli (2002) further asserts that women place a premium on cohesion. They put more effort into developing an integrative culture and climate and are far less individualistic. Female transformational principals are more likely to succeed and advance educational objectives. The so-called feminine leadership style is comparable to the transformational leadership style (Mdluli, 2002:21-22) which unifies all elements of the school as a harmonious network of related components.

To summarise the relevance of why the transformational leadership style is relevant for this study it is because this style focuses on inspiring and motivating staff, building a positive school culture, and fostering a shared vision. From the information above transformational leaders empower their staff, encourage innovation, and create a sense of community. By examining how female principals embody transformational leadership, you can explore their influence on school climate, teacher morale, and overall school improvement.

By focusing on instructional and transformational leadership styles, this study can provide valuable insights into the unique experiences and challenges faced by female principals in Cape Town. This knowledge can inform future research, policy development, and leadership training programs.

3.5 Differentiating how female principals lead compared to male principals

Previous literature reveals that males and females adopt different leadership styles. In this section, a distinction is made between how female and male principals lead. Thus, the vision of a leader is determined by preferences and beliefs backed by experiences and worldviews. The sections above imply that male principals normally implement a vision for the school through a style of leadership that addresses their agenda, which is influenced by their sense of justice and what is socially appropriate as a male. This would typically take the form of what is perceived as being absolutely right and what is strong. Adjacent to this is the vision of a female principal in leading a school and what she believes as being absolutely right, which is influenced by her experiences as a woman and other impactful factors that force her to make decisions based on those experiences and emotions (Nyoni & He, 2019:3).

Another study by Morley and Crossouard (2015) highlights that gendered perceptions affect the authority of female leaders, where they are often expected to lead in a more relational and collaborative style, rather than adopting the authoritative approaches commonly accepted for male leaders. This discrepancy can result in less respect or support for female principals from both male and female subordinates, who may view their leadership style as weak or ineffective (Morley and Crossouard, 2015: 1045).

Nyoni and He (2019:3) indicate that women naturally exhibit traits that make them unsuitable for management, including submissiveness, fear of success, reluctance to take chances, and a lack of managerial abilities. On the contrary, men possess the traits that are necessary for managerial roles, such as aggression, power, competition, self-confidence, and individuality (Nyoni & He, 2019:3). These traits are hypothesised to influence distinct results for men rather than women in managerial roles (Nyoni & He, 2019:3). In comparison, some female school principals seem to naturally possess abilities like collective intelligence, social sensitivity, and empathic precision, all of which are crucial in a classroom setting (De Bruyn & Mestry, 2020:6). These traits also tend to foster a healthier and a non-hostile environment which lends itself to a conducive and innovative teaching and learning experience.

Despite this, a vision cannot be implemented by a female principal because, according to Nyoni and He (2019), top leadership jobs suit men better than women because of their biological makeup and the responsibilities they hold. Nyoni and He (2019) recommend that, in order to accomplish organisational objectives, managers should stay later at work and are not permitted to take time off to look after their families. Additionally, Nyoni and He (2019) argue that cultural gender role standards do not take into account women's responsibilities of taking care of their children and their families, unlike male leaders who do not have the same levels of family responsibilities (Nyoni & He, 2019:4). The domestic responsibility placed on females discourages females from entering into principal positions. It also has a negative impact on how female principals carry out their roles and responsibilities.

In summary, Nyoni and He (2019:3) believe that women are not suited to principal positions due to their family responsibilities which put stress on female leaders. Therefore, gender imbalances exist within educational leadership as females are expected to undertake domestic roles resulting in females being overworked and stressed. Therefore, females may be reluctant to apply for leadership positions. This causes imbalances in numbers between males and females in leadership positions. Therefore, gender and power within educational leadership can explain why females face attitudes from actors from both the school and family levels that impacts their roles as principals.

3.6 Gender and power

Ngcobo (2015) explains that both imbalances and inequities are reflected by gender and power. Furthermore, if authority is understood to be legitimate, the dominant axis of the gendered power system is the association of authority with masculinity. Because men are regarded as superior to women, men are given first preference when it comes to promotions. The inferior status of females therefore impedes their climb up the leadership and management ladder in educational organisations (Ngcobo, 2015:16).

Ngcobo (2015) also claims that a democratic view of power implies that one can get decisive authority by delegating it to the leader. In addition, power dynamics and connections to educational institutions not only support male dominance in educational administration, but they also prevent many women from achieving leadership roles, males tend to prefer other males for primary positions because of their dominance in leadership jobs (Ngcobo, 2015:12) as both males and females prefer to be led by males therefore males are more likely to be given

the authority and the power to lead schools.

Moreover, Eagly and Karau (2002) argue that leadership roles have historically been tied to masculine qualities like assertiveness and control, which are often incongruent with societal expectations for women (Eagly and Karau, 2002 :575). According to Eagly and Karau (2002) female leaders experience a double bind: they are perceived as less competent if they conform to stereotypically feminine qualities (e.g., being nurturing), yet if they adopt traditionally masculine behaviours, they are seen as unfeminine or overly aggressive. This incongruity can lead to diminished support and respect from staff and other stakeholders in schools (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Next, gendered approaches on leadership are discussed as these provide context on how females and males lead.

3.7 Gendered Approaches to Leadership and Empowerment in Educational Settings

This section discusses the approaches female principals take to empower others as well as the different strategies female and male principals use to empower staff, manage conflict, and lead within the school environment. It also sets up a comparison that emphasises how gender influences leadership styles.

Due to female principals' nurturing quality, they support teachers in teaching and learning. Through the involvement of department heads, female principals address problems that are faced by teachers, while supporting and empowering them at the same time. Emanuel (2018:72) reveals that the ability to empower people comes from the leader's willingness to build trust and connections with others, giving others the chance to take initiatives and having faith in their capabilities and potential while enhancing, fortifying, and encouraging them (Emanuel 2018).

Female principals experience and face many challenges in school operations that shape their leadership approach when dealing with the school and the staff, particularly when addressing conflict among staff members. Kgomo (2006:4) states that "conflict is not necessarily bad, but when it leads to a deterioration of collaboration, trust, and loyalty among the employees" it becomes harmful. Moreover, Kgomo's (2006:6) study explains that female principals tend to be better at conflict resolution because they are sensitive to personality clashes, perceptive about potential issues, and diligent in upholding connections inside the organisations.

This approach allows a female principal to maintain a healthy staff atmosphere, which will support a healthy morale among staff members. This will also translate into a healthy and positive approach to teaching and will ultimately benefit the learner as they will have enthusiastic educators who work together. However, in such situations male principals tend to take a democratic approach (Kgomo, 2006:6-7).

Allie (2014) conveys that one participating male principal explained that he described himself as having a "democratic" leadership style, in large part, because he encouraged his workers to voice their thoughts openly. However, he was still of the opinion that the principal's voice was the only one in the institution that would be heard and respected without challenge (Allie, 2014:90-91). Male leadership is a fusion of democratic and authoritarian styles. Although the principal acknowledges the importance of employee input, masculine principalship gives legitimacy and totalitarian power to the principal's "voice" in his capacity as the institution's head. As a result, the principal's point of view always takes precedence (Allie, 2014:90-91). Emanuel (2018) notes that change is inevitable with staff and the student body and that leadership is about the links and connections formed with other people. Therefore, leadership is a collaborative process that occurs in a group as they respond to one another (Emanuel, 2018:12). Additionally, Emanuel (2018) states that this relationship is beneficial for both the leader and the followers (Emanuel, 2018:12). This means that, in a single vision, bonds formed in collaboration give rise to the ongoing commitment to achieving goals, guided by a leader.

3.8 Attitudes and attitudinal factors

Attitudes are a social orientation – an underlying proclivity to react positively or negatively to something (Meyers, 2010:36). Attitudes play a vital role in shaping female leaders in education. Meyers (2010:36) describes attitudes as a person's favourable or unfavourable evaluative response to something or someone, established in one's beliefs, feelings, or intended behaviour. In this study, female principals experienced attitudes from school and family actors that had an impact on how they led the school and the leadership styles that best suited different situations. Female principals carried out their roles and responsibilities according to how they felt and how they were treated. The way in which female principals responded to the attitudes they were faced with at school and from the family actors determined how they led the school and cared for their families. Therefore, attitudes may serve as a facilitating or hindering factor for females in principal positions.

As mentioned earlier in the study attitudinal factors toward female principals can be understood as beliefs, biases, stereotypes, and expectations that shape how people perceive and respond to women in leadership roles (Eagly and Karau, 2002: 573-598). In the context of educational leadership, these attitudes often stem from deeply embedded cultural and social norms that associate leadership qualities with masculinity (Eagly and Karau, 2002: 573-598). Attitudinal factors can be explicit (openly discriminatory or dismissive behaviours) or implicit (unconscious biases that influence judgments about competency and authority) according to Heilman, (2012: 113-135).

Two key attitudes that the literature refers to are specific to the school and family actors. The negative and positive impact of each attitude is discussed below, as it relates to female principals.

3.8.1 Attitudes from school actors that negatively impact female principals

According to the South African Schools Act (SASA), a school is defined as a public or private school that enrols students in one or more grades from grade R to grade twelve (RSA, 1996a). Female principals are moulded and shaped by the school environment and the people involved, which include teachers, learners and parents. According to the DBE (2015:15), the roles and responsibilities of a principal, along with the SMT and SGB, include safeguarding the school's teaching and learning quality by developing and implementing a shared vision, mission, and strategic plan that will provide direction for the school's future development (DBE, 2015:15).

Sanchez and Thornton (2010:6) state that "expansions of scale, decentralisation, and increasing autonomy of schools are making the business of running schools more complex and principals are being asked to do the impossible". This includes a lack of support from the WCED. The expectations and high demands from the WCED shows that both male and female principals are working in stressful conditions (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010:6).

School factors have direct and indirect effects on student achievements. School aspects include: quantity and quality of instruction, the availability of learning opportunities, the climate of the school, the policies responsible for guiding teaching and learning, and the school learning environment (Creemers & Kyriakides, 2009:3). In order for teaching and learning to take place, the school environment must ensure that learners and staff feel safe within clean classrooms.

Another school factor that impacts females in their role is the fact that secondary schools prefer

male principals. According to Sinyosi and Potokri (2021), secondary schools tend to favour men in leadership positions because they are regarded as more adept at relating to students, whereas female principals are more prevalent in South African elementary schools (Department of Education, 2008; Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021:4). Sinyosi and Potokri's (2021) study was conducted within the Gauteng Province. Their research reveals that females who entered into leadership positions resigned from the post due to social, individual and work related barriers (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021:4). Sinyosi and Potokri (2021) further explain that factors such as "backbiting, jealousy and rejection of authority by pupils, parents and colleagues, a lack of support from colleagues, a lack of role models, and discrimination, ended up in female principals becoming irritated and resigning as a result" (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021:4). This indicates that school factors that arise from teachers, learners and parents may facilitate or hinder the female principals' ability to carry out their leadership role. These factors are discussed in more detail below.

This study argues that school factors significantly influence student achievement, particularly for female principals in South Africa. The argument suggests that factors such as gender bias can hinder the effectiveness of female leaders, ultimately impacting student outcomes.

3.8.1.1 Attitudes of teachers

Male and female teachers show resistance and display negative attitudes towards female principals. Older female teachers may challenge younger female principals by asking insulting questions such as: "Who do you think you are?" and "We've never had to work with a woman as a boss before!" (Maime, 2011:44). Further, male teachers may ignore female principals and question their leadership as they still believe that leading and managing are men's jobs. Male teachers also become reluctant to cooperate with female leaders and therefore make it difficult for females to fulfil their leadership role (Maime, 2011:44). These negative attitudes impact how females fulfil their duties as principals and may cause female principals to become inactive or aggressive at work (Maime, 2011:44). Moreover, the study of De Bruyn and Mestry (2020) indicate that principals, male or female will receive disrespect from teachers if they are not one step ahead in terms of accurate and sufficient knowledge acquisition. Therefore, principals need to be prepared for any circumstance or challenge that may arise by attending the necessary workshops and by completing online courses (De Bruyn and Mestry, 2020: 4).

Furthermore, Sinyosi and Potokri (2021:45) contend that when female co-workers are chosen

for leadership roles, some staff members fail to embrace them. Sinyosi and Potokri (2021) assert that women may encounter a lack of acceptance from co-workers at work. When a female administrator is in charge, female instructors frequently refuse to follow their directions, while some male teachers think a female is incapable of delivering effective orders. A lack of community support is typically the result of this circumstance (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021:45). Additionally, Sinyosi and Potokri (2021:45) reveal that both males and females resist taking instructions from female principals. These attitudes make it difficult for females to carry out their leadership role.

3.8.1.2 Attitudes of learners

Faulkner (2015:8) reveals that female principals at schools do not receive respect from the learners, especially from young male learners who display patronising attitudes towards females, which further influences young girls to disrespect the female principal of the school. Additionally, aggressive and unruly behaviour of learners can negatively affect the way principals lead the school. The learners' negative attitudes impact on discipline, the functioning of the school and the teaching and learning process. Therefore, discipline issues prevent the principals from fulfilling their roles. According to Ng'ambi (2015:35), "principals are primarily teachers that share in educating learners to the highest academic achievement possible." Therefore, it is the duty of the principal to make sure that learners are receiving the curricular instruction. However, it becomes challenging for female principals to assist learners in realising their full potential, if they encounter aggressive and unruly behaviour from learners.

Moreover, De Bruyn and Mestrys' (2020) studies indicate that learner attitudes can significantly impact the roles and effectiveness of female principals in educational settings. These attitudes, shaped by cultural and societal biases, often challenge female principals by undermining their authority and fostering resistance among students, who may view male leadership as more authoritative. Such biases reinforce the perception that women are more suitable for nurturing roles rather than managerial or leadership ones, creating a barrier for female principals who must continually assert their legitimacy and capability as leaders (De Bruyn & Mestry, 2020:1-9).

Furthermore, female principals experience challenges such as learners with negative attitudes. This make it difficult for female principals to carry out their role due to issues such as learners arriving late for school, high learner absenteeism and learners showing resistance to learn

(Sinyosi and Potokri, 2021:8). These factors have a big impact on the teaching and learning process as it may cause disciplinary problems. This is a key worry for female principals as it is their job to ensure that effective teaching and learning is taking place.

3.8.1.3 Attitudes of parents

The attitudes from the learners may be related to the attitudes from the parents. As Kgomo (2006) reveals that in schools where female principals face student expectations shaped by traditional gender norms. These biases are sometimes exacerbated by the broader school community, which includes parents, and other community members. Female principals often employ resilience strategies and adaptive conflict-resolution techniques to foster a positive environment, yet they frequently encounter challenges related to parents' skepticism or reluctance to respect female authority figures. The need for systemic support is essential in helping female leaders counteract these attitudes and establish a collaborative and respectful learning environment (Kgomo, 2006:1).

Maime (2011:45) explains that parents show resistance to female principals as they believe it is a man's job to lead the school. Parents display negative attitudes by disrespecting the demands of a female principal. Parents do not cooperate, by not paying school fees and not attend school meetings (Maime, 2011:45). Further, conflict with female principals may also be caused in the workplace due to parents' negative attitudes. Negative complaints are lodged by parents with district offices when minor incidents happen at school. Female principals feel that this could be resolved at school instead of taking it to the district (Schmidt, 2014:9). This is an indication that parents want to have a say in management and feel that they are entitled to their opinion. Some parents feel that a male would lead the school better than a female (Maime, 2011:45).

Moreover, Sinyosi and Potokri (2021:8) describes how the negative attitudes from the parent's impact female's ability to carry out their leadership role. According to Sinyosi and Potokri (2021:8) "parents do the worse by shifting blames of their learners' failure on them". Parents are their child's first teacher. If parents are going to disrespect the principal, the child will do the same. The principal will lose respect from the parent and learner at the same time. These negative attitudes make it difficult for female principals to ensure effective teaching and learning is taking place.

3.8.1.4 Sexist and discriminatory attitudes

Beyond biological categorisation, Maime (2011:18-19) argues that gender encompasses a dynamic web of assumptions and beliefs shaping individual and societal experiences. These ingrained notions influence our thoughts, feelings, behaviours, access to resources, and even how we are treated, impacting both women and men at personal and community levels. The experiences of female principals are examined through the perspective of gender in this study. There are low numbers of females in principal positions due to gender inequalities in material resources, power, and status (Ridgeway, 2011:1). This thesis takes the position that gender inequalities exist in leadership positions, as women find it difficult to enter and fulfil principal positions because they are faced with negative attitudes from the school actors.

Sexism, bias and discrimination hinder females from entering and fulfilling leadership positions. Females face sexist comments and behaviour from their co-workers that discourage them (Avgeri, 2015:29). Davids (2018) also discovered that negative bias, sexist generalisations, and stereotypes continue to obstruct female principals' ability to effectively carry out their tasks and obligations in South African schools (Davids, 2018:5). However, Schmidt (2014:9) reports that female principals attend workshops, maintain professional networks and read materials relevant to their work to overcome negative biases and stereotypes. Despite this, "discrimination still exists in terms of salary, benefits, recruitment, hiring, and promotion" (Schmidt, 2014:9).

According to Sanchez and Thornton (2010:3),

> "women principals tend to be hired more frequently at the elementary level, while women superintendents are relegated to less desirable districts that are either small and rural or urban and troubled. These difficulties merely scratch the surface of the inequities that impact women in educational leadership, yet the perception persists that women have achieved equity".

The fact that male executives dominate the profession, and frequently make hiring decisions, may contribute to the persistence of disparities in educational leadership (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010:3). The discrimination of hiring and promoting women into leadership roles is still present today as we find that there are more male than female principals. According to Sanchez and Thornton (2010), women in educational leadership positions must contend with demanding work schedules and low pay in addition to role conflicts that arise when they change jobs. They

observed how administration roles took a physical and psychological toll on female leaders (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010:6). Similar to this, the heavy job demands of the female principal include poor wages and "a systemic structure, which includes a dominant time structure around which all workers are expected to organise their lives" (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010:6).

Adams and Hambright's (2004) research on teacher leadership programs revealed that educators' passion for teaching often clashed with their desire for leadership roles. Concerns about navigating challenging interactions with parents, additional time commitments, and the stress of high-stakes accountability measures, echoed by Sanchez and Thornton (2010:7), particularly low salaries amidst increased pressure to meet standardised benchmarks, contributed to teachers' reservations towards leadership positions. Additionally, "expansions of scale, decentralization, and increasing autonomy of schools are making the business of running schools more complex and principals are being asked to do the impossible" (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010:7). While it's understandable to acknowledge the challenges women face in educational leadership positions, framing it solely as a matter of balancing work and family obligations can be seen as perpetuating traditional gender roles and overlooking systemic issues.

3.8.2 Attitudes from school actors that positively impact female principals

As mentioned above attitudes from the school actors may have a direct impact on the teaching and learning outcome of the school. Therefore, it is important to have supportive leadership, management and staff to ensure that the school achieve effective and efficient teaching and learning. Additionally, when female principals adopt a mentor it is in the best interest of the schools achievements. When a principal adopts a mentor they are able to get the necessary support enabling them to carry out their leadership role effectively.

3.8.2.1 Supportive leadership, management and staff

Leadership is a facilitating and enabling factor. Allyship of leaders to advance to positions of power and authority is crucial for disadvantaged, marginalised, and underrepresented groups (Ngcobo, 2015:6). Therefore, a principal needs support from teaching staff, SMTs, admin teams, HODs and circuit managers. Further, Ngcobo (2015) defined leadership as a characteristic of member interactions that coordinate the activities of individuals within an organisation to achieve organisational goals (Ngcobo, 2015:6). This requires good

communication between the principal, as the leader, management, staff and the circuit manager and that all parties have the same understanding of what good teaching and learning entails.

The findings of this study note that specific leader figures, such as the SMT, emerge as enabling factors. Ngcobo (2012:6) explains that leadership influences employees' behaviour in the workplace to voluntarily endeavour to achieve organisational goals. This plays a role in supporting and enabling female principals. This is very similar to the writings of Sanchez and Thornton's (2010) demonstration of female leaders working in a cooperative environment.

