

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY  
FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT AS A RESULT OF  
PREJUDICE AGAINST WOMEN IN PROMOTION POSTS:  
WITH REFERENCE TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN  
THE ISIPINGO AREA.

by

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## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that this dissertation is my own work and that all sources I have used have been acknowledged by means of complete references

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## ABSTRACT

This research focused on an investigation into the problems female heads of department experienced with reference to the primary schools in the Isipingo area.

For a successful and a balanced education on a global basis, women must be seen to be equally capable of becoming leaders of educational institutions. The purpose of this research was to ascertain how educators react to the leadership of female heads of department in primary schools. More specifically, the objective of this research was to investigate the problems that heads of department experience, mainly because they were women.

A literature survey of the functions of the head of department enabled the researcher to focus on the areas that the head of department had to give her attention to in order to develop an effective team. Focus was on organizational, administrative and professional matters determining the level of similarities between the English, American and South African education systems.

Research was conducted by means of a questionnaire applied to a representative sample of educators from all levels of the hierarchy of educators. The qualitative method provided a systematic investigation of the topic. The research sought to understand behaviour from the "action" point of view where the objective was to discover the specific experiences of the respondents.

Results revealed that female heads of department experienced many problems in the course of their duties. Moreover respondents emphasized their perceptions that gender discrimination and bias play an important role in determining the level of functioning, success and competence of the female head of department.

The dissertation has recommendations for all women educators at schools in KwaZulu Natal. These recommendations and conclusions may help to counter sexist evaluation and discrimination, as is currently the main reason for the problems that female heads of department encounter in the administration of primary schools. Among the recommendations are that women should be trained for the position, that their teaching loads should be reduced to enable them to cope with the demands of the position and that the appraisal system be revised to enable the heads of department to assess their teams' worth.

Mentoring and setting up motivational structures involving both male and female will enable women, aspiring for promotion, to be psychologically and intellectually well equipped with the knowledge and understanding of the differences between the male and female management styles. This is necessary if both sexes are to work harmoniously together for the benefit of the institution in which they are employed.

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## ADDENDA

### Addendum 1:

Letter to the principals of the sample schools requesting staff and gender statistics

### Addendum 2:

Letter to the principals of the sample schools requesting their assistance in permitting their staff to complete the questionnaires

### Addendum 3:

Structured questionnaire

## CHAPTER 1

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

*"Our life is so dependant on our relations with women - and the opposite, of course is true - that it seems to me, one must never think lightly of them".*

*Vincent van Gogh*

*(Murphy, 1978:587)*

About the most candid, incontestable statement to make about women in educational management is that there are too few of them. To many, the insignificant female presence in the higher echelons of education, does not matter. If women want to do these things badly enough, the argument goes - they will do them. Why, look at Margaret Thatcher, she did it in government despite the oppositions and prejudices she encountered (Aburdene and Naisbitt, 1993: 5-6).

It is true to say that a large percentage of women enter the teaching profession where most of them remain at the entry level post, while those who are promoted to heads of department, often suffer from overt and covert prejudice.

### 1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Although women hold more than 65% of teaching posts in South Africa, they are proportionately under-represented in management posts. Education is traditionally and historically categorized as a "women's field", yet only a small percentage hold the upper level of management positions and this does not augur well for sound educational practice. Women are employed in greater proportions in lower prestige occupations than are their male counterparts. A relatively small number of women have reached policy making levels, as administrators.

Education, as it presently is in South Africa, is, despite attempts to transform it, essentially a bureaucratic organization. In this context Shakeshaft (1987:10), as quoted in Van Der Westhuizen, comments:

“The culture of an organization bases its approach on roles, rules and procedures - not personalities. Roles and rules assure stability, predictability, consistency and comparability; these are the foundation for control, the heart of the bureaucratic body” (1994:560).

Successful men know the roles and play by the rules. Women are taught by society to be nurturers and caretakers and that a leadership role is unfeminine (Finley in Wrigley, 1998:226). These are termed the external barriers that have held back women from applying for promotion posts. In this research the writer attempted to determine whether the leadership of a female head of department was accepted or rejected and whether she enjoyed the support she required to fulfil her task. The current educational system, from the writer’s experience, may be likened to a “traditional home where men are the administrators and women nurture the learners” (de Witt in Van Der Westhuizen, 1994:556-557).

Gender discrimination and sexism, that women have experienced in almost every aspect of their lives, have been protested by women all over the world. Sex role stereotypes and gender bias still exist in certain western educational institutions in the United States and England (Levin and Lockheed, 1998:5-9). Elsewhere a patriarchal culture also exists in many schools where, despite the move towards equity, there does not appear to be any observable shift from gender prejudice. The term “gender prejudice” forms part of the focus of this study and will be defined by the end of this Chapter, but it may briefly be described as the preference of one gender over the other. The basic assumption is that in education and other fields of achievement, women are inferior to men and so women’s “legitimacy” to function is in question.

Lafontine and McKenzie (1985:19) explain this when they state that, “despite efforts to assure women equal access to administrative positions they are still an anomaly with male

defined paradigms of knowledge and power". These authors feel that "it is imperative then that strategies be identified that will both increase the number of women in administration and establish their 'legitimacy' to hold these positions". This will form part of the recommendations in Chapter 5.

According to studies in KwaZulu-Natal by Krige and Scott (1995:55) only 12.8% of the 78% females employed in primary schools, have been promoted to senior management posts. This shows that negative stereotyping and prejudice still exists. Furthermore, in the course of this study the writer also came across glaring gender imbalances in the appointment to management posts in the Isipingo area of the Durban South Region. The statistics are tabled below (Table 1.1)

Table 1.1

*GENDER IMBALANCE OF MANAGEMENT POSTS IN ISIPINGO*

<b>FEMALE EDUCATORS</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>FEMALES IN MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>13</b> <b>(0.06%)</b>
<b>MALE EDUCATORS</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>MALES IN MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>13</b> <b>(0,13%)</b>

Moreover there is only one appointed female principal in the circuit.