Sanchez and Thornton (2010:7) show that female leaders in education often (a) build teams and work together towards a shared goal; (b) treat everyone with respect and value their ideas; (c) share power and responsibility; and (d) stand up for what's right, even if it's tough. These leadership styles can create a positive and effective school environment for everyone. Therefore, in creating this cooperative environment, female principals enable positive attitudes from staff members, and this makes the role of the principal easier.

3.8.2.2 The benefits of having a mentor

Yirci and Kocabas (2010:2) describe a mentor as someone who "helps you to improve your effectiveness in a certain field, shows you how to become an expert in a profession and teaches you how to develop your skills." The authors identified that having a mentor as a novice or senior female principal will help the principal to delegate. According to Goldring et al. (2018), and the programme for a principal supervisor which was launched in 2014, assists districts in changing a position that had previously been assigned to administration, operations, and compliance, into one focused on training and assisting principals to enhance instruction in schools (Goldring et al., 2018:11). Goldring et al. (2018) explain that the programme aims to improve principal performance and boost student learning and accomplishment by upgrading teaching standards. Effective leaders are critical for teacher satisfaction, teacher retention, school atmosphere, parent engagement, and student progress.

Goldring et al. (2018) assert that the principal supervisor initiative includes:

- Leadership focus: shifting supervisors' focus from managerial duties to supporting instructional leadership within schools;

- Work optimisation: they propose reducing supervisors' workload and ensuring strategic assignment to principals for effective support;

- Capacity building: investing in supervisor training and development is central to the initiative;

- Succession planning: ensuring a continuous supply of qualified future leaders is crucial for long-term sustainability;

- Central office support: strong central office structures are needed to sustain the implementation of the revised supervisor role (Goldring et al., 2018:11).

Yirci and Kocabas (2010:2) explain that a school's success or failure depends on the principal which is why novice principals need to be trained and guided through proper mentorship. Yirci and Kocabas (2010:2) add that "mentoring is a remarkable model which aims to combine theory with practice in principal training. It develops beginner principals with the help of a senior principal's support and supervision in a real school environment". A mentor assists and supports the principals in their decision making and the way they lead the schools.

Yirci and Kocabas (2010:2) state that

> "A mentor's role has two aspects. First, one is to supply career development opportunities such as coaching, providing challenging assignments, sponsoring advancement, and fostering the mentee's visibility. Second, mentors provide psychosocial support such as counselling support and role modelling. Without a mentor, an individual will learn less, more slowly or not at all."

Thus, a mentor helps principals develop in their career and personally by giving advice on educational, work or personal matters. Mentorship may aid in supporting female principals personally and professionally within the workplace. With the help and support from the mentor principals will become upskilled and receive positive attitudes from school actors. This will particularly help female principals delegate their role.

3.8.3 Attitudes from family actors that negatively impact female principals

Family isn't just a bunch of people living together; it's a unique environment that shapes who we are, says Scabini and Manzi (2011). Being part of a family influences how we see ourselves

not just as family members but also in other ways. It's not just a backdrop for our identity; it actively shapes it, especially during our teenage years (Scabini and Manzi, 2011:1).

Ndebele (2018:1596) explains that females must balance work and their role as a mother which may be viewed as a restriction. The value systems, attitudes, ideologies, theories, and conceptions that make up our culture are therefore expressed through discourses that are utilised by specific people at specific periods. The traditional expectation that women should be responsible for raising the family may prevent them from holding leadership roles (Ndebele, 2018:1596). According to Ndebele (2018:1596), due to the twin demands of management and family duties, women do not feel qualified to occupy high positions in education. Balancing work and family can be stressful and may have a negative impact on how female principals carry out their work role and maintain relationships with their family.

Ngcobo (2015:2) explains that females are perceived to be mothers, wives, caregivers and nurturers. As a result, they were not given opportunities to become female leaders in education as it was perceived that it was a man's job and women were expected to be stay-at-home mothers/caregivers. Helterbran and Rieg (2004:8) suggest that family and home responsibilities are barriers that constrain women from pursuing leadership roles such as being a principal. Family factors include partnerships between parents and teachers that improve family life, and the role of religion in influencing family and educational dynamics (Jeynes, 2009:1). Thus, attitudes from family actors that both hinder and facilitate female principals in their roles are discussed below.

Additionally, Lumby and Azaola (2014:3) assert that mothers are more involved in parenting than fathers. Because women are seen to be the main caregivers in the families, they may dedicate less effort and time to their leadership role. As a result, in order to fulfil the leadership prototype, women must move outside of the accepted definition of what it means to be a woman (Lumby & Azaola, 2014:3). As this may cause additional stress, anxiety and pressure, female principals therefore need the support from their families in order to be leaders.

3.8.3.1 Attitudes of husbands

Maime (2011) stresses that the attitude and support from husbands play a vital role in shaping female principals. Support from husbands may assist females in delivering their leadership duties or it may cause stress due to their inability to carry out the duties of being both wives

and principals (Maime, 2011:29). However, household obligations are not shared equally so females need to balance work and family life (Maime, 2011:29). A lack of support from husbands may also have an impact on how they carry out their roles and responsibilities within the workplace.

Robinson et al. (2017) provide statistics of married women in principal positions. The statistics include the percentage of women in principal positions who receive and do not receive support from their husbands. According to Robinson et al. (2017), 56% of single women and 36% of married or cohabiting women had switched supervisory roles. In order to support them in new principal positions, 26% of married women principals stated that their spouse or partner moved and 18% stated that their spouse changed occupations. For 20% of married women principals, spouses reported cutting back on their work hours to make room for their partner's position, and 10% had left their jobs altogether (Robinson et al., 2017:6). These statistics may indicate that married or cohabitation may restrict female principals from their work and/or family options.

3.8.3.2 Attitudes of family

Family duties have an impact on females' career aspirations in educational leadership (Avgeri, 2015:28). This may decrease females' desires to enter into leadership roles. Makgoka (2016:31) explains that "family attachments, pregnancy and childbirth" are hindrances to females' pursuit of principal positions. Makgoka (2016) also reveals that studies in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Greece show that females do not advance into leadership roles due to family attachments. These are examples of negative attitudes toward female principals. This is one of the reasons that females are under-represented in principal positions within South Africa and globally (Makgoka, 2016:32). Moreover, Makgoka (2016) highlights that, in contrast to single women principals, married participants acknowledged that their marital status was a hindrance to their jobs. Because of gender norms, husbands are unwilling to help their wives share household duties (Makgoka, 2016:32).

3.8.3.3 Gender-stereotypical attitudes

As the primary caregiver of their children, female principals who spend time at work, are perceived in a gender-stereotypical way as neglecting their families (Helterbran & Rieg, 2004:8). Even though this may be seen as a negative attitude towards female principals, it is a

sacrifice that they are willing to make to achieve their goals. Female principals are also seen as more "hard-working" and "power hungry" when they are in leadership positions but are able to work and be mothers and wives (Adams & Hambright, 2004:3). Makgoka (2016) reveals that men are seen as "public holders of power," whereas African and Arab women are thought of as "baby manufacturers and therefore must remain at home, women belong in the kitchen, and women cannot lead," among many other myths (Makgoka, 2016:41). These gender-stereotypical attitudes hinder women from aspiring to principal positions and make it difficult for female principals to carry out their existing roles.

3.8.4 Attitudes from family actors that positively impact female principals

As mentioned above it can be stressful to balance work and family responsibilities when in a leadership position. Therefore, positive attitudes and continuous support from family actors play an important role in allowing female principals to be confident in their role. It also makes it easier for females to carry out their leadership role

3.8.4.1 Attitudes of children, parents and extended family

A positive attitude of and support from children, parents and extended family allow female principals to succeed in their work (Maime, 2011:29). According to Maime (2011:29), female principals are supported by their families through counsel, encouragement, and the sharing of household responsibilities, allowing them to work long hours at their schools and attend after-hours meetings and workshops. This study found that the participants had supportive family members that included husbands, children and extended family that helped them to carry out their roles stress free.

On the basis of family factors and attitudes, Sinyosi and Potokri (2021) explain that female principals need marital support and acceptability by the family to perform their leadership duties successfully (Sinyosi & Potokri, 2021:45) and to cope with unforeseen circumstances that may arise from work. The family needs to understand the principal's role and support their career choice, which will make this process less stressful.

3.9 Conceptual framework

This section provides a summary of the conceptual framework that guided this study. The conceptual framework was designed from the literature review. Figure 3.1 is a visual illustration of the conceptual framework. As discussed in Chapter 1, this study examined how female principals experience attitudes from both the school and family actors and how this impacts their role.

In defining leadership, the ability to supervise the work of a varied group of people in an organisation to ensure that its primary goal – teaching and learning in schools – is accomplished, is known as leadership. Another way to understand leadership is to look at how it affects people's willingness to put in the effort and work necessary to meet the objectives of a school (Ngcobo, 2015:15; Cordeiro & Cunningham, 2013:139). Thus, it is the principal's duty to ensure that the school's mission and vision, which is to create a safe teaching and learning environment, is achieved.

Figure 3.1 shows that the main unit of this study was female principals. The first block below illustrates the role of the leader and describes leadership. It also indicates the negative and positive factors influencing how female principals lead, based on attitudes from the school and family actors. School and family attitudes are highlighted in the two blocks that follow as they

play an important role in how female principals carry out their roles and responsibilities.

The two blocks below the main figure illustrate the attitudes female principals experience that impact their leadership role. Female principals experience attitudes at both school and family levels. The school encompasses attitudes from teachers, learners, parents, SMT and the SGB whereas the family encompasses attitudes from husbands/partners, children, parents and extended family. These attitudes can either have a negative or positive impact on principals. A negative impact means that female principals are not able to delegate and complete tasks without feeling pressured or stressed while a positive attitude from the school and family makes the role of the principal easier as they feel supported.

Leadership
- The life and direction of the school are given and realised via leadership (Ngcobo, 2015:15).
- Leadership is a characteristic of connections between members who manage the work of diverse people in a school (Ngcobo, 2015:15).
- Factors that influence leadership are attitudes from school and family actor's.

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Attitudes from school actors

(i.e.teachers, learners, parents, SMT and the SGB)
- Support from co-workers including encouragement and motivation.

Attitudes from family actors

(i.e.husbands/partners, children, parents and extended family)
- Females are seen as the primary caregiver to their children.

↔

Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework

3.10 Summary of Chapter 3

This chapter provides a comprehensive framework for the study, exploring the complex interplay of leadership, gender, and school-level and family-level factors. It begins by tracing the historical evolution of leadership in South African education and defining key concepts. The chapter then delves into leadership styles, focusing on instructional and transformational leadership, and examines gender differences in leadership approaches. It also explores female leadership empowerment, and conflict resolution strategies. Finally, the chapter analyses the impact of attitudes from both school and family actors on female principals, identifying both negative and positive influences. By the end of this chapter, readers will have a solid understanding of the framework that underpins the study, as well as the specific challenges and opportunities faced by female principals in South Africa

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The focus of this section is on how the data was collected and analysed based on the main objective of this dissertation which was to discover female experiences of attitudes from the school and family actors that impacted their role as a principal. This also included the exploration of the negative and positive impacts of these factors on how female principals carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Chapter four firstly describes the use of the critical science and interpretive paradigm and includes an outline of the ontological and epistemological premises that guided this research. A qualitative and case study approach was used and is described in detail below. This section also draws on the sample and site of this study. Thereafter, the method of data collection, data analysis and transcription is discussed. Additionally, the chapter's conclusion lists the study's limitations and ethical issues.

The goal of the methodology was to answer the research question: What are the attitudes from school and family actors that impact females in their role as principals?

4.2 Research philosophy

According to Belcher et al. (2016), with a focus on context and social involvement, research increasingly aims to produce knowledge and contribute to practical solutions. Traditional academic definitions and standards of excellence for research are insufficient as disciplinary boundaries are blurred and research interacts more with stakeholders in complex systems (Belcher et al., 2016:1). Further, Belcher et al. (2016) state that, in the fields of social and environmental research, achieving "impact" is highly valued. In addition to producing new knowledge, research initiatives and programmes seek to encourage and use that knowledge to support innovation, enable change, and address issues (Belcher et al., 2016:1-2). Moreover, Kim (2003) explains that to research and find knowledge is a time-consuming procedure. Because of this, academics and researchers use a variety of paradigms to pursue knowledge (Kim, 2003:1). According to Kim (2003), the three main research paradigms are positivism, critical science and interpretivism (Kim, 2003:1).

According to Kim (2003), the foundation of positivism is the idea that social occasions are governed by universal rules, and that, by identifying these laws, researchers can describe, predict, and manage social phenomena (Kim, 2003:2). On the other hand, Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) explain that the philosophical viewpoint of natural scientists who work with the visible reality of society and draw generalisations is called positivism. Positivism emphasises the importance of the information that is normally offered by considering objective facts and data that are unaffected by prejudice or human interpretation (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020:4). Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) explain that, when researchers adopt positivism, according to epistemology, the research would focus on discovering noticeable and quantifiable facts or consistencies. Additionally, to facilitate the development of law-life generalisations, the investigator would search to create causal connections among the evidence acquired (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020:4).

However, there are a few things to consider when choosing the positivist paradigm. Alharahsheh and Pius (2020:4) state that generalisations in the research may cause people's intentions to be ignored and their behaviours to go unexplored and misunderstood. Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) also state that descriptive study results and the status quo are essential components of positivist thought. As a result, it could be challenging for researchers to

comprehend complex issues more deeply so that they can include them into their work (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020:4). This may be a hindrance for researchers who want to gain further insight into their subject under study. For this study, the researcher made use of the interpretive paradigm because in-depth information about female principals' experiences was explored through interactive questions. Therefore, positivism was not suitable for this study because lived experiences of female principals were collected through in-depth interviews.

With regards to interpretivism, Kim (2003) reveals that knowledge is made up of several sets of interpretations that are a product of the social and cultural setting in which it is experienced. Therefore, according to interpretive researchers, there should be a discretion in the way that researchers maintain or use their ideas about those being questioned or observed as well as an understanding of those being investigated (Kim, 2003:13). Kim (2003) also states that researchers who want to generalise their conclusions frequently face substantial obstacles due to the very contextual and subjective nature of interpretative research findings. What holds true in one circumstance or setting might not be true in another (Kim, 2003:13). As a result, the participants in this study were chosen purposely so that there was a variation of growth, development and context.

Furthermore, Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) explain that, interpretivism prioritises understanding the *subjective* experiences and interpretations of individuals within a specific context, rather than trying to measure and generalise about them like physical phenomena. It delves into the *meanings* individuals attach to their experiences and the social interactions that shape their understanding of the world (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020:4). In this research study, the questions asked in the interviews were based on the participants' context within school and within the family. For example, one question was: *How has your family commitments impacted your role as a principal?* On answering a question like this, the participants responded by creating context and in-depth detail of their family commitments.

Alharahsheh and Pius (2020:4) claim that interpretivism takes into account the various factors – cultures, historical contexts, and times – that have contributed to the emergence of social realities. Therefore, this study considered that each participant's circumstances would be different. Even though they are all female principals, their growth and development all took place at different times and in different contexts. Alharahsheh and Pius further (2020:4-5) explain that, in comparison to positivism, which attempts to provide clear, worldwide laws that

can be generalised, interpretivism seeks to integrate richness in the insights acquired. In this study, the researcher did not generalise based on female principals only as many of the experiences of female principals, are also faced by male principals. For example, male principals may also experience having to deal with unruly and aggressive learners or having to deal with difficult parents or SGB members at school.

Interpretivism also has its own critiques, according to Alharahsheh and Pius (2020:5), as it rejects data generated as a foundational basis shared as a universal law, questions its validity, and calls for standards other than those used in the positivist paradigm (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020:5). In the process of making sense of the knowledge received from the participants, the researcher considered the entire experience of the female principal before analysing the information, but also noted that this study was part of a personal interest of the researcher but this did not influence the type of questions the researcher asked or how the study was developed.

The critical science paradigm, on the other hand, argues that, in order for people to take action to correct injustices, researchers should take responsibility for social change (Kim, 2003:2-5). Through the experiences shared in this study by female principals, the researcher found that there are gender imbalances within educational leadership. The study also highlights the underrepresentation of females within educational leadership. Therefore, this study identified disparities within education leadership by studying the experiences of female principals which hopefully will lead to social justice and change.

Kim (2003:2-5) reveals that critical scientists maintain that positivist approaches are unable to capture the crucial role in understanding what is required to enhance human conditions. Therefore, this study also adopted the critical science paradigm to understand how attitudes from school and family actors impact females' abilities to carry out their role as principal. With this understanding, an awareness of what positively or negatively impacts females or the principal's role, in general, was also created.

Kim (2003:2-5) also explains that a critical scientist questions whether businesses truly care about enabling individuals to realise their potential while pursuing humanistic goals. As stated in Chapter 5, one of the challenges females faced in this study was the need for a mentor. Therefore, this research aimed to investigate this among other key factors.

4.3 Design

4.3.1 Research approach-qualitative

According to Asenahabi (2019), a researcher's plan to accomplish the research objective is known as the research design which is adopted before data collection begins. At the lowest feasible cost, research design aims to transform a research problem into data for analysis utilising research questions and answers (Asenahabi, 2019:1). There are two core categories of research designs, namely, qualitative and quantitative research designs. Quantitative researchers contend that qualitative research is anecdotal, unscientific, and biased on the investigator's viewpoint, whereas qualitative researchers believe that human behaviour cannot be turned and measured into statistics (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014:2). Qualitative research on the other hand is founded on an interpretive paradigm which seeks to interpret the world from the perspectives of individuals; as such, it is nomothetic, anti-positivist, voluntaristic and ideographic (Cohen et al., 2007:40). This study used an interpretive paradigm to gain insight into the participants' lives, and to understand them from within, to ensure the integrity of the phenomenon was retained (Cohen et al., 2007:40). In addition to empirical materials, case studies, personal experiences, introspection, life story interviews, and observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts that describe daily routines that make meaning in people's lives, qualitative research includes the collection of these empirical materials (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014:2). For this study, I used a qualitative research design with semi-structured interviews to gain information situated in a case study approach.

Further, Mohajan (2018:1) explains that due to the fact that qualitative research is inductive in nature, the researcher usually looks into meanings and insights in a particular situation. Mohajan (2018:1) describes qualitative research as a method used for gathering data and analysing it while making use of open-ended, semi-structured interviews and purposeful sampling. Furthermore, Mohajan (2018:1) reports that a qualitative research design is a successful model that takes place in a natural environment and allows the researcher to produce a level of detail through intense and genuine participation. To gather appropriate results for this study, the researcher adopted the qualitative design to explore the experiences of female principals through semi-structured interviews. Qualitative research also provided in-depth detail of enabling and constraining factors experienced by female principals.

In addition to this, Mohajan (2018:1) claims that, through the study of specific people or

locations, qualitative research offers unique opportunities to understand the human side of social life. By listening to people's stories, observing their interactions, and interpreting their meanings, we can gain deeper insights into the complexities of social life and the experiences that shape human behaviour. This study collected data from female principals about how the attitudes of school and family actors impact their role in a social setting, which is the school and family environment. Mohajan (2018) adds that qualitative research involves examining the experiences, meanings, and relationships of individuals as well as the social processes and contextual factors that define a group of individuals. Further, qualitative research looks at local knowledge and understanding of a specific programme (Mohajan, 2018:1). Thus, qualitative research initiated the investigation of the lives and experiences of female principals and the impact the attitudes from school and family actors have on the ability of females to carry out their role as principal.

4.4 Research strategy

For this study, a case study approach was used. Building on Starman's definition (2013), a case study goes beyond simply describing an example. It's an intricate exploration of a specific instance, uncovering its unique attributes and the research journey that led to those insights. This in-depth analysis allows for deeper understanding and potential application of the findings to similar situations (Starman, 2013:31). Case studies are beneficial because they are linear but iterative, requiring a logical design, pre-defined data gathering methodologies, and predetermined data analysis methods (Yin, 2009:1-2). Through these methods and techniques, the researcher may find answers to questions that might start with "how", "why" or "where" (Yin, 2009:3). Yin (2009:2) distinguishes four case study designs: single case designs, embedded single case designs, holistic multiple-case designs, and embedded multiple-case designs. This study used the holistic multiple-case design because it included three female principals. A holistic multiple-case study design is a type of replication that is used to figure out the elements that lead to successful outcomes in one example but not in another (Yin, 2009:2).

Case study research has contributed much to what we currently know about the empirical world. Case studies are widely used in the social sciences, and they have been shown to be especially helpful in practice-oriented fields including (social work, business, education, and public administration) (Starman, 2013:29). Starman (2013:30) explains that, regardless of the

fact that case studies are regularly believed of as an element of qualitative research and methodology, case studies may be quantitative or feature a blend of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Thus, for this study, a case study was used to explore the experiences of female principals in their workplaces, and how attitudes from school and family actors impacted their roles. This study aimed to gather rich information on how the attitudes of school and family actors negatively and positively impacted the role of a principal by analysing what was discovered and by describing the impact of all events experienced by each participant.

4.5 Sampling of participants

According to Gentles (2016:11), to accomplish the goals of the research, data are gathered by sampling, which is the selection of particular data sources and the act, practice, or method of choosing a representative portion of a population in order to establish its dimensions or features. Probability and non-probability sampling are the most common forms of sampling. For this qualitative study, a non-probability sampling technique was used. Non-probability sampling is defined by Vehovar et al. (2016:2) as a departure from probability sampling procedures in which units with uncertain probabilities are included. Those specific to qualitative research include: selective, snowball, purposive, convenience, theoretical and within-case sampling (Elo et al., 2014:4). For this study, convenience and purposive sampling were used.

Firstly, convenience sampling selects readily available individuals as study participants in an iterative process until the desired sample size is reached (Cohen et al., 2007:656-657). On this basis, all participants were conveniently chosen in close proximity to the researcher to make it easier to gather data. Second, Elo et al. (2014) explain that purposive sampling is appropriate for qualitative research when the researcher is looking for informants with the most expertise on the subject. When using purposeful sampling, decisions about what or who is sampled, how the sampling should be conducted, and how many people or locations need to be sampled must all be made (Elo et al., 2014:4). The researcher decided that, for this study, female principals would be sampled as they were the best candidates to investigate the impact attitudes from school and family actors have on their ability to delegate their roles and responsibilities, and that they best represented the criteria of this study.

The key unit of analysis was female principals. In this study, three principals participated, of

which one is a deputy principal. According to the Western Cape Government (2020), deputy principals are responsible for administration of the school as well as finance. They also have duties that include teaching and participating in extra- and co-curricular programmes. In addition to this, they also manage staff, interact with stakeholders and communicate with parents, departmental officials and sporting and cultural organisations (Western Cape Government, 2020:2-3).

Thus, the researcher intentionally and conveniently chose three female principals as the researcher had a gatekeeper to two of the participants in this study, and the third participant was easily accessible in terms of meeting for the semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Of the three principals selected, all three principals work within the Metro Central Education District; two principals are at a primary school and one at a high school. Additionally, two principals are from Quintile 1 schools, and the other from a Quintile 5 school. See Table 4.1 below for more details on the selected sample.

Table 4.1: Participants' demographics

Participants	Race	Sex	Experience as Deputy	Experience as principal	Qualification	School
Participant A	Coloured	Female	8 years	13 years	Teaching Diploma	School A

Participant B	Coloured	Female	0 years	15 years	Teaching Diploma	School B
Participant C	Black	Female	6 years	1 year	Teaching Diploma	School C

4.5.1 Background of research site and research participants

The study sample constituted of two principals and one deputy principal. The inclusion criteria were that: the participants are female and in a principal position with different personal growth and development backgrounds. Three diverse schools from Quintile 1 and 5, located in different settings, were included in this study.

The principals chosen were as follows:

Participant A – School A

Participant B – School B

Participant C – School C

Participant A

Participant A is the current principal of School A. She obtained her teaching diploma from CPUT and a Management and Leadership Diploma from UCT. She started teaching in 1995 in Langa at School W, and was promoted to HOD in 1998, and Deputy Principal in 2002. She started as a principal in 2010 at High School X until March 2018 when she started as principal at School A in April 2018.

According to WCED (2021), School A is within the Metro Central Education District in Circuit 5. It is a secondary school and its language of learning and teaching (LOLT) is English. It is a Quintile 5 school and has 17 classrooms, three science laboratories, 10 specialists, one computer room, and one library. The school had 348 learners for the year 2021, with 56 in grade 8, 55 in grade 9, 61 in grade 10, 84 in grade 11, and 92 in grade 12 (WCED, 2021).

Participant B

Participant B is the current principal of School B. She obtained her teaching diploma in 1988 and immediately started teaching grades 2 and 3 in 1989 at School Y in Mitchells Plain. She moved on to be principal at School Z from 2008 until 2018. She became the first female principal at School B in 2019 (MH Magazine, 2016:1).

According to WCED (2021), School B is situated within the Metro Central Education District in Circuit 2. It is a primary school and its LOLT is English. It is a Quintile 5 school and has 26 classrooms, one science laboratory, one specialist, one workshop room, one computer room, and one library. It had a total of learners 792 males and females for the year 2021. There were 71 students in grade R, 98 students in grade 1, 106 students in grade 2, 102 students in grade 3, 107 students in grade 4, 104 students in grade 5, 100 students in grade 6, and 106 students in grade 7 (WCED, 2021:1-2).

Participant C

Participant C is the deputy principal at School C. She achieved a senior primary teacher's diploma along with a higher diploma in education in 1990. She has a BTech in management and was acting principal at School C for one year in 2018. She began working as a deputy principal in 2017 and has spent the last five years as the deputy principal at School C.

According to WCED (2021), School C is situated within the Metro Central Education District in Circuit 2. It is a no-fee primary school and its LOLTs are isiXhosa and English. It is a quintile 1 school and has 19 classrooms with no computer room, library or science laboratory. For the year 2021, it had a total of 634 male and female students enrolled; 45 students were in grade R, 85 students were in grade 1, 75 students were in grade 2, 79 students were in grade 3, 75 students in grade 4, 87 students in grade 5, 100 students in grade 6, and 88 students in grade 7.

4.6 Data collection procedure

For this study, I did face-to-face interviews that lasted 40-60 minutes. Enough data was gathered in the first interview, and therefore it was not necessary for a follow up interview. Each participant was contacted via telephone requesting their participation for this study.

Thereafter, all three participants agreed to take part in this study by responding to the telephone message that was sent. After this, they received an email with information about the study. The researcher then sent out a message presenting a date, time and place to meet for the face-to-face interview. Once again, all three participants agreed to the date, time and place. Each participant was interviewed in the comfort of their own space at their place of work. Only the interviewee and interviewer was present within this space. The researcher described to the participants that this was a voluntary research study, and that if they felt uncomfortable during the interview, they may withdraw at any time. Each participant was also informed that if the questions made them feel uncomfortable in any way, they may ask to stop and help will be provided if participants experienced any discomfort within the interview. Participants were informed that at the end of the research study they would receive a copy of this dissertation.

4.7 Data collection method

As described earlier, this study aimed to explore the experiences of female principals and the impact attitudes from school and family actors have on their ability to delegate their roles. An interview was selected as the best way to determine this. According to Damons (2008:8), an interview is "a planned engagement between two or more persons who speak, converse, and negotiate for a specified goal related with some agreed-upon subject matter." The goal of an interview is to "collect data, such as in surveys or experimental circumstances, sample respondents' perspectives, and evaluate or analyse a person in some way" (Cohen et al., 2007:371).

There are many types of interviews such as: semi-structured, structured, group, and focus interviews (Cohen et al., 2007:371). For the purposes of this research, a semi-structured approach was utilised. According to Kobori et al. (2008), semi-structured interviews are done with a somewhat open framework and a flexible method, allowing for focused conversational two-way contact to examine broad viewpoints or opinions in more depth. Although they are often predetermined, questions can be reworded and rearranged for more explanation if they are not entirely planned and decided upon beforehand (Kobori et al., 2008:9). Additionally, Kobori et al. (2008) explain that semi-structured interviews help the interviewer and the interviewee feel at ease. A set of open-ended questions in an interview script is used to direct the conversation. The interviewer may ask additional questions for clarity (Kobori et al., 2008:9). As questions were asked in the interviews, additional questions arose and were asked.

All three participants responded and interacted in the interviews comfortably. The responses received were related to the study and the participants had similar views about their experiences.

Furthermore, "semi-structured interviews are used, for example, in studies exploring reactions, views and impacts" (Kobori et al., 2008:11). This study explored the principals' views about their experiences of attitudes from the school and family actors. The reactions in the interviews indicated that the attitudes from the school and family have an impact on how principals carry out their roles and responsibilities. Attitudes from the school and family actors were both enabling and constraining for all participants in this study. As this research sought to understand the experiences specifically of female principals, the researcher created an interview schedule that consisted of five sections, namely, biographical questions; motivations and beliefs; school factors; family factors, and future aspirations. The researcher started the interviews with seven biographical questions. Similarities were found amongst all three participants within areas of qualifications, age and number of years in education. Additionally, three questions were asked about the participants' motivations and beliefs as a female principal. School factors consisted of five questions and family factors of four. Lastly, future aspirations consisted of two questions and one question related to giving aspiring principals advice.

Lastly, all semi-structured interviews were recorded on my cell phone and via Zoom, because this assisted with the thorough recording of the principals' responses. The interview schedule may be viewed in Appendix C for further details about the questions that were asked in the interview.

4.8 Data analysis

The analysis method is discussed in this section. A general inductive method for analysing qualitative data is outlined along with the procedures and underlying assumptions (Thomas, 2003). The application of an inductive approach in qualitative research serves three primary objectives: to condense and clarify extensive raw text data, to establish a direct connection between study aims and drawn conclusions, and to formulate a model or hypothesis regarding the inherent structure of experiences or processes evident in the raw data (Thomas, 2003:1). As such, the general inductive approach presents a practical and effective method for qualitative data analysis (Thomas, 2003:1).

This study opted for the thematic analysis method, which encompasses six distinct stages: 1) familiarisation with the data, 2) generation of initial codes, 3) identification of themes, 4) review and refinement of themes, 5) definitive naming and characterisation of themes, and 6) synthesis of findings into a comprehensive report (Braun & Clarke et al., 2017:23).

Gaining familiarity is a means of interacting with and learning from what may seem like an overwhelming volume of data. Being thoroughly engaged with the data on an intimate level are key components of familiarisation (Braun & Clarke et al., 2017:23). To familiarise the data gathered, I split the data into two parts. I made two tables for each participant and two tables for each sub-question to divide the data. The first table included the first sub-question which focused on negative attitudes from school actors and the second table included positive attitudes from school actors. For the second sub-question, the first table included the negative attitudes from family actors and the second table included the positive attitudes from family actors.

Braun and Clarke et al. (2017) claim that the methodical and comprehensive process of assigning significant labels to particular dataset segments is known as coding (Braun & Clarke et al., 2017:26). For this study, each participant's responses were coded in two tables. I had six tables with data in total. The two codes used were "negative attitudes" and "positive attitudes". The data were categorised in either of the above two codes.

The familiarisation and coding process leads helps build the themes (Braun & Clarke et al., 2017:26-27). Braun and Clarke et al. (2017) explain that the active process of identifying and forming patterns is referred to as "constructing themes". This is guided by the research question, which identifies possible clusters of patterned meaning (Braun & Clarke et al., 2017:26-27). The researcher used the above six tables to find themes for further investigation. The themes were reviewed based on the research inquiry and the information found. The themes were then named and defined and a report was created from the information gathered within each table. Creating a report refers to the writing process where the researcher links the research from the literature review to the data (Braun & Clarke et al., 2017:31). This is a detailed report of the findings presented in Chapter 5 of this study.

Over and above this, the Gioia approach (Pederzini, 2018) was used to evaluate the data in two stages. Firstly, a first-order analysis of open coding was performed in order to identify themes and patterns in the experiences of the participants and their events (Pederzini, 2018:8). The

results of this first-order analysis were used to create a historical descriptive narrative of how interviewees characterised their experiences with family and school factors over the two time periods under investigation. The first-order analysis organised the data to make it ready for a second round of coding that was now directed towards the research question (Pederzini, 2018:8). Pederzini (2018) explains that the second-order process requires "comparison of one's data to a developing model emerging from analysis" because it primarily focuses on identifying and developing the appropriate theory to explain the first-order findings (Pederzini, 2018:8). As a result of the themes emerging, a descriptive narrative was provided in Chapter 5 to explain the experiences of female principals.

Secondly, the researcher focused on the research questions and investigated comparisons within the participants' responses to the questions. Many similarities and views about how the attitudes from school and family impact females' ability to carry out their principal role were found.

4.9 Trustworthiness

Gunawan (2015) explains that trustworthiness is when a study can only be considered reliable if the reader of the research finds it to be so (Gunawan, 2015:10). To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, I focused on credibility, dependability, and transferability. To ensure maximum trustworthiness, the researcher made use of triangulation, as well. Stahl and King (2020:1) explain that "triangulation means using several sources of information from the field to repeatedly establish identifiable patterns". In Chapter 3, a literature review was carried out to substantiate the data gathered for this study. Patterns and links were made not only amongst the participants' responses but also linking their responses to the literature. Furthermore, triangulation reduces the researcher's bias (Gunawan, 2015:10) to ensure that this study was grounded in existing research rather than the researcher's beliefs. Therefore, I achieved this by researching recent studies relating to the data gathered.

4.9.1 Credibility

In this research, the researcher upheld credibility by consulting fellow researchers about the data to pinpoint anything that was inappropriate for this study. Additionally, the researcher ensured that all interviews were conducted face to face in each participant's working environment. This ensured that the data gathered were correct and accurate but also assisted

the researcher in linking the responses of the participant to their actual working environment. According to Stahl and King (2020), credibility is something that the reporter and the following reader constructs. The question of "How congruent are the findings with reality?" is one of credibility (Stahl & King, 2020:2). The researcher thoroughly exposed herself to the unit of analysis in order to assure the validity of the data. Due to the length of the study's duration and the researcher's position, ample time was spent conversing with both the participants and the phenomenon itself. The use of semi-structured interviews, which allowed the researcher to delve deeper, and did not limit participant responses on a topic or opinion under study, further assisted the collection of extensive data. Together, the measures contributed to a thorough grasp of the unit of analysis, which helped the researcher comprehend and interpret the data.

4.9.2 Dependability

According to Aung and Ramli (2018), the reliability of data, as opposed to condition and time, is known as dependability. This means that, despite a comparable context, the data are true at any moment and under any circumstance, and they can be applied to the same individual. However, the other party may also use the research as a reference point for reliability. In this study, the data was also submitted and discussed with the expert, other known as my research supervisor, to ensure the reliability of the research and its findings (Aung & Ramli, 2018:1). As a result, recording the interviews for this study aided in the study's dependability which also guarantees the reader that the researcher did not falsify any information for this study. Further, Stahl and King (2020) state that dependability, or the confidence in trustworthiness, is a third viewpoint on trustworthiness. Researchers develop confidence in the unfolding occurrences (Stahl & King, 2020:2). In this study, the researcher trusts the findings discovered and further has confidence in the data produced during the data gathering process.

4.9.3 Transferability

According to Aung and Ramli (2018), the ability to use the results of the research in a different context is known as transferability. It is the duty of the researcher to provide sufficient information to verify the research's applicability. Audio recordings of the interviews were made to ensure the research's transferability. The researcher listened to the recorded audio and transcribed its content in order to collect the data (Aung & Ramli, 2018:1). To attain transferability, I used a case study technique to gain a better understanding of the culture and

environment in which female principal's work. Stahl and King (2020) reveal that, given the design of qualitative research, qualitative research cannot (and does not) strive towards replicability; thus, transferability may be challenging. Theoretically, though, patterns and descriptions from one setting may be transferable to another (Stahl & King, 2020:2). As a result, the researcher maintained transferability through confirming the data with literature found by other scholars and researchers about the phenomenon under investigation.

4.10 The researcher's position

"Positionality" encompasses the individual's perspective and approach towards a study task, influenced by their underlying worldview and assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology), knowledge (epistemology), and human interaction with the environment (human nature and agency). This includes personal beliefs about what can be known about the social world and how people relate to it, shaping the researcher's starting point and potentially influencing their findings (Holmes, 2020:1).

In this study, the researcher's interest in the topic came from her position within her workplace. The researcher is a female educator aspiring into educational leadership. As an educator, acting HOD, researcher, mother and wife, I also faced many challenges related to attitudes from the school and family that played an integral part in the shaping and development of aspiring to be a female leader. Even though I am not in a principal position, I observed what it takes to become a female principal. This intrigued me and hence my interest in this study.

Additionally, this study was driven by my personal as well as professional interest in leadership inequalities in South African schools. As an educator, I am exposed to a school environment every day. As a result, this created context to understand the data gathered for this study. Drawing from my own experience as a teacher with an interest in educational leadership, while currently focused on teaching, emphasises Mohajan's (2018:22) point about the importance of rigorous methodology in research. The author advocate for research models situated in natural environments, enabling deep understanding through active participation in real-world events. To avoid bias, this study has been checked by two supervisors, working in different areas in education. It has also been discussed with scholars and peers of different interests. Therefore, I investigated the experiences of women in leadership positions to understand how the attitudes from the school and family actors impact the ability of a female to carry out their role as principal.

4.11 Ethical considerations

Ethics may be defined as a subject of moral attention to others' rights, and that "truth is good, but respect for human dignity is greater" (Cohen et al., 2007:70). This study upheld three ethical principles: anonymity, confidentiality and justice. According to Mertens (2010:342), individual privacy is safeguarded by ensuring that the data supplied are managed and disclosed in such a way that it cannot be traced to the individual. Confidentiality means that the data has no uniquely identifiable information linked to it, and that no one, including the researcher, can link the data to the person offering it (Mertens, 2010:342). Justice simply means researchers must be aware of the social justice implications of their research and give proper credit to the role of research in advancing the interests of those who are oppressed or disenfranchised (Mertens, 2010:342).

In this study, the female participants' identities were protected by not disclosing their names and their schools names but rather identifying them by codes such as Participant A, B, and C and School A, B and C.

Further, the research proposal was submitted to the Cape Peninsula University of Technology's Ethics and Higher Degrees Committees for ethical clearance in accordance with the University's research ethical regulations. Ethical clearance was granted ensuring that the study method respects the human subjects' rights and does not hurt them in any way. This clearance was received from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. After this, the researcher applied and received permission from the Western Cape Department of Education in order to approach the intended schools and participants.

Additionally, participants were provided with detailed information sheets describing the study, interview schedules, and consent forms to ensure informed participation (these documents may be viewed in Appendix A, B and C for further details). The information sheets were given to the participants for clarity about the topic. Interview schedules also provided guidance as to how the interviews would take place and what was expected of them as participants. The consent form ensured they were comfortable with the interview process and the data being collected. The consent form contains a commitment to concealing the identities of each

participant and protecting the data collected. They were made aware of their right to voluntarily participate and leave the study at any time.

As a researcher, I also pledged to preserve the rights of the participants and the institution by making sure that nobody would suffer any harm, whether it be to their reputation or otherwise, as a result of this study. Therefore, during the data collection and analysis for this study, the researcher took the required precautions and commitments to uphold the informants' privacy, confidentiality, and general research ethical norms.

The risk of harm was carefully addressed and explained to each participant. According to Sim and Waterfield (2019), the risk of harm refers to the psychological and social harm that may arise from breaking the agreement of confidentiality and anonymity. For instance, information that is given to the researcher by the participant may be revealed and may lead to "embarrassment, shame, stigmatisation, discrimination, disruption of existing social relationships, or adverse employment consequences, and in some cases, participants may face legal action as a result of information that is made public" (Sim & Waterfield, 2019:9). For this study, each participant was informed about the above risk of harm. All participants understood the risk of harm and voluntarily agreed to participate. With this said, participants were informed that the data gathered were strictly for research purposes and that it would go through many processes and people, and that the research may be published. Therefore, it was important to express the importance of using codes when referring to participants or schools, while analysing the data. The researcher informed the participants that they would not receive an incentive for participating in this study, but that they would receive feedback about the outcome of the study. Additionally, participants were aware of the interviews and transcripts that would be uploaded to a secured account on the CPUT database. They were also informed that the data will be stored in a secured database and that only the researcher has access to the files via a protected password. Once again, participants understood and agreed to the above.