The above recent statistics were provided by the SADTU Gender Desk in their attempt to motivate school governing bodies to promote more females into middle and senior management posts in the Isipingo area. Gender power is seen to be a pervasive controlling factor underlining the formal processes through which promotions are achieved and power distributed in educational institutions, such as those revealed by the statistics in the Isipingo area. School governing bodies have to be persuaded to consider females despite the fact that legislation in the Constitution of 1996, based on the Bill of Rights, forbids discrimination on the grounds of gender. South African women still experience a lack of power, which is most apparent in management positions in educational institutions.

The writer's experience has verified that even after the 1994 General Elections, when the

policy of Gender Equity was legalised, women were on the receiving end of gender prejudice. Social and constitutional changes are never easy to achieve, despite legislation. Change upsets the calm order of things. Women have to work really hard in today's changing society, including the workplace, to draw attention to their own issues and to achieve equal acceptance (Aburdene and Naisbitt, 1993:83-85).

To assist in the change process and bring about transformation the South African Constitution supports the Employment Equity Act of 1998. Chapter 3 of this Act details the affirmative action process, whereby employers are obliged to ensure that affirmative action measures are in place to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by women and other groups.

In the literature reviewed on the topic of gender prejudice towards female heads of department in primary schools, there is both anecdotal and research evidence to suggest that problems regarding the management roles of the female head of department are frequently seen because promotion posts are not seen to be filled by competent females. According to Bancroft (1995) for those women interested in leadership roles in the education system, there are still battles to be fought as women still need to prove themselves in the field of educational leadership.

Negative stereotyping is still held by both men and women about female heads' of department management capabilities and may, perhaps, even create a self-fulfilling prophecy so that the stereotypes become self-perpetuating and self-fulfilling. A female head of department then begins to accept these negative opinions and performs accordingly. It is notoriously difficult for female heads of department to rid themselves of such psychological stereotyping and so prejudice, diminished support and negative attitudes are perpetuated (Bancroft, 1995:3-19).

A female head of department frequently finds herself stereotyped. On the one hand she

may be considered too submissive and emotional to be an effective leader, while on the other hand she may be considered too aggressive. Such negative stereotyping tends to underrate women and so accord them inferior status and power. In this regard McFarland (1990:50-55) in Coping with Sexism, maintains "that this male controlling power is reflected in the myths encountered with regard to the promotion of women : people don't want to work for a female boss; women don't want top jobs; women are too emotional or too bossy to be managers." Prejudices such as these have added to the stress that the female head of department experiences as she has to double her efforts to convince her staff that she is capable.

J T de Witt in Van Der Westhuizen (1994:523) writes "... the pursuit of management excellence dominates the professional life of the female educational leader". Thus the female head of department should strive towards achieving management excellence, following the principle of Dr Edward Deming's "Total Quality Management (TQM)" (Lemmer and Badenhorst, 1998: 336-337). She should organize her team's strategy towards fulfilling her pupils' needs, while aiming to develop a culture of optimal employee participation, at the lowest cost. Her leadership must be to commit to a vision and train her team towards it. She should develop a co-operative and collaborative management relationship that will enable her to work closely with senior management and staff to achieve the mission, vision and goals of her school (Lemmer and Badenhorst 1998:336-337) .

The writer holds the view that the head of department is pivotal to the overall functioning of the school. Whether male or female, heads of department, and their equivalents in pastoral teams, should have school-wide interests and school-wide influences. They must speak both for their departments and for the whole school. (Marland, 1989:3). It is the duty of all heads of department to produce the most effective, personal and vigorous teaching and administration of the subject under their control.

To meet such demands of management excellence, the female head of department has to continually reflect on her skills and attributes and try to improve those skills that are essential for good leadership and management (Squelch and Lemmer 1994:8). As an effective leader she should "place a high value on people in the organization" follow McGregor's Theory Y, which assumes that "people in organizations are motivated to perform and to be subjects, not objects, in the organization" (Lemmer and Badenhorst 1998:336).

Up to now as statistics quoted earlier in this research, prove, women managers have not been given the opportunity to share in organizational development and exercise their power at top management levels. Organizational sexism is all too observable in attitudes and behaviours in management and many women are treated as "objects", rather than "subjects", with little opportunity to demonstrate their leadership abilities (Wrigley, 1998:52-57).

### 1.3. THE PURPOSE OF THIS INVESTIGATION

The idea of this research grew from the experiences of the writer, who has been a head of department for the last eighteen years, and from observations and experiences of her male and female colleagues. The research has concentrated on gender power relationship in departments, paying particular attention to the social and psychological barriers female heads of department experience in the execution of their duties. Attention has been focused on identifying and analyzing problems female heads of department experience in the Isipingo primary schools of the Durban South Region of KwaZulu Natal, with the aim of providing recommendations to assist them to cope with problems arising from prejudice.



## 1.4. DEFINITION OF TERMS

### 1.4.1. HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (H.O.D) IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

According to the English and American system of education the head of department is the “best qualified and frequently the most senior teacher of the subject or phase. The head’s of department organization is essential to produce the most effective personnel and vigorous teaching of the subject to the best needs of the pupils.” Marland (1989:3). In South Africa the head of department, is considered a “senior person”, that is, one who is most qualified and experienced to create the appropriate departmental environment for teachers. The head of department stands senior to the Level One teacher, but subordinate to the deputy principal.