4.12 Limitations of the study

Simon and Goes (2013) define limitations as uncontrollable factors inherent to any study, restricting its scope and potentially impacting findings and conclusions. This inherent uncertainty is why terms like "prove" and "disprove" are avoided in research. Future research

could always cast doubt on the accuracy of any theory or finding from a previous study (Simon & Goes, 2013:1). As this study made use of a case study approach, one limitation would be that the findings gathered may or may not be found in similar situations. Therefore, this study made use of extensive literature to back up data found and to investigate the gaps within the study. The participants are also from the same working environment which may lead to recommendations for ongoing research.

One more limitation for this study was the time factor as analysing and interpreting a large amount of data is time consuming. The researcher needs to be involved during the analysis and interpretation of the data. Therefore, enough time needs to be put aside for this process to ensure that the outcome of the data analysis is not affected.

Another limitation could be the population of this study. This study had three participants, two from a quintile 1 school and the other from quintile 5 school. It could be argued that a bigger sample would have enabled a more definite ending to the outcome of the study.

4.13 Conclusion

The methods used to gather and analyse data for the study were covered in this chapter. Additionally, the chapter covered the methods used to choose participants, methods used for gathering data, and analysis techniques. Relevant ethical principles were described, and methods used to guarantee validity and dependability were also covered. Trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and the study's limitations were discussed.

In the next chapter, the results of the one-on-one interviews are presented, and they provide an answer to the research question: What are the attitudes from the school and family actor's that impact females in their role as principals.

Chapter 5: Findings and discussion

5.1 Introduction

Guided by the chosen research methods, this chapter presents the study's key findings. It explores the diverse attitudinal factors, both positive and negative, that female principals encounter from school and family actors, as revealed through in-depth interviews with three principals. The main research question was:

What are the attitudes of actors including teachers, learner, and families etc. that impact females in their role as principals?

The sub-questions were:

1. How do female principals experience the positive and negative attitudes of school actors (principals/school leaders, teachers, learners, parents and SGBs) in their current role as principal?
2. How do female principals experience the positive and negative attitudes of family actors (husband/partner, children and extended family) in their current role as principal?

Based on the aim of this research, which was to gain insight into the attitudes of female principals and their experiences from the school and family levels, the principals reported on attitudes specifically in relation to the following individuals: principals/school leaders, teachers, learners, parents and SGBs that had a positive or negative impact on their ability to carry out their roles and responsibilities as a female principal. In addition, the principals reported on attitudes with regards to their husband/partners, children and extended family that also either had a positive or negative impact on their ability to carry out their roles and responsibilities as a female principal.

The following themes emerged during data analysis and are discussed below:

1. Female principals' experiences about negative attitudes from the school level that impact on their role as principal.
2. Female principals' experiences about positive attitudes from the school level that impact their role as principal.
3. Female principals' experiences about negative attitudes from the family level that

impact their role as principal.

4. Female principals' experiences about positive attitudes from the family level that impact their role as principal.

All findings below are based on the principals' perspectives using verbatim quotes. The three principals are identified as Participant A, B and C.

5.2 Description of the three principals who participated

This study included three female principals. One principal was a deputy principal from a quintile 1 school and other two principals were from a quintile 5 school: two being a primary school and the other a high school. The total number of learners varies between 300 and 800 learners per school and the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) is English at all three schools, although one of the schools also has isiXhosa as an LOLT. The three principals reported different sets of qualifications. Participant A has a higher education diploma, as well as an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), a leadership and management diploma and a diploma in leadership. Participant B holds a higher education qualification, as well as an ACE leadership and management diploma and a postgraduate leadership diploma. Participant C holds a teaching certificate that includes a higher diploma in education as well as a Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) in management. The length of time spent as a principal varied from one year to ten years. Participant A has 14 years of experience as a principal and 20 years of teaching experience, including four years as a Head of Department. Participant B has 11 years of experience as a principal and nine years of teaching experience, including three years as a Head of Department. Participant C has one year of experience as a principal, seven years as a deputy principal, and 22 years of teaching experience, including 13 years as a Head of Department. The experiences of each participant differed depending on the school they attended. Participant A worked at three different schools, Participant B at seven schools, and Participant C at two schools. The age range of the principals were between 45 and 60 years.

5.3 Theme 1: Female principals' experiences about negative attitudes from the school level that impacts their role

As discussed in the literature review, attitudes play a role in a female principal's experiences and their ability to carry out their roles and responsibilities. The principal ensures that teaching and learning takes place in a safe setting. However, attitudes from school actors that arise from teachers, learners and parents may have a direct effect on females entering into and having leadership positions. Females thus experience a range of obstacles at school that may be demanding and stressful while balancing work obligations (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010:6).

This section explores the negative attitudes from school actors that impact female principals in their current role. They include factors such as a lack of professional support from WCED, negative attitudes from teachers, learners, parents and the SGB, including unfairness within the recruitment and promoting process of principals.

5.3.1 Unrealistic support from the WCED that negatively impacts on the ability of female principals to carry out their role

Based on the perspectives and experiences shared by the principals, the demands from the WCED impacts principals' ability to do their work. Instead of spending time outside the school grounds, they became office-bound. This was particularly with regards to the amount of pressure and demands to actively manage the school as a whole rather than being able to also perform their duty as a principal. Participant A specifically stated that the unrealistic support due to perceived attitudes and expectations from the WCED negatively impacted their ability to carry out their work. This is shown in the following excerpt:

Participant A

> "*But I do feel that, as a norm, the WCED doesn't even necessarily support principals. Such as principals being killed with compliance issues; you become almost office bound, instead of being out on the school premises. So the WCED has unfortunately become compliance driven, and is subtlety threatened if you don't comply; we are going to charge you.*"

The quote above indicates that this principal is expected to comply with office duties, such as admin, instead of being actively involved in the classroom or general discipline of staff or

learners. Not only are they not receiving the necessary support they are also "*being killed with compliance issues.*" Participant A indicates that these types of pressures prevent them from carrying out their roles and responsibilities as principals such as being actively involved in the school. Instead, they have become office bound, meaning that they have so much admin and stress from the WCED that they are unable to leave their offices.

According to the DBE (2015:15), the roles and responsibilities of a principal, along with the SMT and SGB, are to safeguard the school's teaching and learning quality. This is done by developing and implementing a shared vision, mission, and strategic plan that will inspire and motivate everyone who works in and with the school and provides direction for the school's future development (DBE, 2015:15). These demands and responsibilities however make it difficult for a principal to carry out her role.

Additionally, Sanchez and Thornton (2010:6) state that the "expansions of scale, decentralisation, and increasing autonomy of schools are making the business of running schools more complex and principals are being asked to do the impossible". For the principals to play a meaningful role in terms of duties such as instructional leadership, they need to have less bureaucratic compliance and excessive administration. Therefore, Sanchez and Thornton's (2010) work may be closely related to the quote above for the reason that principals are "*being killed with compliance*" (quote from Participant A) and cannot carry out their roles and responsibilities. The expectations and high demands from the WCED prevents and limits the ability of principals to play meaningful educational roles in the school, including supporting the instructional project of the school. This may be the case for all principals, not only female principals.

5.3.2 School level staff have unrealistic expectations of female principals

As stated above, principals have a responsibility to manage a school, therefore teachers must also carry out their roles to teach. During the interviews, the participants were asked what factors at school level make it difficult to carry out their role as a female principal. Both Participants A and B stressed the fact that teachers have high expectations of them and varying degrees of negative attitudes towards them. In the quotes below, Participant A felt that teachers expected a lot from the principal. In addition, Participant B felt that teachers often neglected their roles by expecting principals to teach. According to both participants, these high expectations negatively impacted their ability to carry out their role as principal. The following

quotes by Participants A and B elaborate on this further:

Participant A

"Expectations: they expect you to know every policy verbatim or to have answers for everything. They also expect you to be sensitive toward their needs but not taking into account that I also have needs."

Participant B

"My teachers, also there's more expectations of me, because sometimes my teachers just throw their hands up in the air and expect management to do something. Now the teacher was to put the kid out of class and say go to the office, you know, that type of thing? Yes. So that, for me, that expectation of me having to deal with everything."

It is evident that Participant A was feeling frustrated, as teachers have expectations that do not always seem realistic. Participant A implied that, even though she is the principal of the school, she is also human, and she needs to ensure that the entire business of the school runs smoothly. Even though it is the principal's role to know school or departmental policies, it is however unrealistic to expect the principal to know everything or to have answers to everything. Thus, these expectations and attitudes towards a principal may have an impact on how they carry out their roles and responsibilities. Participant A made it clear that, even though she is in a leadership position, she does not have the answers to everything. However, in a leadership position, principals may seek counsel to meet the expectations of teachers in the scope of the school and their leadership.

On the other hand, it is evident in the quote above that Participant B felt stressed and overwhelmed by the fact that she had to step into the teacher's role and deal with issues that may be resolved within the classroom. When changing roles, Sanchez and Thornton (2010:6) note that women in educational leadership positions must also contend with demanding job expectations. Female leaders who accepted administrative jobs experienced physical and emotional demands (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010:6).

Principals are also faced with having to step into many roles that have an impact on their primary role. For instance, Participant B had to deal with discipline issues even though teachers

could solve these issues. Therefore, according to Sanchez and Thornton (2010), high expectations may result in female principals being overworked and stressed (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010:6). On top of that, "expansions of scale, decentralization, and increasing autonomy of schools are making the business of running schools more complex and principals are being asked to do the impossible" (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010:6). Therefore, high expectations may negatively impact female principals' ability to carry out their roles. Participants A and B were both feeling frustrated, stressed, alone, isolated, and overworked as a result of the previous sub-theme's lack of support from WCED. They also believed that teachers were asking too much of them.

5.3.3 Negative attitudes from male teachers that impact females in their current role as principal

The biggest challenge female principal's face is not competence, but the patriarchal attitudes that male teachers have, which is reflective of particular societal and cultural factors that feel that females don't have a role to play. Participants A and C felt that they did not receive the necessary respect from male teachers. Both participants expressed that teacher's negative views and attitudes make it difficult for them to carry out their role, especially given that they are female. Male teachers find it difficult to take instruction from a female, therefore the attitudes of the male teachers may impact how female principals carry out their roles and responsibilities. Principals A and C further show this below:

Participant A:

> "*It's difficult sometimes to work along with some men, it was very difficult for them to take instruction from a female.*"

Participant C

> "*It is difficult to give instruction to old males, but when you give instruction to the young ones, they value your experience.*"

Both participants found it difficult as a female leader to give instructions to a male. Participant A felt that it is difficult to work with men in general and give them instructions whereas Participant C felt that it was difficult to instruct an older male compared to younger males. The quotes above show the aspect of gender inequality, which may be referred to as an ordinal

ladder among men and women in material resources, power, and status (Ridgeway, 2011:1). In the views of Participants A and C, it is evident that males' views of females in these positions are negative. It is also evident in the first quote that males in general did not respect the status and the power of the female principal. In the second quote, the participant experienced disrespect from older males. This type of behaviour discourages females in their role as principal and affects how they lead the school and delegate duties.

Sinyosi and Potokri (2021:45) contend that, when female co-workers are chosen for leadership roles, some staff members fail to embrace them. Steyn (2015) asserts that women may encounter a lack of acceptance from co-workers. Male teachers may refuse to follow directions or orders from a female administrator. As a result, these situations provide difficulties for women in leadership. The work of Sinyosi and Potokri (2021) and others resonates with the quotes above as both participants found it difficult to work alongside men. Steyn (2015) adds that both males and females resist taking instructions from female principals. These types of attitudes from male or female staff makes it difficult for females to carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Ngcobo (2015) explains that both imbalances and inequities are reflected by gender and power. If authority is understood to be legitimate, we can infer that the dominant axis of the gendered power system is the association of authority with masculinity. It is assumed that men are given preference for promotions. The inferior status of females therefore impedes their ascent up the leadership and management ladder in educational institutions resulting in men excluding women from performing managerial tasks (Ngcobo, 2015:16).

5.3.4 Lack of passion, professionalism and enthusiasm from teachers to deliver the curriculum

As seen above, female principals have trouble giving instruction to male staff. In addition to this, female principals also experience working with teachers who lack the passion and enthusiasm to teach and deliver the curriculum. This may have a negative impact on the school's success based on the attitudes they show and express. There may be various reasons why teachers may be lacking passion or enthusiasm to deliver the curriculum. This may be due to a lack of content knowledge or skills, personal matters or just a reluctance to work. Even though this issue may be a challenge for both male and female principals, this study focused on the experiences of female principals. Participants B and C express that teachers lacking the

passion and enthusiasm to teach make it difficult to carry out their role as principal. This is shown below:

Participant B

"*Sometimes what also makes it difficult is, like I say, the attendance of people, the reluctance to participate in extra-mural activities and things like just the overall professionalism, enthusiasm, the wanting to be at the school and to be part of the growth.*"

Participant C

"*Teachers don't have that vibe, that passion, that passion to deliver that curriculum, because around that curriculum, there are committees. And you find out these things. They've got nothing to do with a child's teaching and learning. It's just systems and structures that are needed by the department, but the core business is to teach those learners.*"

Participant B raises a very important aspect, that of professionalism. Part of becoming a teacher includes an oath to teach the youth of today and to prepare them for tomorrow. Teachers should aim to develop good, respectful and knowledgeable human beings. To achieve this, teachers have to model behaviour that is professional. Participant B experienced working with teachers who lacked professionalism and enthusiasm and were reluctant based on their negative attitude to attend and participate in extra-mural activities and to be a part of the growth of the school. This made it difficult for her to carry out her role.

Similarly, Participant C also worked with teachers who were not passionate about teaching, which showed in the attitude towards teaching. Participant C believed that teachers lack the "*vibe*" and passion to teach and deliver the curriculum because the curriculum has a lot of "*systems and structures*" that are not concerned with the business of teaching and learning. Thus, teachers who experience a lack of passion, professionalism, and enthusiasm to teach the curriculum make it difficult for principals to carry out their role.

Barker (2014:302) further describes the experience of Winston Churchill, who was passionate about teaching in primary and secondary school. Passion, enthusiasm and professionalism are

required to be a good teacher and go hand in hand with ones attitude to teach, according to Winston Churchill. Participants B and C experienced difficulties with working with their teachers which had a negative impact on how they practiced their professions.

5.3.5 Negative attitudes from parents and the SGB that impact female principals

Parents, the SGB and the SMT need to trust the principal to manage the school, respect the role of the principal and feel confident that the principal is able to fulfil his/her role as a leader. However, some parents and members of the SGB have negative attitudes that impact principals in fulfilling their role because they feel that they could manage the school better than the female principals involved. This is expressed as follows:

Participant A

> "*The challenges are hectic with parents, almost thinking that they know how to manage and they want to give input and they want to tell you how to manage your school.*"

The first quote from Participant A indicates that parents think they have the right to participate in decision making of the school. This is why each school is governed by the SGB, where parents are allowed to say and give input on how the school should be managed. However, it is clear that the SGB at this school was disjointed as Participant A notes the following:

Participant A

> "*The relationship between the SGB and SMT. The stepping over of governors (SGB) into management (SMT) issues, because of that, caused a bit of dissension among staff members, because some staff members think they can just do just about everything because they have an ear with the SGB.*"

The second quote from Participant A may indicate that the SGB does not agree with the way the SMT manages the school, or they are influenced by other stakeholders such as the staff/educators in their perception of how the SMT manages the school. The SGB gets involved in matters that the SMT is responsible for. The stepping over of the SGB into management issues causes conflict between the staff and the SMT because of the relationship the staff have with the SGB members. It is evident that the relationship between members of the SGB and

staff/teachers affects the trust and the confidence the SGB has in the SMT of the school. This results in parents who feel entitled to manage the school because of the influence the SGB and the staff's relationship has on how the school is being managed. This may leave the principal of the school in a very difficult position because he/she depends on the SMT to carry out its roles. Parents may have concerns, however, they need to respect the roles of the principal, the SMT and the teachers.

The parents' attitudes may also have arisen from the fact that Participant A is a female. According Maime (2011:45), parents often show resistance to female principals as they believe it is a man's job to lead the school. This may once again be related to gender inequality. The parents of this school do not respect that the school is being led by a female principal and that duties are delegated by a woman to both male and female staff. This is a clear indication of parents' negative attitudes toward female principals by disrespecting the demands of a female principal.

5.3.6 Learners' negative attitudes impact female principals in carrying out their role

The aggressive and unruly behaviour of learners can negatively affect the way principals lead the school. Thus far, from the above themes, it is evident that female principals are not receiving the necessary support from the WCED, teachers have high expectations of principals, and parents and SGB members have negative attitudes towards principals. Added to this are aggressive and unruly learners which impact on the learners attitudes towards the principal. This may be due to learners who are not living with both parents, and in some cases, learners are living with caregivers or guardians. As a result, learners' behaviour and attitudes make it difficult for female principals to carry out their role, which has a negative impact on females' experiences as principals. This is expressed by the views of Participants B and C below:

Participant B

> "*The kids are becoming more aggressive, more entitled, more self-absorbed. So the kids are also becoming very challenging.*"

Participant C

> "*Our learners, our learners were unruly. Okay, when I came there, yes, until I discovered that most of the learners from a single parent, parent may end up being*

raised by grandmother's childcare."

In the first quote, Participant B expressed a concern about learners' behaviour becoming more challenging. For a principal, this issue may cause many other issues, such as teachers having to teach in an environment where learners feel they are entitled. Participant B also mentioned that learners were becoming more aggressive and self-absorbed. Principals may need to reach out to support groups to address and deal with unruly and aggressive learners because this behaviour may lead to poor academic performance not only within learners but the school as a whole. In the second quote, Participant C explained that their learners are unruly. She discovered that many learners come from broken homes, with single or no parents at all. They are either in childcare or their grandparents take the responsibility of raising them because their own children cannot fulfil the role of being parents. Thus, learners' aggressive and unruly behaviour may be a result of a lack of parental involvement in their education as well as their lives. Further, making it difficult for female principals to carry out their role effectively.

According to the South African Constitution each child has the right "to family care or parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment" (RSA, 1996b). Participant C's statement resonates with the Constitution because learners are either living with a single parent or a caregiver. The quotes above indicate that the unruly and aggressive behaviour of learners impact how female principals carry out their role. As a result, the learners' negative attitudes impact on discipline, the functioning of the school and the teaching and learning process. Thus, the principal has to deal with discipline issues which prevents the principal from fulfilling their role.

The aggressive, entitled, self-absorbed and unruly behaviour of learners toward female principals may thus be an indication of how society views women principals. Grillo et al. (2022:2) explain that females in leadership positions still face oppression related to race, gender and age. Participants of different races and age experienced learners' negative attitudes which made it difficult for them to carry out their roles and responsibilities as principal.