### 1.4.2 PRIMARY SCHOOL PHASE

This is the pupils’ entry phase into education in which they master the first principles of reading, writing and mathematics. They are also introduced to a general content of religious instruction, technology, geography, history, physics, chemistry and languages other than the home language. Teaching is offered to children between seven and fourteen years old. The South African primary school system is similar to that of the English system, as explored in a study on the development of primary education in England Goodey (1995:214). The primary education phase demands trained teachers who are well equipped with the knowledge of children’s development as well as knowledge of subject content and skills. To meet these goals Goodey suggests that “the primary school should play an important part in improving the health, the manners, the level of intellectual attainment, the vitality and the happiness of the rising generation”. Moreover the primary school is the “common school of the whole population” (Goodey 1995:214).

The focus of this study is with particular reference to the Junior Primary Phase (Grade 1

to 3) and the Senior Primary Phase (Grades 4 to 7) of the Isipingo primary schools of the Durban South Region of KwaZulu Natal.

#### 1.4.3. SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPING

This refers to the norms and beliefs that are generally preferred about the values, characteristics and behaviour of one gender over the other. It often involves not only discrimination against a gender but also marginalising and isolating. Stereotyping holds that women, are inferior to men in education and achievement. Stereotyping is based upon prejudice which refers to instances where an unreasonable opinion, dislike or distrust arises from false information, rather than from reason or experience.

#### 1.5. METHODOLOGY

Materials to be used in this study will come from two main sources:

- the investigation has been preceded by a study of relevant published material (mostly from the United States of America, Britain and South Africa) and unpublished material, that is, lectures, theses, dissertations and Union - SADTU and APEK- bulletins. This was a necessary step in this qualitative research because it fulfilled the purpose of identifying problem areas or areas that were neglected and raised pertinent questions about the topic.
- a structured Likert type questionnaire was conducted in four of the primary schools of the Isipingo area. The questionnaire was formulated to explore the support that the female head of department received in her functions, that is, administration, staff development and the facilitation of learning.

## 1.6. OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

This research is divided into five chapters.

Chapter One provides a brief insight into the problems that female educators experience in their workplace. Included also are definitions of terms used in the research and the proposed method of investigation.

Chapter 2 begins with an overview of the functions of the head of department. A comparison between the English, American and Isipingo primary schools will be done. These functions will be viewed from a wide perspective, discussing the various factors that influence the application of female heads of department duties.

In Chapter 3 the research method and the procedures concerning the questionnaire analysis will be discussed.

In Chapter 4 an analysis of the results will be made from the Likert type questionnaire, followed by a discussion of the results.

Recommendations for the possible improvement of the position of female heads of department in primary schools will be suggested in Chapter 5.

## 1.7. SUMMARY

In Chapter 1 of this research, the background was introduced and the objectives briefly outlined. Female heads of department in the Isipingo area of the Durban South Region of KwaZulu Natal formed part of this research and they have many challenges to meet. These women are marginalised and considered not to be up to meeting the expectations of their position, their performance had been measured against the historically dominant presence of male managers in schools.

The scarcity of women in all spheres of educational leadership was explored in the South African, British and American systems. Organizational, attitudinal and behavioural prejudices have acted as barriers keeping women from achieving their maximum potential in the primary education phase. Women thus need to be empowered to challenge gender power prejudices in the workplace.

In Chapter 2 an overview of the functions of heads of department in the English, American and South African educational systems will be provided.

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## CHAPTER 2

### FUNCTIONS OF HEADS OF DEPARTMENT

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

*"A woman is accustomed to the role of a catalyst, incorporating the ideas and contributions of others to tolerate more informality and to function in a less authoritarian manner."*

*(Mirides, 1980:28)*

As the head of department in a primary school works with a small, fairly homogenous group of teachers, it is possible for her to give her individual attention to the organisational, administrative and professional matters of her department. Her awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of her teachers, for example, will allow her to distribute, more efficiently than other members of the school management hierarchy, duties such as staff deployment, time-tabling and the delegation of responsibility for the various extra-curricular activities of her school.

Her specialist knowledge of the phase, her teaching expertise and her professional relationship with her teachers also make it possible for the head of department to create a climate favourable for systematic staff development. Therefore the quality of work of a department often reflects the quality of instructional leadership of the head of department. Marland (1989), Levin and Lockheed (1993) and Lemmer and Badenhorst (1998) provide findings that the administration of primary schools are comparatively similar in England and Wales, United States of America, as well as those in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. Heads of department in English primary schools have more extensive duties than those of heads of department in the American and South African educational systems.

## **2.2. AN OVERVIEW OF THE FUNCTIONS OF HEADS OF DEPARTMENT: A COMPARISON BETWEEN ENGLISH, AMERICAN AND ISIPINGO PRIMARY SCHOOLS.**

The position of head of department existed in the primary schools of England and Wales and the United States of America long before its introduction, in 1979, in the primary schools of the Republic of South Africa.

From a study of the functions of heads of department in England and Wales in Marland (1989: 1-6), Levin and Lockheed (1993) and Everard and Morris (1989), Kemp and Nathan (1992), we find that the position of department head (the title preferred by American schools) is not as uniformly structured in the schools in New York as it is in English and Isipingo primary schools.

Findings about primary schools in New York and California were discussed by writers such as Wynn and Wynn (1988: 192-197) and Green (1997:60-75). From a study of these authors' works the writer concluded that the status and duties of heads of departments varied from country to country. However, with regard to specific functions, it was apparent that there were considerable similarity in the primary schools of England and Wales, New York and California and that of the Isipingo primary schools.

Seven basic functions of heads of department are emphasised in the three primary education systems. These are:

- promoting staff development;
- communicating information effectively;
- monitoring the work of teachers;
- supervising classroom teaching;
- monitoring pupil performance;
- taking responsibility for organisational matters;
- assisting with general school administration.



In the following sub-sections of this Chapter, each of these will be discussed in some detail.

### **2.2.1. PROMOTING STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

According to research findings by Levin and Lockheed (1993) it is interesting to note that English, American and the Isipingo primary schools share a common approach to the development of staff. Marland maintains that it is of all the duties "the most important and the most difficult and should be logically prior to all other responsibilities"(1989:45). Kemp and Nathan share Marland's view and conclude from the Wales Research Project on Heads of Department that: "from a managerial standpoint, improvement in the range and quality of staff expertise is crucial to the department's most valuable resources and is an investment for the future well-being of the school"(1992:173).

Professional development of staff not only results in an increased effectiveness within the department, it also leads to enhanced job satisfaction amongst colleagues. The staff developmental programmes in all three educational systems include specific tasks, such as organising teachers into a cohesive unit, stimulating and encouraging their professional growth and guiding beginning teachers. In South Africa developing guidelines for Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), entails advising teachers on personal and professional matters, assisting them to identify problems and working out tentative solutions, as well as conducting demonstration lessons.

Berry in Green focuses on the head's of department leadership and staff development role in the New York and Californian system of education. He refers to him as a "catalyst for action in his department," and describes him as "the most knowledgeable individual and the most effective leader in his field.....a consultant and a resource person to the members of his department." (1997:45-56).

This is also evident in the Isipingo schools where the introduction of the OBE system of teaching and learning has become the responsibility of heads of department who have to ensure that staff members are professionally equipped to meet the new challenges. It has been of particular importance in the delivery of OBE that heads of department in the Isipingo primary schools identify teachers' strengths and weaknesses. They have to co-operate with teachers in finding solutions to their difficulties, by using both formal and informal opportunities to offer guidance and advice. Small scale action research may be helpful in finding solutions. As the OBE programme has been implemented in all Isipingo primary schools it is imperative that heads of department are trained in the new approach and are given the resources and opportunities for training members of their own staff. This will be fully developed in Chapter 5.

The introduction of the OBE programmes in the Isipingo primary schools enables heads of departments to encourage greater collaboration and professional interaction among teachers. In these schools heads of department makes the effort to stimulate greater professional collegiality through regular sharing of ideas. This is especially important for total quality management (TQM), (as referred to in Chapter 1), that ideas be shared in order to confront practical and technical issues associated with subject mastery and classroom craft. This is most relevant to the implementation of the OBE programmes at Grade 1 and Grade 7 levels.

Development of new practices, such as the introduction of OBE, requires heads of department to manage change. According to Lemmer and Badenhorst change in public elementary schools is the key element in the American education system when compared to South African schools (1998:430). Some American schools in the states of California and New York are exceptionally well-resourced with educational aids, textbooks and technology. This is because these schools have a recommended teacher-pupil ratio of 17:1. This is also evident in England and Wales where their class sizes are 16:1. However, the South African ratio of 40:1 poses tremendous challenges for heads of department in this country.

South African heads of department have to develop management skills so that they and their teachers are able to cope with the slow transformation process. All three educational systems currently have one thing in common with regard to implementing staff development or INSET programmes, that is, that in all three education systems staff development is crucial to the effectiveness and development of their rapidly changing education institutions. The conducting of staff development workshops has until recently, been a very neglected area with regard to the training of heads of department, thus leaving them with a low confidence level. (Kemp and Nathan, 1992:173).

### 2.2.2. COMMUNICATING INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY

One of the major responsibilities of the head of department is to ensure effective communication of information and ideas from her department to other departments, as well as to senior management staff. The writer found during the course of her research in Isipingo primary schools that heads of department wanted improved communication within their own school and also with departments in other schools. In addition they desired better communication with their own teams at regular informal meetings.

Heads of department would also like to see greater contact between staff and parents as co-operation and understanding between them is necessary for effective education. It is part of the duty of the head of department to ensure that communication is effective in her own department and between other departments in the school. Staff efficiency is developed when they are informed about facts, problems and constraints relevant to their department or phase.

Good communication has to be an effective two-way process, not only with staff but also with parents. It is part of the heads' of department duty to be open and maintain informal contacts with parents with whom an interchange of information is essential. (Kemp and Nathan, 1992:69-71). The South African Schools' Act 84 of 1996 assists heads of

department in this regard in that greater parental and community involvement is encouraged to enable schools to function more effectively.

Generally in all three educational systems the heads of department have to operate an extensive communications network. The head of department does not have to communicate actively with all groups all the time, but she has to be aware that there will be times when she needs to do so. Communication with her team has to be most intense, followed by communication with other people in the school. The principal means of communication in the schools of England and New York is through department meetings.

### **2.2.3. MONITORING TEACHERS' WORK**

The monitoring of teachers' work at all primary schools, whether in England, New York or Isipingo is similar in that it is generally informal in nature. It does not entail the writing of any reports nor does it involve formal appraisal of teachers' work. However, a well structured appraisal system in schools was reviewed and introduced in the 1988 Reform Act in the English education system. The New York and Californian systems guide the elementary schools in the setting of an assessment programme for teachers which is based upon "liberal, individualistic, pragmatic and progressive principles". The elementary school teacher in New York and California has his probation, merit awards and promotion all dependent on an appraisal system (Theron and Van Staden in Dekker and Van Schalkwyk 1995:559). From 1998 the South African education system also adopted a similar approach where probation and merit awards depended on an appraisal system. According to Ken Biggs in the chapter on "Staff Appraisal" in Green appraisal is understood to be a "continuous and systematic process intended to help individual teachers in their professional development and career planning"(1997:125-126). Moreover, it enables the head of department to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers in her team. More specifically, according to Biggs, all three education systems' methods of appraisal enable heads of department to:

- recognise the achievement of teachers and help them identify ways of improving their skills
- help teachers, governing bodies and local education authorities (LEAs) to determine whether a change of duties would help teachers' professional development and improve their career prospects
- identify teachers' potential with the aim of helping them through appropriate in-service training
- help teachers, having difficulties with their performance, with appropriate guidance, counselling and training
- improve the management of the school

To successfully monitor teachers' work, each school will need to make adequate arrangements to review and monitor the appraisal process. This will assist the heads of department to evaluate how successful they have been in achieving some of the suggestions outlined above. In addition, governing bodies will need to have reports on aggregate targets and consider these in relation to the school and staff development plans. It is expected that each province, as in the case of South Africa, local education authorities (LEAs) in England, and the state of New York and California, will provide performance-related information about teachers to national education authorities.