5.3.7 Females in leadership positions experience racial, religious, intellectual and cultural discrimination

Females in leadership positions experience attitudes towards their gender and race, and this often leads to them being further discriminated on. According to Davids (2018:5), negative

bias, sexist generalisations, and stereotypes continue to obstruct female principals' ability to effectively carry out their tasks and obligations in South African schools. All three participants reported facing discrimination for being female in a leadership role in addition to finding it challenging to get a main post. The quotes that follow indicate that the participants faced various difficulties in their roles as women, as well as challenges such as racial, religious, intellectual, cultural norms and discrimination:

Participant A:

"*On the other hand, you have a challenge where your staff members feel that they know better and they don't understand the line function and because of the history of the school and the way things were done before. Yeah, because what has happened is, I've come to this school as the first female. I've come to this school as a female of colour and I've come into the school as the first Christian.*"

Participant B:

"*There was a first female principal, you know, so it was difficult for them. I always laugh, there was this old group of SADTU guys there. And they were talking, oh, give me a year, two years tops. I was there from 2010 to 2018. So, you know, it was difficult at first but here, I had fewer males. But again, they will say they are better teachers, they are better people, they understand because there's always been a female principal at the school.*"

Participant C:

"*Well, they can give you a deputy principal post as a female, but a principal post, oh, they look for those males. I'm always number two or three with two males when they send the names to the governing body. So you actually do meet the requirements but because they want the male, you don't make it.*"

In the first quote, Participant A implies that the leadership styles she used may not agree with how the school was led for many years. Not only is she the first female principal at the school but she is the first Christian principal of colour. Participant A explains that staff think they know better because of the history of the school and the way things were done before. This shows that people are resistant to change. The above quote is therefore an indication of females

experiencing discrimination related to gender, race and religion even though Ngcobo (2015:15) explains that "the provision of the Bill of Rights should allow female teachers and managers the ability to enjoy protection from discrimination." As stated in the Bill of Rights, "people should be treated fairly and without discrimination based on gender, race, or class" (RSA, 1996b). Despite these rights, females remain being discriminated against, not only for their gender but their race and religion as well. As Participant A explained above, she was the first female, Christian and Coloured principal at the school and this may be the reason why she was experiencing discrimination from the staff.

In the second quote, Participant B reports that males are resistant towards having females in leadership and this spills over into attitudes that are negative against female principals. It is clear that males have little to no confidence in a female leading their school. The principal commented that, because she was a female in leadership, she would not last long as a leader at their school because of this. However, Participant B has led the school for eight years up to the present. For Participant C, as a deputy principal, it has been difficult for her to achieve the main principal position. It is evident that she was discriminated against for her gender, as she explained that the SGB would rather appoint a male as principal instead of a female. Thus, males at her school did not believe that a female could lead the school and give instructions to men. It is evident that, for Participants A, B and C, gender is at the forefront of discrimination as Sanchez and Thornton (2010) state that gender inequalities in education impact benefits and the promotion and hiring of females into principal positions. They further note the following:

> "[W]omen principals tend to be hired more frequently at the elementary level, while women superintendents are relegated to less desirable districts that are either small and rural or urban and troubled. These difficulties merely scratch the surface of the inequities that impact women in educational leadership, yet the perception persists that women have achieved equity" (Young, 2001:36 cited in Sanchez & Thornton, 2010:3).

The perception of women achieving equity is contradictory to the three quotes above. Gender inequality thus contributes to the disparities we find in educational leadership. Therefore, the fact that male executives predominate the profession and frequently make hiring decisions contribute to the persistence of disparities in educational leadership (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010:3). It is also evident in each of the quotes above that males want to dominate in the workplace. The preference for men over women for the work is evident in each of the quotes

above. The discrimination and male dominance that female principals face go hand in hand. A male principal will lead the school more effectively, according to the staff. Despite the physical distinctions between men and women, females are successfully performing the role of school leaders.

5.3.8 Power dynamics in terms of recruiting and promoting females in principal positions

When it comes to recruiting and promoting females in education leadership, gender inequality once again becomes a factor as males and females are not treated equally; this also goes hand in hand with continued negative attitudes and views around this When Participant C, as a deputy principal, applied for a promotional post as principal, she experienced gender inequality and unfairness within the workplace. Due to cultural norms and the way the school was led before, they preferred a male leading the school instead of a female. This is shown below:

Participant C

> "*I always go to the interviews. Yes. It's either I'm in a panel, okay, as a union rep. Or I'm a candidate myself, out of, let's say 160 applicants for a principal. Yes, you will get 10 females and the rest. I'm telling you the honest truth; you will get 10 females and the rest are males. And, you can see, those SGB also are males, okay. And even if they are females, they are always interested in taking a male. Okay, even if females can be good. They've got that belief that, you know, most African schools. No, no, no, no, no, you can't be led by a female. It's part of the culture, your culture and your upbringing.*"

The quote above implies that there is unfairness within the recruiting and promoting process of principals due to societal culture and ingrained views held. Participant C's experience during this process includes being a candidate or an employer. Participant C revealed that, out of 160 candidates applying for the post, only 10 were females. This reveals the unequal and unfair recruitment process. Participant C also explained that there were only males on the panel to interview candidates. If there are females on the panel, they also prefer male candidates. This indicates the cultural norms that males uphold that excludes females. Participant C further explained that it is their "African Culture" and that the people on the panel were brought up this way.

The quote above also addresses key disparities between males and females, as well as the

unequal nature of selecting females for leadership positions. Further, it draws on attitudes related to culture and the belief that males are more suitable for leadership positions than females. It is the inferior status of females that impedes their ascent up the leadership and management ladder in educational institutions (Ngcobo, 2015:16).

The quote above is also related to the work of Ngcobo (2015) who claims that a democratic view of power implies that decisive authority is delegated to a leader. In addition to perpetuating male supremacy in educational administration, power structures and ties with schools also limit many females' chances to hold leadership positions. Due to their dominance in leadership roles, men often seek other men to fill primary posts (Ngcobo, 2015:12). Nonetheless, as stated in the quote above, both men and women want to be led by men. According to the quotation, even the women who sit on the panels that represent the SGB for the interviews want a man to be in a leadership position. Males are clearly given the position of leadership in the African society and in the schools.

A recent study by Grillo et al. (2022) revealed that Black women remain underrepresented in school principal positions. "Fewer than 5% of all principals in the United States are black women" (Grillo et al. 2022:1-2). Historically, Black women's involvement in school leadership positions has been limited compared to their White and male counterparts. Culturally, Black women face oppression related to age, race and gender (Grillo et al., 2022:1-2). Although Grillo et al.'s (2022) study was conducted in the United States, South Africa faces the same problem. Grillo et al. (2022) explain that, culturally, Black women had to amplify their voices and lived experiences in order to be seen or heard compared to their White male counterparts (Grillo et al., 2022:5). The work of Grillo et al. (2022) resonates with the quote above because Participant C faced oppression related to gender in terms of the recruiting and promoting process within educational leadership.

5.3.9 Summary of Theme 1

To summarise Theme 1, negative attitudes from the school actors have an impact on how females carry out their role as principals. Participants A, B and C shared that they do not receive the necessary support from the WCED. Participant A felt that, instead of creating admin work for principals, the WCED can cut down on being compliance driven which will give principals more time out of the office and be more visible on the school grounds. Further, participants claim that teachers expect principals to step into teachers' roles. Participants felt that teachers

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should be able to deal with issues, such as discipline, so that principals do not have to deal with these issues. In addition, the negative attitudes from teachers, learners and parents impact the movement and role of females in leadership positions. All school actors, such as teachers, learners, parents, SMTs and SGBs, need to support females in leadership roles. Culturally, Black women experience oppression due to their gender, amongst other factors. This made it difficult for Participant C to carry out her role as a Black female leader and to aspire further into her leadership role. Therefore, the above attitudinal factors show the challenges principals in general, and more specifically, female principals experience within their workplace which makes it difficult for females to carry out their principal role.

5.4 Theme 2: Female principals' experiences about positive attitudes from the school level that impact their role as principal

In addition to negative attitudes from the school level that female principals experience, they also experience factors at the school level that positively impact them in their current role. This section discusses factors such as supportive management, supportive leadership, management and staff, and positive attitudes from teachers and learners.

5.4.1 The support received from stakeholders (i.e., teachers, learners, parents, management, staff, mentors and the SGB)

5.4.1.1 Supportive leadership, management and staff

In the business of teaching and learning, it is important not to work in isolation. The role of a principal is to delegate and give instructions to staff. Therefore, it is important to have a supportive SMT, staff and circuit manager who follow instructions and support the decisions made by the principal. Efficient and effective staff, coupled with positive attitudes, drive the teaching and learning process as expressed by the three principals below:

Participant A

> "*What makes it easy at school, I have efficient staff and effective staff within their roles. That makes things easier and I do have a very supportive SMT that has my back 100%. That is what makes things bearable when it becomes very hectic at school. The staff members acknowledge and realise what it is that you do, and they*

will encourage you."

Participant B

"*My deputy, she's the HOD that acts, and my other HOD, that's the other senior. They are very supportive. They understand the role you get; you tell them one time how to do something and they do; you don't have to check on them doing it. My admin team is a good team, I must say, my admin team, they [are] brilliant, they understand what I want, how I want things, where we going and you can get, and we work together, not me instructing them.*"

Participant C

"*When I was a principal, acting as a principal, every term, my circuit manager would come and check on me. It was a very good support. We had young teachers; they were eager to learn and whatever you gave them, yes, they would modify it more, and especially when it comes to ICT.*"

The three quotes above show the support from the SMT, staff and circuit manager. All participants explained that staff and management were very supportive and have positive attitudes towards them. Leadership is considered a facilitating and enabling factor, according to the views of all three participants. Ngcobo (2015:6) also notes that allyship of leaders is very important in enabling disadvantaged, marginalised and underrepresented groups to ascend to positions of power and authority. Therefore, the quotes above are a clear example of groups ascending to positions of power and authority, and all three participants claimed that it is an enabling factor to carry out their principal role. They also have the support from teaching staff, SMTs, admin teams, HODs and circuit managers.

Ngcobo (2015:6) defines leadership as a feature of the interactions between members who are coordinating the work of different persons inside the organisation with the aim of ensuring that shared organisational goals are attained. The quotes above show that good communication was taking place between the principals, as the leaders, management, staff and the circuit managers. Further, the quotes indicate that the principals were receiving the necessary support to carry

out their roles and responsibilities to enable successful teaching and learning to take place. The findings of this study note that specific leader figures impact the work of the female principals positively. In the case of Participant A, it was the SMT, which does not appear in the literature as an enabling factor.

Ngcobo (2015:6) indicates that leadership is framed by the necessity to shape employees' behaviour in an organisation so that they voluntarily work to attain organisational goals. This shows that the work of Participant A, being able to shape the SMT as an enabling factor, reveals the leadership style she uses to delegate duties. Participants B and C referred to school actors, such as the HOD and the circuit manager, who play a role in supporting and enabling them in their leadership position. This is very similar to the writings of Sanchez and Thornton's demonstration of female leaders working in a cooperative environment where individuals share the same vision and attitude.

Sanchez and Thornton's (2010) study might also be related to the responses above from Participants A, B and C since they are working in a cooperative environment. Sanchez and Thornton (2010:7) demonstrate that female leaders (a) work to create a cooperative environment under a shared vision; (b) value people and their contributions; (c) use power and make it accessible to others; and (d) resist practices that interfere with the overall goals, thus confronting issues as necessary in their roles as educational leaders. In the quotes above, participants believed that the positive attitudes received from staff and management were supportive. This means that they contributed positively to the school and that they understand the main vision and mission of the school. It is evident that the principals above valued their staff and management's contributions to the school. The principals also had confidence in their team and appreciated the positive attitudes and value they add to the school.

The participants were also confident in their role as principals and in the roles of their staff members. From the quotes above, it is clear that Participants A, B and C portray good leadership skills and therefore have supportive staff. The evidence above shows that staff and management approve of the leadership styles of their principals because they are able to work in an effective and efficient environment where one vision and mission is followed and achieved.

5.4.1.2 Female principals manage to change attitudes of teachers and the school from dysfunctional to functional

Positive attitudes from teachers are important as teachers are the driving force of the school. Without teachers, no learning can take place. Thus, the principal relies on positive attitudes from teachers to ensure that teaching and learning is taking place. Attitudes shape female leaders in education. Meyers (2010: 36) defines attitudes as a person's internal evaluation of something or someone, shaped by their beliefs, feelings, and potential actions. Think of it as a mental weighing scale tipping towards either favour or disfavour. In the quote below, Participant A achieved success despite negative circumstances. Participant A expressed that positive attitudes from some teachers affected how the school operated and obtained successful results:

Participant A

> "*So, my role there was to basically get the staff to work as a unit because, when I got there, they were just very disjointed. There were too many chiefs and too few Indians. And I got the staff to work together and, like I said, we became a family. But, in the school that I was at, we tried to create a home away from home. I started as a principal, we were labelled as dysfunctional and managed then to turn the school around completely to fully functional. And even within academics, we moved up from a very low base. Our systemic results came up from 0.8% to 30% and beyond. I got the staff to work together and, like I said, we became a family.*"

The quote above shows that Participant A managed to get the staff to work together instead of being "disjointed". The school was labelled dysfunctional but, with the help of the teachers, the school became fully functional and raised the academic results. This proves that if the staff have a positive attitude in their posts and toward the principal, the whole school will benefit.

According to Sanchez and Thornton (2010:6), women in educational leadership positions must contend with demanding work schedules in addition to role conflicts that arise when they change jobs. Participant A expressed that she was in a new school as principal and she

experienced role conflicts with staff because, in her words, "*there were too many chiefs and too few Indians*". Sanchez and Thornton (2010:6) believe that administration roles can take a physical and psychological toll on female leaders. In relation to the quote above, the principal started a new job and had to face challenges such as the role conflict amongst staff. She managed to achieve positive staff attitudes and staff had started working together to achieve positive results for the school.

5.4.1.3 The benefits and importance of having a mentor and a supervisor

Principals are responsible for the entire school. They also need to answer to the Education Department, circuit managers, parents, staff and learners. Sanchez and Thornton (2010:6) observed how accepting administration roles took a physical and psychological toll on female leaders. Having a mentor and a supervisor can assist principals in their role. In the quotes below, the participants stressed the importance of having a mentor and a supervisor acting as a mentor. Participants A, B and C expressed that a mentor or supervisor would be beneficial in instances where advice is needed in educational matters or even in their personal lives. The quotes below show that it is important to have a mentor and a supervisor assigned to each principal, male or female. This will encourage positive attitudes that will help principals carry out their roles. Participants A, B and C expressed the following:

Participant A

> "*I don't have a mentor. I have an immediate supervisor. I have colleagues that are within my network that I can ask for advice, and I can pick up the call and say, 'Listen, how do you do this?' My supervisor comes in and he listens. I feel that this is one of the vacancies the department can actually fill; they can actually have mentors assigned to principals instead of a circuit manager that needs to ensure compliance, etc. I think the mentor would be available for not just advice about school matters, but also to be there personally. So that type of advice, that type of conversation? That is not what we have. So, they sort of say the role of principal is really lonely. Because you basically have to be within the space to be able to answer to the Head of Education, to your Circuit Manager, to parents, to teachers, to everybody.*"

Participant B

"*Mr. X was one of my mentors, when I became a newly appointed principal at school Z, that was now 'deermekaar', so you know, he came to visit me, and it was always willing to support and it was so good that I could just pick up the phone and phone him and say, 'how do I deal with this?' And sitting in his conversation, I've learned a few tricks, how to circumvent some stuff, to deal with some stuff, what to say, what not to say, and you know, how to be bold and how to just to put something out there and people deal with it.*"

Participant C

"*So there was a male teacher. When I came there, he had very good results in his school. So I adopted him as my mentor. And he was a very good mentor, because he was telling me, you must first understand, yes, the environment, because I'm coming from the other side to this new school. Yes. So I learned to understand the environment through him.*"

Participant A highlighted that the WCED does not have a mentorship programme or a mentor assigned to novice or experienced principals. Even though Participant A did not have a mentor, she relied on either an immediate supervisor or colleagues for advice. Participant A felt that this is a beneficial aspect that the WCED can fill instead of assigning circuit managers who serve a compliance purpose. Participant A suggested that a mentor can give advice not only on educational matters but also on personal matters. Similarly, Participants B and C felt that a mentor serves as a support structure – a person who is willing to listen and give advice where necessary. Both Participants B and C have mentors. However, Participant C adopted a mentor who was a good example and achieved good results in her school. This is a clear indication that a mentor is important and beneficial for novice and experienced principals. It would instil positive attitudes enabling female principals to delegate their principal role.

Participant A explained that it is important for principals to have a supervisor. Goldring et al. (2018:11) reveal that an initiative for a principal supervisor was launched in 2014 to assist

districts in changing a position that had previously been devoted to administration, operations, and compliance into one focused on training and assisting principals in enhancing instruction in schools. Goldring et al. (2018) explain that the programme was driven by a desire to improve principal performance and boost student learning and accomplishment. Principals who are also effective leaders are thus essential to build up schools, improve teaching standards, teacher satisfaction, teacher retention, school atmosphere, parent engagement, and student progress (Goldring et al., 2018:11). Further, Goldring et al. (2018:11) explain that principal supervisors can assist and foster principal development as Participant A mentioned, "*the role of principal is really lonely*".

Yirci and Kocabas (2010:2) explain that the success or failure of a school depends on the principal and highlight the importance of a mentor, especially for newly appointed principals because "mentoring is a remarkable model which aims to combine theory with practice in principal training. It develops beginner principals with the help of a senior principal's support and supervision in a real school environment". All three participants agreed that a mentor is there to assist and support the principals in their decision making and the way they lead the school. Thus, assigning mentors to principals will make it easier for principals to carry out their role.

Yirci and Kocabas (2010:2) describe a mentor as someone who "helps you to improve your effectiveness in a certain field, shows you how to become an expert in a profession and teaches you how to develop your skills". This is related to the quote of Participant C because her mentor taught her to understand the new environment she was working in to achieve success at leading the school and achieving positive results.

In addition, Yirci and Kocabas (2010:2) state that

> "a mentor's role has two aspects. First, one is to supply career development opportunities such as coaching, providing challenging assignments, sponsoring advancement, and fostering the mentee's visibility. Second, mentors provide psychosocial support such as counselling support and role modelling. Without a mentor, an individual will learn less, more slowly or not at all."

This relates to Participants A and B's quotes that expressed that a mentor would help them develop in their career and personally by giving advice on educational matters as well as by

being there when they need to speak to someone.

5.4.1.4 Summary of Theme 2

To summarise Theme 2, female principals experience factors at the school level that positively impact them in their current role. This section discussed factors such as supportive management, supportive leadership, management and staff, and positive attitudes from teachers and learners. Further, this study found that the support received from stakeholders (i.e., teachers, learners, parents, management, staff, mentors and the SGB) is important and positively assists principals in their role. As this study specifically focused on female principals' experiences, the participants highlighted positive factors such as supportive, effective and efficient staff, SMTs, HODs, admin staff and circuit managers, who assist them to carry out their role through working together as a team. Moreover, the role of a mentor and supervisor emerged as an important factor in assisting principals in achieving positive attitudes toward effective teaching and learning in their schools.

5.5 Theme 3: Female principal's experiences about negative attitudes from the family level that impact their role as principal

Family and home responsibilities are factors that impact females in their current role as principal. Ngcobo (2015:2) explains that females are perceived and expected to be mothers, wives, caregivers and nurturers. As a result, they are not given opportunities to become female leaders in education as this was perceived to be a man's job (Ngcobo, 2015:2). This section briefly discusses negative attitudes from the family actors hinder females in their current role as principal.

5.5.1 Females principals experience divorce

Regardless of whether they are working or studying, women are expected to take on roles such as mother, wife, caregiver, housekeeper, and more. These expectations impact on their personal lives as females in principal positions feel that they must carry out these roles in addition to their leadership role. Participants A and B noted that, because of the stressful nature of their roles, their partners attitude towards them changed and impacted on their relationships as well as them experiencing divorce:

Participant A

"*But I do think that getting the post as principal, also impacts on your personal life. So I'm divorced.*"

Participant B

"*Also, um, my, my ex-husband wasn't also very understanding and very supportive. Okay. I was busy climbing the ladder because I started in 95. I got married in 96. Okay, so I was always involved. So unfortunately, we started, you know, we kind of grew apart because I was growing in my profession, and he was just in his profession.*"

According to the quotes above, Participants A and B believed that their pursuit of their education and careers had a negative effect on their personal lives and resulted in divorce. Maime (2011:29) explains that females who pursue a career in leadership must sacrifice their family in order to adhere to their leadership roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, Maime (2011) stresses that the attitude and support from husbands play a vital role in shaping female principals. Positive attitudes and support from husbands may assist females in delivering their leadership duties effectively however negative attitudes cause stress and the inability to carry out their duties of being both wife and principal (Maime, 2011:29). The quotes above show that Participants A and B did not receive support from their husbands, and this caused stress within the marriages which ended in divorce.