#### **2.2.4. SUPERVISING CLASSROOM TEACHING**

In all three education systems the general agreement is that the heads of department should supervise and assess the teacher's performance in the classroom. Marland observes that "The head of department has to know what goes on in the classes for which she is responsible". This is done to ascertain what teaching materials are needed by her staff, the content of the subjects being taught and the learning outcomes that are being achieved (1989: 26).

According to Everard and Morris (1988:95) heads of department in the New York and Californian primary schools are responsible for supervising classroom performance. This includes an assessment of teachers' ability to select and utilise appropriate teaching methods, the skills in generating pupil involvement in the lesson, the proficiency in the use of audio-visual resources, the confidence in the delivery of lesson content, the rapport with pupils and the competence in creating an ordered classroom environment.

Besides the reasons outlined by Marland, classroom supervision gives the head of department in the English education system information that is directly relevant to the design of professional development activities (1989:26) Squelch and Lemmer (1994), in their analysis of supervision practices in the South African classrooms, hold similar views to Marland about the English system of classroom supervision and that to Everard and Morris's views about the New York and Californian system. The heads of department in all three education systems are able to gain information about the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers when they are involved in classroom supervision. Classroom supervision, according to Squelch and Lemmer's study, helps to provide information about the sources of difficulties and the possible avenues for change. It has been noted, in all three education systems, that classroom supervision allows heads of department to access the success or failure of their staff development programmes.

#### **2.2.5. MONITORING PUPIL PERFORMANCE**

The head of department is also required to monitor the performance of pupils in her specialist phase. She is generally required to analyse test results, projects, workbooks and examination marks, to identify pupils who are having difficulties with the subject, who are under-achievers and those who are "high-fliers". She is expected to design appropriate programmes for study for three groups of pupils - remedial programmes for those experiencing difficulties; motivation and alternate programmes for under-achievers; and extension and enrichment programmes for "high-fliers". As Marland observes of

heads of department in the English system their "ultimate responsibilities....are to the pupils of the school..." (1989:39).

In the Isipingo primary schools the writer has found that this function is generally referred to as "pupil-orientated supervision". It usually takes the form of regular scrutiny of the progress the pupil is making in the continuous assessment of Outcome Based Education. If a learner is performing poorly in any aspect of the programme the head of department interviews the learner to determine the cause of the problem. Should outside school factors be the source of the difficulties, she will enlist expert assistance from parents, the school guidance counsellor, and perhaps the Education Department's grade supervisor. Should the cause of the pupil's problem be an ineffective instructional programme, she endeavours to work closely with the teacher to devise alternative teaching strategies.

Another reason for monitoring pupil performance, according to the staff of Isipingo primary schools, is that it provides information and feedback about teaching problems within the department, as well as the success of staff development programmes. As Dimmock notes, monitoring pupil performance in the English primary schools will help to effect decisions on the "organisation and running of the department" (1998:1-19). In the schools of New York and California the heads of department monitoring of pupils' performance also gives them an insight into the provisioning of remedial teaching and training programmes for basic skills development, such as in the areas of reading, writing and arithmetic (Theron and Van Staden in Dekker and Van Schalkwyk 1995:597).

#### **2.2.6. RESPONSIBILITY FOR ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS**

The head of department is responsible for all organisational matters pertaining to her department or phase. In the Isipingo primary schools, for example, she studies the education department's catalogue of reference and textbooks and informs the principal of the books which should be purchased. She is also actively involved in requisitioning teaching equipment such as overhead projectors, laboratory and workshop requirements.

In the English, New York and South African primary schools the head of department manages and controls resources allocated to her department.

Another major organisational responsibility is the planning and supervision of tests and examinations. She has to appoint examiners and moderators for the various grades and to ensure the timeous completion of the typing of question papers and their duplication.

As soon as the tests, examinations and continuous assessments have been completed, the pupil's performance is examined and problem areas identified. Discussions are held with individual teachers as well as a team of teachers to iron out future problems.

The heads of department of the three educational systems referred to in this Chapter have other organisational responsibilities such as the deployment of staff at the beginning of the year, on the basis of the strengths and weaknesses of the individual teachers. They also assist with the planning and completion of the school's timetable at the beginning of the school year or, as in recent times in the KwaZulu-Natal schools, every term. This is because teachers are being redeployed every term by the Education Department, thus leaving heads of department the onerous task of having to redistribute the teaching load to available staff. The head of department is also responsible for the daily supervision of lesson plans, the weekly examination of the schemes of work to determine teachers' progress and the scrutiny of markbooks after tests and examinations.

#### **2.2.7. ASSISTING WITH GENERAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION**

Because of the size and complexity of modern primary schools, the principal requires the assistance of heads of department to complete the various tasks associated with the general administration of the school. In the primary schools of Isipingo, the organisational matters generally entrusted to heads of department include the preparation of a daily roster of relief teachers, the daily monitoring of pupils' attendance, the identification of regular absentees and communication with their parents where necessary.



She has to also collate general statistics for departmental purposes as well as supervise teachers assigned to be on play ground duty during intervals and lunch breaks.

Heads of department also assist with general school administration. This may prove useful when they aspire to higher positions. In interviews with principals a frequent reason advanced for the assignment of general administration duties to heads of department was that they had to be familiarized with the "wider field of school management" to facilitate their promotion to the next level.

The heads of department in the primary schools of England face a formidable task with regard to implementing organisational responsibilities in their schools. The heads of department have to assist the principals in providing information regarding their departments to the LEAs. Together with health authorities, they have to help in the administration of free medical and dental services and ensuring that free meals are administered to pupils. In addition they are delegated the responsibilities to establish, with the LEAs and the governing bodies, the curriculum which the school intends as its educational policy. Education in England is seen as an important step in the government's "back to basics" programme. The heads of department have to ensure that the national curriculum will concentrate on the 3 Rs with short pen and paper tests. Furthermore, the English system of teacher training has, since 1994, designated certain schools as "internship schools". It thus becomes incumbent upon the heads of department to ensure that teacher trainees are assigned to work under outstanding teachers. Such change in policies in the English education system places great demands on the administrative duties of the head of department (Goodey 1995 in Dekker and Van Schalkwyk 1995:171-217).

In New York and California, in addition to their normal administrative duties, heads of department in primary schools are also called upon to cultivate in learners an appreciation for and understanding of the environment, a sense of public and social responsibility and loyalty to the American democratic ideal. Because of this ideal heads of department are

required to assist in placing emphasis on group work and co-operation.

The heads of department in the New York and Californian schools are required to steer their teams to select themes (instead of subjects) for study at local, national and international levels. As the traditional examination system has been abolished and promotion from one grade to the next depends on pupils' performance during the year, it becomes the responsibility of the head of department to monitor all sorts of scholastic and achievement tests so that a uniform national standard of education is attained in primary schools (Theron and Van Staden 1995 in Dekker and Van Schalkwyk 1995:535-565).

### 2.3. CONCLUSION

From a study of the functions of heads of department in England, New York and Isipingo schools, the researcher has concluded that there is a high degree of unanimity about the basic functions of the head of department.

Implementing the above-mentioned functions in all three educational systems are problematic because heads of department lack management skills. The researcher concludes that heads of department are expected to gain from their "on the job experience" and that such experiences should be adequate to equip them for their many functions. As indicated in Chapter 1, the only other recourse is to develop the expertise of heads of department by engaging them in a systematic management training programme. Such capacity building programmes, undertaken by all three education systems, will enable the heads of department to perform the functions outlined in this Chapter.

## 2.4 SUMMARY

In this Chapter the importance of the position and the contribution which the head of department is able to make to the professional growth of her teachers and by extension, to the quality of work in the classroom was discussed. Attention was also focused on the functions of heads of department in the England, New York and Isipingo primary schools.

In all three education systems these functions include promoting staff development, communicating information effectively, monitoring the work of teachers, supervising classroom teaching, monitoring pupil performance and having responsibility for organisational matters.

The Chapter concluded with the view that heads of department are not only engaged in the execution of their functions, but they are able to gain expertise in the total administration of the school, which prepares them for promotion to the next level.

The next Chapter will deal with the research methodology used, procedures for the collection of data and the analysis of statistical information.

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## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, PROCEDURES AND EVALUATION OF RESULTS

*"The dogmas of the quiet past sleep quietly beneath the turbulence of the present; And those who bestir that turbulence: The thinkers of today, the pioneers of tomorrow, create new methodologies that affect us all".*

*Peggy A. Ertmer*

*(Leedy P.D. 1997:155)*

#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

Previous chapters served as a background to the research programme in this study. The literature survey provided an overview of existing research in this and related fields. Certain aspects of the literature survey were inconclusive, namely, whether female heads of department experienced problems in primary schools where previously males had dominated promotion posts. These two aspects were the reason for this research report and it was decided that the qualitative method be used to investigate them.

This Chapter presents a description of the methodology employed in this research. It begins with the theoretical background, including the rationale for the use of qualitative methodology. Limitations of the research are indicated. Sampling, the questionnaire design, pre-testing and responses are also indicated. The Chapter concludes with a statement concerning the researcher's subjectivity.

## 3.2 TRADITIONS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Although qualitative methodology is comparatively new in the field of educational research, it has been successfully applied in the field of sociology. Because of sociology's relevance for education, it followed that qualitative methodology was also applied when observing human behaviour in education. Human behaviour does not follow rigid natural laws. There is regularity but never of the same quality (Maxwell, 1996:25). Journal articles and studies reveal that qualitative research has been popular in New York, England and South Africa.

### 3.2.1. WHAT IS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?

Qualitative research is inductive. There are four common qualitative designs, namely, case studies, ethnography, phenomenology and grounded theory. As this research had a sociological approach, the grounded theory design was its basis. Grounded theorists start with broad research questions, such as the questionnaire of this research. This provides the freedom and flexibility to explore the problems associated with the attitudes that female heads of department experience. The research questions identified the general focus for this research report and were action and process orientated. Depending on how the questions are focused, the researcher gathered different data and attended to different aspects of the analysis.

In qualitative research hypotheses or theories are not the starting point - reality is. Hypotheses, themes, or issues emerges from the study of reality. Findings are not expressed in numbers but in words. The sample population was small, (61 educators in this research report), and was carefully selected by the researcher according to certain criteria. Qualitative research often employs unstructured (open) questionnaires. (Mitchell and Jolley, 1992:528).

### **3.2.2. THE USEFULNESS OF A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

"Qualitative research provides important early steps in the systematic investigation of a topic" (Maxwell, 1996:17). Because it is concerned with the understanding of human behaviour from the individual's own frame of reference, it "allows us to know people personally and to see them as they are developing their own definitions of the world" (Maxwell, 1996:53). It thus allows researchers to study ideas and concepts which may be lost in quantitative approaches. Qualitative research seeks to understand behaviour from the "action" point of view: the researcher, seeks to discover the specific experiences of the respondents. (Patton, 1987: 29).

### **3.2.3 QUALITATIVE COMPONENTS**

Qualitative methods (what is actually done in conducting a qualitative study) have four main components. These are:

- the research relationship: established with the subjects of the study
- sampling: what times, settings or individuals are selected for observation and what other sources of information are used
- data collection
- data analysis

These components are important aspects of this study and will affect the value and validity of the conclusions and recommendations that will be made in the next Chapter. It is therefore useful to think of these as "design decisions" (Maxwell, 1996: 65-66).