Robinson et al. (2017) also provide statistics on married women in school principal positions. The statistics reveal the percentage of women in principal positions who receive support from their husbands and the percentage of women who do not receive support from their spouses. According to the AASA 2015 Mid-Decade data, 56% of single women and 36% of married or cohabiting women had switched supervisory roles. In order to support them in new principal positions, roughly 26% of married female principals stated that their spouse or partner moved, while 18% stated that their spouse had changed occupations. For 20% of married female principals, spouses had cut back on their work hours to make room for their partners' position, and 10% gave up their jobs altogether (Robinson et al., 2017:6). These statistics are a clear indication that the relationship between women and men may restrict them from their work options, impacting on the negative attitudes towards each other as well. Both participants in

this study made a choice to become a principal which led to divorce.

5.5.2 The lack of understanding and support from the husband

A female principal has to be prepared to make sacrifices when it comes to her marriage. Both parties in a marriage need to be supportive and understanding of each other's work roles, responsibilities and commitments. Participant C's husband had a negative attitude, as expressed by Participant C below:

Participant C

> "*You see, the times whereby you have to work extra miles in school. You leave home early, you come home late, that commitment. It impacted my own life because I had to go, we had one car. Okay, so I have to go and drop my husband, very early to his work, and then he will be the last one to go home because I'm still busy at work. He was understanding but sometimes you could see he didn't understand.*"

In the quote above Participant C explained how being a deputy principal impacted her personal life, specifically her marriage. Participant C saw that her husband was understanding some of the time. Participant C's marriage did not end in a divorce, but it came with its challenges that caused stress and affected how she carried out her role. This may prevent her from applying for and becoming principal.

Maime (2011) stresses that a husbands' attitude and support play a role in shaping female principals. Support from husbands may assist females in delivering their leadership duties effectively or it may cause stress and the inability to carry out the duties of being both wife and principal (Maime, 2011:29). Furthermore, family responsibility and obligations cause females to stress in their workplace if household obligations are not shared equally. Females need to balance work duties with managing their families (Maime, 2011:29). Participant C was trying to balance her work duties that sometimes prevented her from fulfilling her family commitments, which was to drop and pick up her husband from work. Maime (2011:29) explains that it is important for female principals to be supported by their families through counsel and encouragement, allowing them to work late or for long periods of time at their schools as principals are expected to attend after-hours meetings and workshops.

5.5.3 Female principals have to balance work and household responsibilities

Due to cultural norms, females are seen as mothers, domestic workers, and caregivers even if they have a job. As a result Females in leadership have to sacrifice their family role due to high job demands. The attitudes toward females having to balance work and family responsibilities may have a negative impact on how they delegate their role as principal. This is expressed in the views of Participants B and C below:

Participant B

> "*I just have myself and my son, he's 18 in his matric. So obviously I take care of my mom but she doesn't live with me. It's easy on the one hand, but it's also difficult because I get my mom to look after him because, if I go to a conference or workshops or training, I'm working late, but now he's 18. Last night, I had to pick him up. He wrote until 5, I only got there ten past six. He was a bit grumpy, but he needed to understand I had a governing body meeting. Yes, I could only pick him up when I could get there. He knows a lot about not getting a cooked meal because I'm working late.*"

Participant C

> "*When you come home, you are no longer a female manager. Now, you are a domestic worker, because you must do all these things while looking after your kids. My kids were young, you have to wash dishes now. I don't have to instruct anyone, so everything is upon me.*"

The quotes above imply that it is challenging for female principals to pursue a career in leadership while having a family. Because children seem to be more dependent on their mothers, female principals may feel that they are neglecting their children based on their children's attitudes and responses. In the first quote, Participant C explains how she had to ensure her son was safe while she was working. She also explained that her son needed to understand that she had to attend meetings and workshops after working hours. Participant C also noted how she has to end her leadership role and step into her domestic role the minute she gets home; she goes from giving instruction in the workplace to taking instruction at home.

Ndebele (2018) explains that females have to balance work and their role as mothers.

Culturally, women are expected to look after the family. The value systems, attitudes, ideologies, theories, and conceptions that make up our culture, according to Archer's (2000) theory, are expressed through discourses that are utilised by specific people at specific periods. The quotes above show that the attitudes and ideologies of females being the mother, domestic-worker and caregiver still exist today. The traditional expectation that women should be responsible for raising the family prevents them from holding leadership roles (Ndebele, 2018:16). These attitudes and ideologies remain a tradition and part of culture and the way people perceive and view each other. Due to the dual demands of management and family duties, women may not feel qualified to occupy high positions in education (Ndebele, 2018:16). Therefore, the cultural norm and societal ideology of females being the mother, domestic-worker and caregiver may discourage females from also aspiring into leadership positions.

5.5.4 Summary of Theme 3

To summarise Theme 3, family and home responsibilities are factors that negatively impact females in their current role as principal. Ngcobo (2015:2) shows that females are seen as the mothers, wives, caregivers and nurturers and that working out of the home is a man's job. However, in this study, even though females became principals, they still had to balance work and family/household responsibilities which made it difficult for them to carry out their role as principals. Therefore, this section briefly discussed how home and family responsibilities impact females in their role as principals. Further, to understand the views of female principals about family actors attitudes that negatively impact their role, this theme discussed females experiencing a divorce, the lack of understanding and support from their spouse, and female principals having to balance work and household responsibilities. Participants revealed that climbing the educational leadership ladder did indeed have an impact on their personal lives as two participants experienced divorce.

5.6 Theme 4: Female principals' experiences about positive attitudes from the family level that impact their role as principal.

A positive attitude of and support from children, parents and extended family enable female principals to succeed in their work (Maime, 2011:29). According to Maime (2011:29), female principals who are supported by their families through counsel, encouragement, and the sharing

of household responsibilities, find it easier to work late or for long periods of time at their schools. In theme 3 it is noted that the participant's family were in some instances unsupportive of their role as principal when it comes to sacrificing family time. However, in this theme the family's attitudes have changed and they have become more supportive.

The experiences of female principals about attitudes from family actors that facilitate them as principals are discussed below.

5.6.1 Support received from children

As seen above, females in leadership have motherly/domestic roles when they get home. Even though this may have an impact on how female principals carry out their role, females do experience support from family, especially their children. The quotes below show that the family impacts the work of female principals to lead the school positively. Knowing that they have family members who understand and have positive attitudes towards their role allows them to lead their schools without feeling the guilt of sacrificing family time. Participants A, B and C have supportive family structures, as expressed below:

Participant A

> "*I have no commitments. Both my daughters are adults. I've got independent children. I don't have to worry about having to do things at home.*"

Participant B

> "*I would say my son is very supportive because he's at the point now where he understands. He's 18 and his matric.*"

Participant C

> "*My daughter always support really, even my younger daughter, because she is inspiring. I took her to my school. She was very inspired and then she told me that, Mama, I want to be a teacher.*"

The quotes above imply that their children seem to be at a stage in their lives where they understand their mothers' roles and responsibilities as principals. The children were very supportive of all three participants. Participant A has the support of not cooking, cleaning or

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worrying about her two daughters as they are independent and do everything for themselves. Similarly, Participant B's son had entered adulthood and supported his mother's career. For Participant C, both her daughters are supportive and one daughter is inspired to also become an educator.

The literature review in this study revealed that family duties have an impact on females' career aspirations in educational leadership as they have to care for their families (Avgeri, 2015:28). The quotes above show that the participants have gone through the process of nurturing their families and their children are grown and understand the importance of their mothers' leadership roles. Therefore, they receive the support from their children.

5.6.2 Support from extended family

In addition to children who support their mothers in their role as principals, the support and positive attitudes from extended family make balancing work and life easier. Participant B's brother supports her in taking care of her mother. This is expressed in the quote below:

Participant B

> "*Like I say, my mom doesn't really want to bother me unless it's really necessary. I would put things in place. So that's easy. So, for example, my mom lives in Mitchell's Plain, and she's not always well, so I've got this arrangement. For example, my brothers, whenever logistically, they must do things for her. Yes, I will cover the cost for you guys to happen. Yeah, so I've made things that work for me.*

Participant B has to juggle family responsibilities and work responsibilities. If her mother needs something, she has put structures in place when she is not able to attend to her mother. Participant B felt that she was fortunate to have her brothers who can be there physically for her mother when she is not able to be there. In her own words, "*I've got this arrangement*" with my brothers. If her mother needs something, her brothers will step in and she covers the costs. These arrangements enable her to carry out her role as principal without stressing about her mother.

Maime (2011:29) notes that positive attitudes and support from extended family, through counsel, encouragement, and the sharing of household or family responsibilities, enable female principals to work late as they are expected to attend after-hours meetings and workshops. Kaparou and Bush (2007:227) explain that "generally the major responsibility for all domestic tasks including the care of other dependents falls on women". Participant B has a supportive family who is willing to assist her and work out a plan for her mother that works for everyone involved. This is a positive enabling factor that makes it easier for her and other female principals to delegate duties with the support of extended family.

5.6.3 Support received from the ex-husband

Female principals need a good support structure for their career growth (Eckman, 2003:46). For Participant A, even though her marriage ended due to her becoming a principal, she and her ex-husband have been able to finally maintain a good relationship over time, and in return this has changed his attitude positively towards her and her work. This is expressed below:

Participant A

> "*I have a good network in my family life. Okay, so when I leave from here, my family is there. Even though I'm divorced. I'm friends with my ex-husband.*"

In Theme 3, Participant A mentioned: "*But I do think that getting the post as principal, also impacts on your personal life. So I'm divorced.*" Although becoming a principal resulted in the end of the marriage for Participant A currently still has her ex-husband as a friend. Having a healthy relationship with people you consider as friends and family may assist in Participant A carrying out her principal roles successfully.

According to Sinyosi and Potokri (2021:45), the positive assistance from home, especially from husbands or partners, helps women to focus and cope with the pressures of their position as principal. The positive attitude of Participant A's ex-husband shows that she has a support structure of family and friends when she gets home.

5.6.4 Family that understands

Having a family that understands the role of a principal impacts how principals carry out their roles and responsibilities. Female principals are under a lot of pressure as they have to keep

their family happy as well as their workplace. For participant C it is important that her family has a positive attitude toward her work by understanding when she has to put in extra time. This is shown below by Participant C:

Participant C

> "*When they understand that I have to be at work. Okay. When they understand that I have to do extra? Maybe I promised them that on the 15th or on the 16th. I will take them out. Then, you know, the Department doesn't plan properly. Oh, they will come in two days. Yes. And I planned this a month ago with my kids and my family. Then two days within that they said you must attend a workshop on Saturday. So it changed the whole thing with my family. But I will say to them, okay, the workshop starts at nine and it ends at three from three o'clock after the workshop, I'm all yours, but I think they're tired.*"

Participant C starts by saying "*When they understand*" and ends off by saying "*but I think they're tired.*" Although the family understands that she has to sacrifice family time for work related matters, it still affects their attitudes and how they feel about her being a principal. Participant C balances work and family responsibilities, as she explains in the quote above, even though she has to work on the day she planned to spend time with her family.

The quote above also indicates that the department expects her to be ready and available for any last minute decisions that may contribute to education. Even though she also has the roles and responsibilities that come with being a mother and wife. Sinyosi and Potokri (2021:45) explain that, for female principals to perform their leadership duties successfully requires marital support and acceptability by the family. It is evident from the quote above that Participant C's family understands her role and supports her career choice.

5.6.5 Summary of Theme 4

To summarise Theme 4, a positive attitude and support from children, parents, husbands and extended family through counsel, encouragement, and the sharing of household

responsibilities, allows female principals to work late at their schools as well as succeed in their work (Maime, 2011:29). This theme discussed how female principals sacrificed family time for work demands. In this theme, the participants disclosed that family members, children, extended family, and an ex-husband supported their careers. All three participants have adult children who understand that their mothers have to sacrifice family time to fulfil work duties. Extended families showed support by taking on family responsibilities such as looking after elderly parents as well.

5.7 Summary and key findings of Chapter 5

As discussed in Chapter 1, the objectives of this study were to understand the attitudes of school actors (principals/school leaders, teachers, learners, parents and SGBs) that affect how females

carry out their roles and responsibilities as principals. In addition, this study was conducted to better understand the attitudes of family actors that affect how females carry out their roles and responsibilities as principals. The four themes identified by means of qualitative analysis were: female principals' views about negative attitudes from the school level that impact their role as principal; female principals' views about positive attitudes from the school level that impact their role as principal; female principals' views about negative attitudes from the family level that impact their role as principal; and female principals' views about positive attitudes from the school level that impact their role as principal.

Chapter 5 focuses on an analytical discussion of the results in response to the main research question: *What are the attitudes of actors including teachers, learners, families etc. towards female principals and how does it influence their work?* This study discovered that the attitudes from both school and family actors have both positive and negative impacts on how female principals carry out their roles and responsibilities. The three participants in this study had similar experiences in terms of how they managed their school and how school and family actors impact their ability to delegate their role as principal.

5.7.1 Negative attitudes from the school level

The female principals had similar views about the school level staff having unrealistic expectations of them. Participant A felt as if teachers expected her to know every policy verbatim and have the answer to everything. Whereas Participant B felt that teachers were not fulfilling their roles by sending learners to the office to deal with matters that could have been resolved in the classroom. Participants A and C expressed that it was difficult for them to instruct males, and Participant A said it was difficult for some men to take instructions from her. Participant C said it was also more difficult for her to instruct older males compared to younger males who would listen and value her experience as a female principal. Participants B and C both felt that staff lacked the passion for teaching the curriculum, are reluctant to attend extra-mural activities, and do not want to be at the school and be part of the school's growth. This had a negative impact and made it difficult for the principals to carry out their role. These findings echo Barker (2014:302) who explains the experience of Winston Churchill whose attitude towards teaching, whether primary or secondary school, was centred on being passionate about teaching which further developed him into becoming enthusiastic towards his profession.

Participant A encountered parents who wanted to tell her how to manage the school as they felt they were entitled to give their input as to how the school must be managed. In addition to this, Participant A also experienced the SGB wanting to step into management issues which further influenced the attitudes of teachers who agreed with the SGB. This caused dissension among staff members and put the principal in a difficult position. Participants B and C had similar views about having to deal with negative attitudes from learners. They said that the learners were becoming more aggressive, entitled, self-absorbed and unruly creating discipline issues and teachers who were not able to teach. Participant B mentioned that teachers expected principals to deal with disciplinary issues that could be resolved in the classroom. These factors make it difficult for principals to carry out their role as they need to deal with issues that took up their time.

In chapter 5, all three participants had similar views about gender discrimination. As gender is a key factor in this study, Participant A said that, as the first female principal, she found it challenging to lead the school as it was always led by a male. Similarly, Participant B was also the first female principal at her school and experienced challenges of staff, specifically a group of men judging her and making remarks that she would not last in the post as a female principal. On the contrary, Participant C, a deputy principal, said that the staff preferred a male principal. Participant C contended that, even if she applied for her principal post, she would not get it, because the African belief is that it is their culture to be led by a male. All three participants experienced gender discrimination within the workplace. Maime (2011:18-19) highlights the multifaceted nature of gender, going beyond biological sex to encompass a web of ingrained beliefs influencing individual and societal dynamics. These beliefs impact our inner world of thoughts and feelings, outward behaviours, access to resources, and even how we are treated at both personal and community levels. The experiences above indicate that the assumptions and beliefs of both male and female staff have an impact on how people treat females in leadership positions. It also has an impact on people's attitudes toward female principals.

5.7.2 Positive attitudes from the school level

The female principals had similar views about the support received from leadership, management and staff. Participant A explained that she had effective and efficient staff and a supportive SMT who made things bearable when school becomes challenging. Participant B disclosed that she has supportive HODs whom she can fully trust to get the job done. Participant

C noted that her circuit manager was very supportive as well as young staff members who were eager to learn. Participants A, B and C felt that the necessary support and effort from leadership, management and staff makes their job easier. All participants received support from leadership, management, SMTs, HODs and circuit managers. This enhanced positive attitudes from the school level that enabled female principals to delegate their principal role.

Participant A managed to change the attitude of the staff at her school when she was appointed as principal. She got the staff to work together and not against each other. As a result, the schools' systemic results went up from 0.8% to 30%. This shows the importance of working together as a team.

Principals, especially novice principals, need to have a mentor. According to Yirci and Kocabas (2010:2), "[m]entoring is a remarkable model which aims to combine theory with practice in principal training. It develops beginner principals with the help of a senior principal's support and supervision in a real school environment". All three participants had similar views about the need for a mentor. This factor highlights that the role of a female principal can take a toll on her mental and physical health (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010:6). Participant A stated that she did not have a mentor, however she had an immediate supervisor and colleagues who she may call for advice with regards to work related matters. However, Participant A felt that a mentor would be more beneficial to principals instead of circuit managers who are compliant driven. According to Participant A, mentors could be there not only for work related issues only but also as a friend to confide in even about personal matters.

Participant B was not assigned a mentor; she adopted someone as her mentor who supported her by visiting her at the school and giving her advice. Likewise, Participant C also adopted her own mentor and explained that the advice given by her mentor helped her to understand her environment better and this assisted her in her role as principal. Comparably, all three participants said that a mentor is beneficial for advice about school and personal matters. This is one aspect that the WCED may work on to assist principals in their role by assigning mentors to them.

5.7.3 Negative attitudes from the family level

The support from the family level has an impact on how principals carry out their role. However, participants in this study received negative attitudes from their family and this had a negative impact on how they carried out their responsibilities as principals. For Participant A, being a principal impacted her personal life and resulted in a divorce. Participant B's husband was not very supportive and understanding resulting in her also experiencing a divorce. On the contrary, Participant C did not experience a divorce however, similarly to Participant B, her husband was not always supportive in some situations. Participant C had to commit to extra time in her leadership role and her husband did not always understand. The attitude and support from husbands play a vital role in shaping female principals. Support from husbands may assist females in delivering their leadership duties effectively or it may cause stress and the inability to carry out the duties of being both wife and principal (Maime, 2011:29). The marriages of Participants A and B did not last because of their career path and high demands that come with being a principal, and for Participant C, her marriage was being tested by the high demands of being a principal.

In addition to the above, not only did the participants experience negative attitudes from their husbands, these attitudes were also experienced from their children as well. Participant B explained how her son did not always understand when she had to work late. This had an impact on her responsibility towards her son. Ndebele (2018:1596) explains that females have to balance work and their role as a mother. Culturally, women are expected to look after the family. This expectation of a woman may make it difficult for women to carry out their role while trying to fill their motherly role at the same time. Simultaneously, they have demands, such as working late, but also the responsibility to be there for their children; this may cause stress not only in the workplace but in the household as well. Participant C said that when she leaves her job and gets home, she's no longer the manager, she steps right into a domestic and motherly role. Females in leadership have to balance this and as stated by Ndebele, and culturally, females are expected to look after their family (Ndebele, 2018:1596). The literature review examined social feminism that emphasises that the society's ideology about females as the caretakers and domestic roles in the home should not only be assigned to women, but also to men. This will enable societal change and bring about gender equality where men and women receive equal treatment when it comes to family duties and responsibilities.

5.7.4 Positive attitudes from the family level

Although female principals received negative attitudes from their family, they also received positive attitudes that enabled them to fulfil their leadership role based on knowing that they have the support from their family. Participants A and B had similar views about their children who are adults and are independent. This gives them a sense of relief knowing they can do things for themselves such as cooking and cleaning. Participant C has supportive daughters who found inspiration from their mother also wanting to pursue a career in education. In addition, support from extended family also played an important role in the principals' lives. Ndebele (2018:1596) explain that "generally the major responsibility for all domestic tasks including the care of other dependents falls on women". Nonetheless, Participant B received support from her siblings who agreed to take care of her mother when she was not able to physically be there due to work demands. This gives Participant B peace of mind knowing that she has family to rely on and who supports her role as principal.