## **3.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

### **3.3.1. VALUE-FREE FINDINGS**

As Kidder (1981:85) points out, there is a tendency on the part of the social scientists to view society from the perspective of their own value system. Nevertheless, Kidder, argues that it is possible for the social scientist, once having recognised her own personal values, to guard against their distorting influence and to strive for "personal authenticity" (1981:105-107).



Striving for "personal authenticity" and objectivity was particularly relevant to the researcher, who is the only female head of department in a staff of thirty females, four males, three of whom are in management positions. The researcher was often seen as part of the management hierarchy and had to make every effort to overcome the suspicion of staff concerning her research. This was done by emphasizing confidentiality of responses.

### 3.4. SCHOOL-BASED SAMPLES

The sample that received the questionnaire for completion in November 1998 was drawn from four out of ten primary schools in the Isipingo area. The sample comprised educators of both sexes from Level One to principal. In each case the principal was asked to ensure that only teachers with more than five years' service completed the questionnaire, as they were experienced in working with heads of department. The four schools studied had a total of eighty-one staff members and eighty-one questionnaires were distributed. Details of the sample and sixty-one responses are indicated in Table 3.1. Sixty-one responses constituted a return of 76.25 %, which is considered sufficient.

TABLE 3.1

#### SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION AND RETURNS

	SEX		TOTAL	USABLE RETURNS			% RESPONSE
	M	F		M	F	TOTAL	
PRINCIPALS	2	2	4	2	2	4	100
DEPUTY PRINCIPALS	1	-	1	1	-	1	100
H.O.D.s	2	5	7	2	4	6	85.71
LEVEL 1	13	56	69	10	40	50	72.46
TOTAL	18	63	81	15	46	61	76.25

### 3.5. PRETESTING THE QUESTIONNAIRE (THE PILOT STUDY)

Literature on research methodology advises the pretesting of the research instrument in order to make the necessary changes if problems were discovered. The pre-test or pilot group should have characteristics closely parallel to those of the selected sample: "the pilot run is done with a sample which is similar to the group from which the sample will be selected" Maxwell (1996: 44-45).

As the anonymity and objectivity of the researcher's colleagues were compromised by their assisting with the pre-testing of the questionnaire, they were excluded from the final sample. However, the comments of the more experienced and better qualified of the researcher's colleagues were noted.

The pilot study concentrated on testing for ambiguity and was useful in leading to rephrasing of ambiguous questions and in revising the order of questions so that they were easily understood and meaningful.

### 3.6. PROCEDURES FOR DATA COLLECTION

Letters and questionnaires were personally delivered in the first week of November 1998 to principals of the four Isipingo primary schools which formed the sample. The assistance of principals was sought in the distribution of questionnaires and letters (Addenda 1, 2 and 3). In the administration of the questionnaire every attempt was made to reduce "non-response". Thus the following was done:

- the questionnaire was available in English and set out in an uncluttered format for easy reading and completion
- it was made as interesting as possible and included several closed questions to reduce the time needed by the respondent to complete the questionnaire (i.e ± 10 minutes)

- a paragraph was included on the first page of the questionnaire, explaining the reasons for the study
- the questionnaire was handed to both male and female staff members who had more than five years of teaching experience (irrespective of rank)
- the questionnaires were personally collected by the researcher a week later, after a telephonic reminder to the principal

### 3.7. THE QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The questionnaire was compiled by reviewing relevant literature, obtaining advice from academic researchers and pre-testing the questionnaire, as stated above. The structured questionnaire comprised sixty-two questions, divided into five parts.

Part 1: Personal particulars of educators (5 questions):

This Section was designed to obtain information on the personal particulars of the respondents such as gender, qualifications and years of teaching experience.

Part 2: Function (16 questions):

Here the instrument aimed to establish the functioning of female heads of department.

Part 3: Effectiveness in administration (18 questions):

This covered the ability of female heads of department to be effective and dynamic administrators.

Part 4: Staff development and team building (16 questions):

This Section dealt with the role of heads of department in the upgrading of educators.

Part 5: Facilitation of the learning process (7 questions):

Here the researcher aimed to determine whether female heads of department were successful in setting up interesting learning programmes for learners.

Simple and unambiguous structured questions were developed based on the objectives outlined above. Respondents had to choose one of five responses, ranging from "strongly

agree" to "strongly disagree" for each of the statements. Each response carried the same weight.

### 3.8. RESPONSE DATA

Table 3.2 was an analysis of question 2 of part 1 (number of years of teaching experience). This detail had relevance for the responses obtained from parts 2 to 5 of the questionnaire. It was interesting to note that the bulk of the responses came from personnel who had ten to fifteen years of teaching experience (36 %).

TABLE 3.2

#### NUMBER OF YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN YEARS	PRINCIPAL	DEPUTY PRINCIPAL	H.O.D.	LEVEL 1	TOTAL
5 - 10				19	19
10 - 15	1	-	3	18	22
OVER 15	3	1	3	13	20
TOTAL	4	1	6	50	61

Table 3.3 was an analysis of Question 3 and Question 4 of part 1, which dealt with the academic and professional qualifications of the respondents in terms of category classification.

TABLE 3.3

*ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS*

QUALIFICATION	CATEGORY CLASSIFICATION				
GRADE	PRINCIPAL	DEPUTY PRINCIPAL	H.O.D.	LEVEL 1	TOTAL
C			1	20	21
D	1	1	4	13	19
E	1		1	9	11
F	2			6	8
G				2	2
TOTAL	4	1	6	50	61

Table 3.3 indicated that the highest number of respondents came from Category "C" which indicates the possession of a teaching diploma without a completed degree. In contrast Category "G" requires a minimum of a Master's Degree, in addition to a general teaching qualification. Only 2 of Level One respondents met this condition. It was interesting to note that six staff in management ( principal- 1, deputy principal- 1, head of department- 4) were Category "D". Thirteen Level 1 educators had also attained a "D" grading. All the respondents were "professionally" and "sufficiently" educated so it may be assumed that they understood and were able to answer the questions. Table 3.3 denoted the level of expertise of the respondents in the research.