Even though Participant A is divorced, she still receives support from her ex-husband. Sinyosi and Potokri (2021:45) state that the assistance from home, especially from husbands or partners, aids women by increasing their level of focus and coping with the pressures of their position as principal. As Participant A explained, she is friends with her ex-husband and still considers him as family; this enables positive relationships and a support structure. Participant A coped with the demands of her job knowing she had the support from friends and family. Participant C's family understands when she needs to work late. Even though she had prior commitments with her family, they knew that she had to sacrifice family time for her career. This enabled Participant C to successfully complete her work knowing she has a family that understands and supports her role as a principal.

5.7.5 Conclusion

It is evident that female principals experience both positive and negative attitudes from both the school and family actors. Attitudes from both stakeholders within schools and families played an enormous role in the development of the participants as principals and how they carry out their roles and responsibilities. This chapter discussed how attitudes from the school actors (i.e., SMT, teachers, learners, parents, SGB and the WCED) impacted female principals negatively and positively in carrying out their role. To elaborate on the attitudes from the school level, the following themes emerged and were discussed: Theme 1: Female principals' views

about negative attitudes from the school level that impact their role; Theme 2: Female principals' views about positive attitudes from the school level that impact their role. In addition, it also discussed how attitudes from the family level (i.e., children, husbands, ex-husbands and extended family) impacted female principals negatively and positively in carrying out their role. To elaborate on the attitudes from the family level, the following themes emerged and were discussed: Theme 3: Female principals' views about negative attitudes from the family level that impact their role as principal; and Theme 4: Female principals' views about positive attitudes from the family level that impact their role as principal. Thus, the above major themes were identified and discussed as factors that impact how females cope with the demands of being a principal and how they carry out their role.

5.8 Discussion and analysis of findings

With the goal of uncovering the attitudes from school and family actors impacting female principals, this research employed three sub-questions to illuminate their experiences. The emerging themes showed that female principals revealed that attitudes negatively and positively impact their role. Furthermore, the findings showed how the attitudes of school actors influence female principals' ability to carry out their roles and responsibilities. Moreover, the findings showed how the attitudes of family actors influenced female principals' ability to carry out their roles and responsibilities.

To theorise the data and demonstrate how it relates to the literature, this section synthesises the findings from Chapter 5, as summarised above. It also looks at how the instructional and transformational leadership styles serve as an important lens to understand how females lead compared to males.

5.8.1 Attitudes of school actors are both enabling and constraining for female principals in their role

Across all the emerging themes stated above, despite negative attitudes from school actors experienced by female principals, the attitudes also had a positive impact. This led to positive changes in practices to address compound situations in the way females delegate their roles and responsibilities. The themes also relate to the under-representation of females in leadership positions and highlight gender imbalances within educational leadership.

The findings show that females experienced gender inequalities within the workplace. Specifically, at the school level, female principals experienced difficulty giving instructions to male staff. Lumby and Azoalo (2011) challenge the narrow focus on numerical representation of women in leadership. They argue that a true understanding of gender in this context demands recognising its fluidity and interconnectedness with individual stories, conscious choices, and the dynamics of the workplace. This multifaceted perspective, they suggest, is vital for addressing gender discrepancies in leadership effectively (Lumby & Azoalo, 2011:1). This may be a hindering factor why females are under-represented in principal positions.

Additionally, female principals experienced a lack of professional support from the WCED. Female principals' experiences show that they were overloaded with admin and compliance issues from the WCED. According to the DBE (2015:15), principals have set roles and responsibilities. They need to work along with the SMT and the SGB ensuring that teaching and learning takes place in a safe environment (DBE, 2015:15). In addition to this, female principals experience staff having unrealistic expectations and expect principals to know everything and have the answer for everything at any given time. Literature reveals that there are stringent employment expectations for women in leadership roles in education (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010:6). Without the necessary professional support, these demands and unrealistic expectations make it difficult for principals to carry out their role as well as it creates negative attitudes from the school level that impacts their role as principal.

Furthermore, the findings show that female principals face many challenges within their role. However, even though principals were not formally assigned mentors, they adopted their own mentors. Yirci and Kocabas (2010) argue that a principal's success or failure directly affects whether a school succeeds or fails and that mentorship is a significant positive aspect that would support principals in their duties. Female principals' experiences indicated that mentorship helps them cope with both work matters and their personal lives. Thus, mentorship will enable and enhance principals' ability to delegate their roles and responsibilities.

5.8.2 Attitudes of family actors are both enabling and constraining for female principals in their role

Another theme is the negative attitudes from family actors experienced by female principals. However, these attitudes have a positive effect as well and can lead to positive change in the way females delegate their roles and responsibilities.

The findings show that female principals must balance work and household responsibilities. In addition, they may experience a lack of understanding and support from their spouses that may lead to divorce due to their commitments to their role as principal. According to Ndebele (2018:16), women do not feel qualified to hold prominent positions in education due to the twin demands of management and family responsibilities. Therefore, the social norm and societal philosophy that dictates that women should be mothers, housewives, and caregivers will deter future female aspirants to leadership posts.

Additionally, literature points out that if female principals are supported by their children, spouses, partners and extended family it would make it easier for them to focus on their principal role and enable them to delegate their role. According to Maime (2011:29), female principals who receive support from their families in the form of advice, encouragement, and the sharing of household duties find it easier to work late or for extended periods of time at their schools. In this study, the participants' children are adults and can take care of themselves; this makes the load lighter for female principals as they do not have to see to childcare. Further, they have the support of extended family who understands their demanding job and compromises when it comes to family responsibilities. This may lead to a positive way in which females delegate their role.

5.8.3 Instructional and Transformational leadership styles and its relevance to the role of female principals:

Skaalvik (2020:1) characterises the original instructional leadership concept as a hierarchical approach in which the principal is positioned at the apex. In this model, the principal is viewed as the primary knowledge holder and decision-maker, exerting significant influence over instructional practices (Skaalvik, 2020:1). Principals are responsible for overseeing and improving the quality of instruction in their schools. This style emphasises the importance of focusing on curriculum, instruction, and assessment. By understanding how female principals perceive and implement instructional leadership, you can gain insights into their impact on student learning outcomes.

According to Atsebeha (2016:36-37), transformational leadership entails strengthening, inspiring, and motivating followers to work towards common goals which include an organisation's vision and direction (Atsebeha, 2016:36-37). This style focuses on inspiring and motivating staff, building a positive school culture, and fostering a shared vision. Transformational leaders empower their staff, encourage innovation, and create a sense of community. By examining how female principals embody transformational leadership, you can explore their influence on school climate, teacher morale, and overall school improvement.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The study is concluded in this chapter. The aim of this research was to investigate the attitudes from school and family actors that have positive and negative impacts on how females experience and carry out their role as principals. In five sections, this chapter provides a summary of the research findings, a further synthesis of the findings, and some closing thoughts. These sections are as follows:

In section 1 both of the research sub-questions are summarised, which also includes an overview of the main research questions. The findings are summarised in Section 2. The researcher will also offer potential suggestions for practice, policy, and further research in section 3. The contributions of the study are discussed in Section 4. The study's concluding observations are presented in the last section.

6.2 Study Summary

6.2.1 Sub-research question 1 summary

Sub-research Question 1 aimed to understand the attitudes from school actors that affect females and how they carry out their roles as principal.

There were two main factors that came from the data collected. The first factor was how principals experience negative attitudes from school actors (principals/school leaders, teachers, learners, parents and SGBs) in their role as principal. The following themes emerged from this factor: the lack of professional support from the WCED that negatively impacted the ability of female principals to carry out their role; school level staff, i.e., teachers' expectations of female principals; the negative attitudes from teachers that impact female's ability to carry out their role as a principal; teachers lacking passion, professionalism and enthusiasm to deliver the

curriculum; negative attitudes from parents and the SGB that impact females in their current role as principal; negative attitudes from learners that impact female principals in carrying out their role; females in leadership positions experience racial, religious, intellectual and cultural discrimination; and power dynamics in terms of recruiting and promoting females in principal positions.

Participants found that the WCED did not fully support principals in their role. Instead, they were driven by compliance which resulted in principals spending more time in the office than on the school grounds. In addition, participants strongly agreed that staff had high expectations of principals. They expected principals to step into roles that may have been resolved within the classroom. They also expected principals to know policies verbatim and to have the answer to everything. Furthermore, participants experienced negative attitudes from male staff, as they resisted taking instruction from them. Participants also strongly agreed that staff lacked the passion for their job as they were reluctant to participate in extra-murals and the curriculum.

Additionally, participants explained how parents think they can give input in how the school is being managed. Coupled with that, they have SGB members who think they have the right to step into management issues. Further, participants strongly agreed that learners' negative attitudes created unnecessary challenges as learners were becoming more aggressive and unruly. Female principals also experienced negative attitudes from staff who discriminated against them based on race, gender, religion and culture. The negative attitudes experienced by the participants was indicative of how well female principals carry out their roles and responsibilities.

The second factor that emerged was based on how principals experienced positive attitudes from school actors (principals/school leaders, teachers, learners, parents and SGBs) in their role as principal. The following themes emerged from this factor: the support received from stakeholders (i.e., teachers, learners, parents, management, staff, mentors and the SGB), supportive leadership, management and staff; female principals manage to change attitudes of teachers and the school from dysfunctional to functional; and the benefits and importance of having a mentor.

Females also experienced factors at the school level that positively impacted them in their role.

The support received from stakeholders (i.e., teachers, learners, parents, management, staff, mentors and the SGB) assisted the principals in their role. As this study specifically focused on female principals' experiences, the participants highlighted positive factors such as supportive, effective and efficient staff, SMTs, HODs, admin staff and circuit managers, who made it easy to carry out their role through working together as a team. Moreover, mentors and supervisors assisted principals in achieving a school where effective teaching and learning is taking place. Yirci and Kocabas (2010:2) agree that mentorship is an important positive factor that would encourage principals in their role and the success or failure of a school depends on the principal (Yirci & Kocabas, 2010). These positive factors create positive attitudes from the school level that allows female principals to delegate their leadership role.

6.2.2 Sub-research question 2 summary

The aim of the second sub-research question was to understand the attitudes from family actors that affect females in how they carry out their roles as principal.

There were two main factors that came from the data collected. The first factor was how principals experience negative attitudes from family actors (husbands/partners, children and extended family) in their role as principal. The following themes emerged from this factor: female principals experience divorce; the lack of understanding and support from their spouse; and female principals have to balance work and household responsibilities.

Participants strongly agreed that being a principal has an impact on their personal lives. Two participants experienced a divorce. Additionally, negative attitudes from their spouse and children impacted on how they carried out their role as principal. The participants also agreed that the lack of understanding and support from their spouse and having to balance work and household responsibilities had a negative impact on how they perform in their role.

The second factor was how principals experience positive attitudes from family actors (husbands/partners, children and extended family) in their role as principal. The following themes emerged from this factor: support received from children; support received from extended family; support received from ex-husband, and a family that understands.

Female principals were able to sacrifice family time for work demands. As female principals are expected to attend after-hour meetings and workshops, they need to feel supported and not judged for putting their work before their family. Therefore, participants disclosed that family

members supported them in their role as principal. In addition, they received support from children, extended family, an ex-husband and a family that understands.

Even though the participants have children who are adults, they still understood when their mothers had to sacrifice family time to fulfil work duties. Extended families showed support by sharing family responsibilities such as looking after elderly parents. The above are enabling attitudinal factors that play an important role in how principals, specifically female principals, cope with the demands within their role.

In summary, the findings of the two sub-research questions revealed that both negative and positive attitudes from the school and family levels impact how principals carry out their role.

6.3 Recommendations

In this study's findings, the female principals' responses for the two research questions show that the attitudes from the school and family actors have an impact on how females are able to delegate their role. The study makes recommendations in response to needs identified by the female principals. There will be recommendations for policy, practice geared toward the school, and finally recommendations for future research. Concluding remarks follow.

The following suggestions are made based on the findings of this study:

6.3.1 Recommendations for policy

The study's research findings can make significant contributions to policy. The results indicate that, in order to lessen the impact of attitudes of school and family actors, policy makers need to consider the demands of female principals.

Chapter 2 showed that the government had implemented policies such as the South African Standard for Principalship (SASP) which outlines the roles and responsibilities of a principal (DBE, 2015:3). Nevertheless, there was a significant disconnect between practice and theory, therefore the goals of the policies were never fully realised. Chapter 5 of this study showed that female principals were overloaded with admin. They felt that the WCED should adopt mentorship programmes to make their loads lighter in order for them to be more present and active within the teaching and learning environment.

6.3.1.1 Mentorship

A suggestion was made for the implementation of a mentorship programme for novice or experienced female principals. This will enhance female principals' professional development and allow for training for female principals. It will also allow female principals to manage their private, public and professional lives. Additionally, it will also strengthen female principals' ability to delegate their role confidently knowing they have the support of their mentors for guidance whether it may be work related or linked to their private lives.

6.3.1.2 Workshops

It is proposed that female principals attend workshops throughout the year to enhance their leadership skills and abilities. This may happen before and after they are appointed as female principals. Workshops on gender will allow for female principals to meet quarterly or yearly to discuss issues around factors that impact their ability to carry out their role. This will encourage female principals and serve as a support knowing that they are not alone. Additionally, to recognise individual dual roles, such as having to balance work and family, female principals may benefit from workshops on this subject.

6.3.2 Recommendations for practice

The study's research findings can make significant contributions to practice. The results indicate that, in order to lessen the impact of views from school actors, positive attitudes toward female principals are needed.

Chapter 5 found that female principals received negative attitudes from people in the workplace. According to Ndebele (2018:18), the majority of staff members at the schools exhibited scepticism about the leadership abilities of female school principals, which negatively affected their perception of female principals. Attitudes may be addressed through school practices; the way things are done and the way decisions are made.

6.3.2.1 Directed to school

Research may be conducted on leadership experiences by female principals and further investigate female HODs and deputy principals that struggle to advance into the main principal role thus ensuring an equal number of women of colour apply for these positions.

6.3.2.2 Directions to staff

Literature and this study's findings show that the work ethic and attitudes of the staff ultimately determines the success of the principals' ability to manage the school. The assistance of the staff in achieving the mission and vision of the school depends on the attitude of the staff towards the principals. Negative attitudes from staff and a lack of support will cause the principal to be stressed. Therefore, staff should have a positive attitude and trust that the decisions made by the principal will enhance the teaching and learning process of the school. This study recommends the enhancement of staff morale, motivation, empowerment and teamwork through workshops, team-building and staff motivational sessions. These recommendations are key in achieving positive attitudes from the staff.

6.3.3 Recommendations for future study

The researcher suggests using more data collection methods after finishing the entire research cycle and analysing the results. The accuracy of the data collecting account and the credibility of the study can be improved by using more than one data gathering tool, such as observations or document analysis. Future research will benefit if observations are done after face-to-face interviews to make the link from the data gathered during the interviews to the observations.

The researcher also only looked into a small subset of participants in three schools due to time restrictions. The researcher suggests using a bigger sample size of participants and additional schools from various provinces or quintiles. A better, more thorough understanding of the experiences of female principals will result from this. Additionally, it will give a more thorough and accurate summary of female principals' experiences in the South African education environment.

The research revealed that the attitudes of school and family actors plays an integral part in the success of the role of a female principal. Further research is recommended to explore how attitudes from the school and family levels toward females in principal roles may be changed. This will promote healthy relationships within schools and an increase in females applying for promotional and leadership positions within education. This may be achieved through educating staff and family about the challenges facing female principals. It may also be beneficial for staff and family to understand what motivates and helps female principals carry out their roles.

6.4 Contribution to knowledge

6.4.1 Contribution of the study

This study discussed the experiences of females within their role as principal. Females are faced with attitudes from the school and family levels that have a direct impact on how they carry out their roles and responsibilities as a principal. The experiences of the females in this study varied, however, most of them indicated that negative and positive attitudes play an integral part in the way female principals lead the school.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge specifically around attitudes from school and family actors that impact female principal's positions. This study contributes to the investigation of factors that influence women's movement into principal positions. As more females are entering such positions; they are affected by an environment that may either be facilitating or hindering this movement. Therefore, this study looked closely at the negative and positive attitudes from school actors (staff, learners, parents SGB and the SMT) that impact females in their principal role. It also looked closely at the negative and positive attitudes from family actors (husbands/partners, children and extended family) that impact females in their principal role. The sections to follow will outline the knowledge gained from this research study.

Firstly, existing literature provided knowledge about the role of the principal. The principal's main role is to ensure that the school is conducive for teaching and learning to take place. Together with the SMT and the SGB, the principal works toward a goal. They follow the vision and mission of the school ensuring that the school's goal is met, and that is to ensure that the staff is able to teach and that the learners achieve success and reach their fullest potential. In order for this to take place, the principal needs the support from the WCED, SMT, SGB, staff, learners and parents to lead the school successfully. Therefore, positive attitudes are important as the success of the school depends on the principal. As this can be stressful if the principal is not able to fulfil her role. Therefore, the attitude of the principal's family plays an integral part in this. If the principal is supported by her family, she would feel less stressed. This will enable the principal to cope with the demands of being in a leadership role. This study contributed knowledge about the role of the principal and how the support of stakeholders may enhance the principal's ability to carry out her role.

Secondly, this study found that female principals are under-represented within leadership roles. The literature in this study indicates that females are under-represented for reasons such as females are better in the classroom due to their motherly role. They also need to take time for the domestic role. Male leaders are preferred over female leaders. Even though South Africa has undergone policy change and implementation of policies, we still find traces of gender inequalities within educational leadership. The literature in this study shows that there are more male principals than female principals, globally.

Lastly, this study came across attitudes from school actors that play a role in the way females are able to delegate their roles and responsibilities. These attitudes varied from the lack of support from the WCED, to negative attitudes from the staff, learners, parents and the SGB. Although these factors were constraining, there were instances where female principals experienced attitudes from staff and learners that enabled them to carry out their roles and responsibilities. Additionally, the attitudes from family actors played an integral part in the way females delegated their leadership role. Family attitudes, such as the lack of support and understanding from husbands, made it difficult for females to carry out their principal role. Positive attitudes from children and extended family made it easier for females as they felt supported and understood.

The principals in this study shared their experiences and revealed that attitudes can be both enabling and constraining factors within their leadership role. Therefore, this study contributes to the body of knowledge about the attitudes that play a role in how females delegate their principal role. Additionally, it contributes to the body of knowledge about the number of females applying and aspiring into leadership positions.

In summary, the findings of the two sub-research questions portray that female principals' experiences of the attitudes from school and family actors ultimately determine the success of the school. Both negative and positive school and family attitudes toward female principals will either hinder or facilitate the teaching and learning process of the school thus also playing a vital role in the representation of females within educational leadership. Therefore, this study contributed knowledge about females' experiences of the attitudes from school and family actors and how they impact female principals' ability to carry out their role.

6.5 Concluding comments

To conclude, this research studied females' experiences of the negative and positive attitudes from school and family actors that impact their principal role in Cape Town schools, Western Cape. This research also addressed the under-representation of females within educational leadership, in South Africa and globally. This study firstly explored the factors such as negative and positive attitudes from school actors (staff, learners, parents, SSMT and SGB) that impact females in their principal role. Secondly, this study investigated factors such as negative and positive attitudes from family actors (husbands/partners, children and extended family) that impact females in their principal role. As stated in this study, women are under-represented in principal positions. The result of these research findings show that females are facing attitudes from the school and family levels that impact their role as principal and further hinder their entry into principal positions. Therefore, further research may be undertaken about aspiring females who want to apply for leadership positions. This investigation will be able to address challenges that females face and further increase the representation of females within educational leadership.

The study has explained the importance of female principals' experiences and offers suggestions for additional research to supplement the body of knowledge about how attitudes have a significant impact on female principals' capacity to succeed.

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Appendix A: Ethics committee letter of permission to conduct the research study

Private Bag X8, Wellington, 7654 P.O. Box 652, Cape Town, 8000 Jan van Riebeeck Street, Wellington, 7654 Highbury Road, Mowbray Tel: +27 21 864 5200 Tel: +27 21 680 1500

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

On the 21st of October 2021 the Chairperson of the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology granted ethics approval (**EFEC 3-10/2021**) to S Davids for research activities related to a M.Ed degree.

Title:	Female's experiences of school and family level attitudes that impact their role as principal: A case study of three female principals in primary and secondary schools in Cape Town.

Comments:

The EFEC unconditionally grants ethical clearance for this study. This clearance is valid until 31st December 2024. Permission is granted to conduct research within the Faculty of Education only. Research activities are restricted to those details in the research project as outlined by the Ethics application. Any changes wrought to the described study must be reported to the Ethics committee immediately.

_____ Date: 21st October 2021 Dr Candice Livingston Research coordinator (Wellington) and Chair of the Education Faculty Ethics committee Faculty of Education

Appendix B: WCED ethics approval letter

Western Cape Government — Education

Directorate: Research   meshack.kanzi@westerncape.gov.za

Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000 wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 16375E04C000054-20230404

ENQUIRIES: Mr M Kanzi

Mrs Shaheeda Davids

2 Kimberly road, Townsend Estate

Goodwood

Cape Town

7460

 Dear Shaheeda Davids,

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: SCHOOL AND FAMILY ATTITUDES AS FACTORS INFLUENCING FEMALES IN BECOMING PRINCIPALS: A CASE STUDY OF THREE FEMALE PRINCIPALS IN CAPE TOWN SCHOOLS.

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **2 June 2023 till 30 September 2023.**

6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).

7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Mr M Kanzi at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.

8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.

9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.

10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.

11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

The Director: Research Services

Western Cape Education Department

Private Bag X9114

CAPE TOWN

8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards,

Meshack Kanzi   tel: +27 21 467 2531   wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za

Appendix C: Ethics informed consent form

Faculty of Education Ethics Committee (CPUT) for Non-Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

Ethics informed consent form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

<u>Category of Participants (tick as appropriate):</u>

Principals	<u>*X*</u>	*Teachers*		*Parents*		*Lecturers*		*Students*	
Other (specify)									

You are kindly invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Shaheeda Davids from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The findings of this study will contribute towards (tick as appropriate):

An undergraduate project		*A conference paper*	
An Honours project		*A published journal article*	*X*
A Masters/doctoral thesis	*X*	*A published report*	

Selection criteria

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because a total of 3 principals will be sampled.

The information below gives details about the study to help you decide whether you would want to participate.

Title of the research:

Female's experiences of school and family level attitudes that impact their role as principal: A case study of three female principals in Cape Town Schools.

A brief explanation of what the research involves:

A key problem in the South African context is thus to better understand why so few females are in leadership positions in South African schools. Understanding the factors that hindered and facilitated females in becoming principals in South Africa will thus shed light on this problem. Specifically, this study will investigate the attitudes from school and family actors as factors that facilitated and hindered female's movement into principal positions.

Benefits of research

This study will contribute to the body of knowledge specifically around school and family attitudes as factors facilitating and hindering female's movement into principal positions.

Incentives

There will be no incentive for participating in this study.

Procedures (duration)

This study will be conducted over a period of two years. It will include intense research and investigation into the topic. One-on-one interviews with principals will take place over a 40–60-minute time frame.

Right to withdraw/ voluntary participation

As a participant your participation is voluntary which means you have the right to decline participation and withdraw from the activity at any time.

Confidentiality and anonymity

All the data collected within the interviews will be handled and reported in such a way that they cannot be associated with them personally. No uniquely identifying information will be attached to the data so that no one will be able to trace the data back to the participant.

Potential risks, discomforts or inconveniences

As this is a medium risk study, questions asked in the interview might bring back traumatic experiences and memories that may cause discomfort. Therefore, a de-briefing will be held after the interview to ensure the participant is okay or to find out if there is any assistance at hand that may help the participant overcome past experiences.

Dissemination of results

This study may be published.

Kindly complete the table below before participating in the research.

Tick the appropriate column		
Statement	Yes	No
1. I understand the purpose of the research.		
1. I understand what the research requires of me.		
1. I volunteer to take part in the research.		
1. I know that I can withdraw at any time.		
1. I understand that there will not be any form of discrimination against me as a result of my participation or non-participation.		
1. Comment:		

Please sign the consent form. You will be given a copy of this form on request.

Signature of participant	Date

Researchers

	Name:	Surname:	Contact details:
1.	Shaheeda	Davids	063 771 6529

Contact person: Prof. Yusuf Sayed	
Contact number:	Email: sayed.cite@gmail.com

Appendix D: Information sheet

INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE: Female's experiences of school and family level attitudes that impact their role as principal: A case study of three female principals in primary secondary schools in Cape Town.

Dear Research Participant,

You are hereby invited to participate in a research study that forms part of a research project which examines attitudinal factors impacting females in principal positions. This information leaflet will help you decide if you would like to participate. Before you agree to take part, you should fully understand what is involved. You should not agree to take part unless you are completely satisfied with all aspects of the study.

WHAT IS THE STUDY ALL ABOUT?

The study examines attitudes from school and family actors influencing females in their role as principal and in becoming principals. In this study, school and family attitudes as factors will be examined and discussed. The aim is to investigate the above factors and discuss how it impacts females in carrying out their role as principal and further how it impacts their movement into principal positions.

The study therefore aims:

- *To better understand the attitudes of school actors that affect females in how they carry out their role as principal.*
- *To better understand the attitudes of family actors that affect females in how they carry out their role as principal*

WHAT WILL YOU BE REQUIRED TO DO IN THE STUDY?

As a female principal, you will be asked to participate in a face-to-face interview and follow - up interview.In the interview you will be asked to respond to questions regarding your reasons for entering principal positions and your experiences about your training in becoming a principal. The questions will also delve into school and family attitudes as factors facilitating and hindering your movement into principal positions. The interview and/or the follow up interview will take 40-60 minutes and will be recorded and transcribed thereafter.

CAN ANY OF THE STUDY PROCEDURES RESULT IN PERSONAL RISK, DISCOMFORT OR INCONVENIENCE?

The study involves no foreseeable physical discomfort or inconvenience to you or your family.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS THAT MAY COME FROM THE STUDY?

The research project will impact at several levels:

i. *Knowledge:* It will generate new knowledge and scholarship about how female principals were facilitated or hindered by attitudes from school and family actors as factors in their movement in becoming a principal. Such knowledge will enable a better understanding of what conditions inform the success of female principals and what conditions impact negatively on their journey.

WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS AS A PARTICIPANT IN THIS STUDY?

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Even if you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any stage without any penalty or future disadvantage. You don't even have are not obliged to provide the reason/s for your decision.

HOW WILL CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY BE ENSURED IN THE STUDY?

All information obtained during the course of this study will be regarded as strictly confidential. The study data will be coded and so and will not be linked to your name. This will ensure that your identity cannot be tracked or used. All the interview recordings and transcripts that are collected will be stored in a secure and locked office at the CPUT research centre Centre for International Teacher Education (CITE). All electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer at the university centre. Privacy and confidentiality of all participants and universities will be protected at all costs, and collected data will only be used for research purposes. There is a possibility of this study being published.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

Yes. The project has received ethical clearance from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, and the participating institution. All parts of the study will be conducted according to accepted research ethical principles.

CONTACT PEOPLE

If you have any queries about the study, please contact Professor Y. Sayed, South African Research Chair in Teacher Education and Director of Centre for International Teacher Education (CITE) at sayedy@cput.ac.za

If you have any concerns about the study or the conduct of the study, please contact the Head of Department for Research at CPUT

A FINAL WORD

Your cooperation and participation in the study will be greatly appreciated. Please sign the consent form if you agree to participate in the questionnaire.

Appendix E: Semi-structured one-on-one interview schedule

CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL TEACHER EDUCATION

Female's experiences of school and family level attitudes that impact their role as principal: A case study of three female principals in primary and secondary schools in Cape Town.

Interview Schedule: Female's Experiences as Principal

Meta Data
Interviewer:
School:
Date of Interview:
Time of Interview:
Recording Device:
Language of Interview:
Gender of Interviewee:
Race of Interviewee:

To the interviewer,

This instrument is used to interview female principals in schools in Cape Town. The aim is to map their professional life histories relating to their experiences of becoming a principal. This instrument is divided into 5 sections. This includes interviewee biographical details,

motivations and beliefs about the principal role, school and family level attitudes as factors and future aspirations.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

1. What qualifications do you have?
2. How long have you been in teaching?
3. How long were you an HOD?
4. How long were you Deputy Principal?
5. How long have you been a Principal?
6. How many schools have you worked at?
7. Please describe your current role as a principal.

MOTIVATIONS AND BELIEFS

1. What motivated you to become a principal? (probe for influences of peers, family or friends).
2. What are your beliefs about the role of a principal?

   a.   Have these beliefs changed overtime? (probe for when these changes, if any, occurred and what could have influenced this change)

School level factors

1. What support have you received from your school or the WCED?
2. What has the role of your mentor been?
3. What factors at school have made it difficult for you to carry out your role as the principal?
4. What factors at school have made it easy for you to carry out your role as the principal?
5. Did you experience any stereotypes, biases or discrimination from your co-workers, learners or parents as a female principal? If yes, please elaborate.

Family level factors

1. What are your family commitments?
2. Who supports your role as a principal within your family?
3. How have your family commitments impacted your role as a principal?
4. What family factors make it difficult for you to carry out your role as the principal?

What family factors make it easy for you to carry out your role as the principal?

FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

1. How long do you intend to stay in this profession? (probe for reasons to leave or stay)
2. What are your future aspirations and what do you wish to achieve or leave behind?

Is there anything you would like to add relating to your experiences of being a principal, and what advice would you give females who would like to become a principal in the future?

Appendix F: Example of a transcribed interview of a principal as a participant

Interviewer	What qualifications do you have?
Interviewee	The last one is BTEC in management, otherwise I've got a teachers diploma. Okay, Third year, I further my studies and have got higher diploma education, then I've got a BTEC in management.
Interviewer	How long have you been in teaching?
Interviewee	From 1991? Up until now? So it is 30 years' experience.
Interviewer	How long were you the HOD?
Interviewee	13 years
Interviewer	How long were you the deputy principal?
Interviewee	Seven years, I think you'll also have experience as a principal. Yes, I did act as a principal in 2018, 2018 for one year, for one year until 2019.
Interviewer	How many schools have you worked at?
Interviewee	Two schools.
Interviewer	Describe your current role as a principal or deputy principal.
Interviewee	Okay, firstly, when I acted as a principal. I managed the whole school. Okay. But as a deputy principal, my core role was to manage curriculum, to teach and manage other structures like IQMS which is QMS now. And I'm doing SPMDS for non-teaching staff.
Interviewer	What is that?
Interviewee	It's a Staff Performance Development and Management System.

Interviewer	And you're also in charge of the CEMIS?
Interviewee	Yes, CEMIS. For the registration and deregistration of the learners. Okay. And also pimps. PIMS. It's for teacher attendance. And I'm also monitoring the online registration of learners, that's called SAMS. I'm coordinating all the committees. But not SGB, Because I'm not a member, but I was the co official member of the SGB, when I was acting. But committees like finance committee, Curriculum Committee, assessment committee, fundraising committee, I coordinator, those so that I can see they meet, and they got their plan.
Interviewer	What motivated you to become a deputy principal?
Interviewee	Okay. As the time goes by, when you do an HOD work while you are doing the HOD work, you could see that you are overlapping. You also do the deputy principals work. Yes. So you might as well apply to be a deputy. Because you are also exposed to deputy principals work.
Interviewer	When you applied for the deputy Did you have any issues? Did you face any challenges?
Interviewee	No, I didn't face any challenges, I just applied. And I keep on applying. I didn't apply once. Oh, I keep on applying and didn't apply once in my school and get it. There was a block post in my school, but I couldn't get it. Because there were people that came before me, they became a HOD before me, irrespective of they are not doing their work as an HOD. But because they came before me. So the post was directed to them. But I also applied just for the experience, I got the post outside of my school from the other school.
Interviewer	What are your beliefs about the role of a principal? What do you believe?
Interviewee	I believe that a principal can manage everything. But you must use teamwork and you must always delegate. Otherwise, if you want to take everything on your own, you won't make it.
Interviewer	Have these beliefs of yours changed over time?

Interviewee	Yeah, it changed because when the new principal came, he wanted everything. He was inexperienced, because he was 20 years in teaching and I was already 29 nine years old when he came. So he wanted to do everything for himself. And then until he collapsed. Until he couldn't make deadlines. And then I told him, you can't do everything. Because he was a male he didn't want to ask the females, it was a part of you know that ego.
Interviewer	What support did you receive from your school or the WCED?
Interviewee	Firstly, from the school, yeah. Now, when I attend a workshop, yes, then I come back and report them to the teachers. I don't want to do exactly what I told them or what is required. Nice. And then the WCED will come and assist us through curriculum advisors. Okay, upon, so they will come and check our work. And check out are we going about covering the curriculum, teaching the curriculum manageably, like we do monitor and control and give feedback to the teachers. So they will be up in arms, especially when I was a principal acting as a principal, every term, my circuit manager would come and check on me. It was a very good support.
Interviewer	What has the role of your mentor been if you had a mentor?
Interviewee	Okay. I did have a mentor during that time, because in my area, we have about four primary schools. But in Section sections, so there was a male teacher. When I came there, he had very good results in his school. So I adopted him as my mentor. And he was a very good mentor, because he was telling me, you must first understand, yes, the environment because I'm coming from the other side to this new school. Yes. So I learned to understand the environment through him. We have a written community now, okay, whereby we invite parents, oh, then we turn we show our parents, how could they help learners at home with homework?
Interviewer	What factors at school made it difficult for you to carry out your role as the deputy principal?
Interviewee	Yoh The SGB, okay. They are very difficult people, especially those who are

	unemployed. They want to come to the school each and every day, uninvited and when they come they come for two reasons. Now. They are unemployed. Yes, they want coffee. And is in for handouts. Yes, they're looking for handouts, wages, it's a voluntary job. It's a voluntary job, but those who are not employed, they will come. And they will always volunteer themselves to clean the school. But at the end of the day, you will see they will tell you. No, ma'am, you must give us something, I'm telling you.
Interviewer	Is there anything else like the staff members gave your problem or the learners?
Interviewee	Our learners, our learners were unruly. Okay, when I came there, yes, until I discovered that most of the learners from a single parent may end up being raised by grandmother's childcare. So I became involved with an NGO that is called X. Whereby they got, in terms of social workers, oh, nice, and those people will come and help the school after school, teaching them about peer pressure, about how to handle yourself, if you are coming from a Poverty home, how do you handle yourself. And how can you change your home from poverty through education. So they had a lot of programs.
Interviewer	Do you feel that that helped a few learners?
Interviewee	Yes, it helped most of the learners. They changed. And another thing I applied to the department for scouts. Okay, nice. Yeah. So we had a scouts program whereby they take the children to camps, teach them skills. Yes.
Interviewer	What factors at the school made it easy for you to carry out your role as the deputy principal?
Interviewee	The teachers, we had young teachers they were eager to learn and whatever you gave them? Yes, they will modify it more our MAKE IT. And especially with ICT. Okay, yes. So as you remember, we must remember, we don't we are not very exposed to computers. Now. We only learn about computers when we've got computers. In our lab. Now. We've got a lab. Okay.
Interviewer	But do you feel that as a female leader, do you find it difficult to instruct or give

	instruction to male leaders or male teachers?
Interviewee	Yes. Yeah, it is difficult to give instruction to old male, but when you give instruction to the young ones, they value your experience. Remember, all those teachers that were there were FUNZA learners. Teachers, old teachers have got that, mind that those FUNZAS, that they cannot do nothing without computers. So they treated them as if they knew nothing. Yeah. So at my school, we change all that, we make use of them, for them to train us. How to use ICT and all that how to conduct a lesson through ICT. It was an exchange of experience. Yes, because they got experience of the older ages giving them guidance and we've got an experience of them that gives us a new technology outlook.
Interviewer	What are your family commitments?
Interviewee	You know, that is the other factor. Because as a female manager, yeah, when you come home, you are no longer a female manager. Now, you are a domestic worker, because you must do all these things while looking after your kids. My kids were young, you have to wash dishes now. I don't have to instruct anyone, so everything is upon me. So it changed. At school, they treat you as that figure. Yes, at home, they don't even know that you are a school principal. They treat you as a mother and a wife.
Interviewer	Who supports your role as a deputy principal within your family?
Interviewee	My daughter, your eldest daughter, my eldest daughter, and she always sees me. Not as a deputy principal. Yes. As a principal. Okay. My daughter should always support me, even my younger daughter, because she is inspiring. I took her to my school. She was very inspired And then she told me that, Mama, I want to be a teacher.
Interviewer	How has your family commitments impacted your role as a deputy principal?
Interviewee	You see the times whereby you have to work extra miles in school. You leave home early, you come home late, that commitment. It impacted my own life because I had to go, we had one car. Okay, so I have to go and drop my husband,

	very early to his work, and then he will be the last one to go home because I'm still busy at work. He was understanding but sometimes you could see he didn't understand. Especially on Friday. Okay, on Fridays, when I come late. He doesn't understand it at all because he wants his own life at home.
Interviewer	And you had to give most of your time to school?
Interviewee	Yeah. It's worse when we've got events. Oh, it can go on for very long, long.
Interviewer	What family factors make it difficult for you to carry out your role as a principal?
Interviewee	I can't say much on that. Okay. Because they know that I'm working. Any factor, they know they must manage, it must not affect my work. Okay, so they respect your job and your role.
Interviewer	What family factors make it easy for you to carry out your role as a principal?
Interviewee	Yeah. When they understand that I have to be at work. Okay. When they understand that I have to do extra? Maybe I promised them that on the 15th or on the 16th. I will take them out. Then, you know, the Department doesn't plan properly. Oh, they will come in two days. Yes. And I planned this a month ago with my kids and my family. Then two days within that. They said you must attend a workshop on Saturday. So it changed the whole thing with my family. But I will say to them, okay, the workshop starts at nine and it ends at three from three o'clock after the workshop, I'm all yours, but I think you're tired.
Interviewer	How long do you intend to stay in this profession?
	Until 60. I've got three more years.
Interviewee	
Interviewer	What are your future aspirations? What are you going to do after 60?
Interviewee	You know after 60 I was telling myself that teachers struggle to do management work they can teach and manage. If I can get a group of ex deputy principals because not principal exactly but deputy principal because they are the one who knows the curriculum exactly. Okay. So if I can get a group of deputy principals

	who worked closely with the curriculum so that we can design something for the teachers to help them to help them.
Interviewer	When you say manage, do you mean manage the children? Or manage a group of teachers?
Interviewee	Manage a group of teachers.
Interviewer	What do you aim to achieve or leave behind?
Interviewee	You know, what I'm always saying to the teachers, that we are here for core business, and core business is to teach an African child. We are underprivileged for so many years. But now everything is in our hands. But the teachers don't have that vibe, that passion, that passion to deliver that curriculum, because around that curriculum, there are committees. And you find out these things. They've got nothing to do with a child's teaching and learning. It's just systems and structures that are needed by the department, but the core business is to teach those learners.
Interviewer	Is there anything you'd like to add relating to your experiences of being a principal? And what advice would you give females who would like to become a principal in future?
Interviewee	I always go to the interviews. Yes. It's either I'm in a panel, okay, as a union rep. Or I'm a candidate myself, out of, let's say 160 applicants for a principal. Yes, you will get 10 females and the rest. I'm telling you the honest truth; you will get 10 females and the rest are males. And you can see those SGB also are males. And even if they are females, they are always interested in taking a male. Okay, even if females can be good. They've got that belief that, you know, most African schools No, no, no, no, no, you can't be led by a female. It's part of the culture, your culture and your upbringing. I think it's the whole world. Back in the day, it was just the female who must cook and clean and look after the kids. Well, they can give you a deputy principal post as a female, but a principal post Oh, they look for those males. I'm always number two or three with two males when they send the names to the governing body. So you actually do meet the

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	requirements but because they want the male you don't make it.
	The end.