### 3.9. ANALYSIS OF DATA

The Likert Scale was used in Parts 2, 3, 4, 5, of the questionnaire. It was used to determine the degree of agreement or disagreement in respect of attitudes being measured. This Scale was based on a simple summation of the individual's responses, by means of a tick to a number of statements, each of which carried the same weight in

determining the Scale score. The number of responses per category was totalled and converted into a percentage to determine the overall response for each statement. The data was then analysed by the process of "open coding" which, according to Leedy, is the: "process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data"(1997: 164).

### **3.10. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

To test the reliability of this research the researcher repeated questions to determine the consistency and honesty of the responses. Correlated results indicated that the research had reliability and validity as it measured the phenomenon it set out to measure (Bainbridge, 1991:212-213). Reliability was evident in questions 8.3 and 8.9 of the questionnaire.

### **3.11. SUMMARY**

In an attempt to justify the use of qualitative methodology this Chapter dealt with this approach to research and outlined its theoretical basis. The data collection instrument, sampling and data analysis procedures were also described. The questions of reliability and validity as well as an examination of the limitations of the research were also included. The researcher's own stance and values were discussed in order to eliminate or minimise potential bias.

The following Chapter focuses on the data obtained and analyses the remaining parts of the questionnaire. The focus of attention will shift to identifying actual problems, which impede the functioning of female heads of department.

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## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

*“Although we set out primarily to study reality, it does not follow that we do not wish to improve it; we should judge our researches to have no worth at all if they were to have only a speculative interest. If we separate carefully the theoretical from the practical problems, it is not to the neglect of the latter; but, on the contrary, to be in a better position - to solve them”.*

*Hoy, W.K. and Miskel, C.G. 1982: 17*

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter is concerned with reporting results of the research which was conducted by means of a questionnaire and (as indicated in the previous Chapter) was personally distributed by the researcher to educators of the four Isipingo primary schools.

The findings are reported in the same sequence and under the same headings as the items appeared in the questionnaire. Part 1 (personal particulars of educators) was analysed in Chapter 3, and will not be discussed in this Chapter. Evaluations based on the findings of the field research are presented and discussed. Analysis of the findings are accompanied by numerical tabulations and graphical representation.



**4.2. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

**4.2.1. TABLE 4.1: FUNCTIONS**

The statements in this Section were designed to gauge the respondents' perceptions of the functions of female heads of department in Isipingo primary schools. The focus was on establishing the degree of congruence between perception of the function and the level of involvement of female heads of department. The results presented in Table 4.1(Page 41) cross-tabulate the position of respondents in viewing the functions of female heads of department.

TABLE 4.1

## CROSS-TABULATION: POSITION OF RESPONDENTS' ROLE FUNCTION

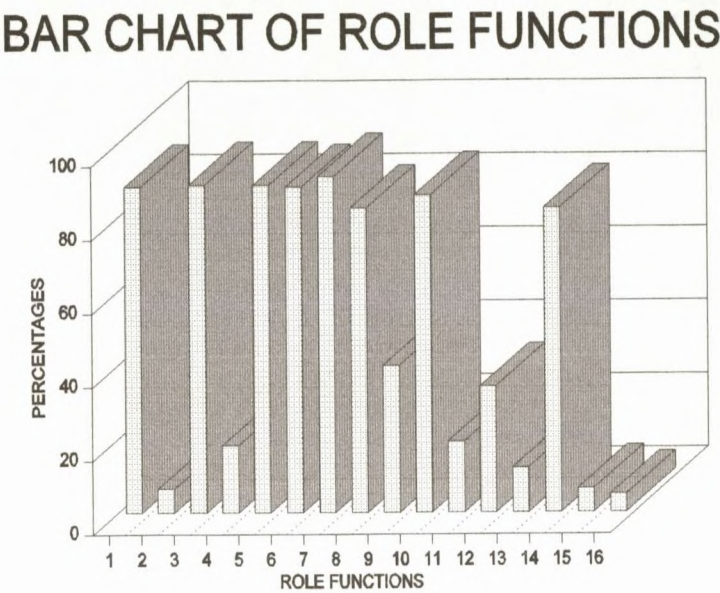
6. THE FEMALE H.O.D:	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
6.1 Establishes departmental aims, policies and objectives in keeping with the school's overall policy.	45.71	42.85	5.71	2.85	2.85
6.2 Promotes equal opportunity of duties for both male and female staff.	3.27	3.27	4.91	42.85	45.71
6.3 Supports staff in providing a multi-cultural education.	40	49.8	4.91	2.85	2.85
6.4 Prepares the departmental timetable.	6.25	12.5	9.38	34.37	40.67
6.5 Is consulted by the deputy-head and the principal for staff allocation.	49.18	40	4.91	2.85	2.85
6.6 Prepares, circulates and reviews syllabuses and schemes of work.	45.71	42.85	2.85	2.85	4.91
6.7 Checks on the standard of the test questions, marking memoranda and tests.	40	51.2	2.85	-	5.71
6.8 Controls the proper planning, preparation, teaching and assessment of work.	42.85	40	9.38	5.71	2.85
6.9 Sees to the setting and marking of homework.	11.42	28.57	2.85	40	17.14
6.10 Establishes a uniform procedure for the continuous assessment of pupils.	37.14	49.14	9.38	2.85	2.85
6.11 Arranges all testing programmes and executes them in a well-organised manner.	4.91	14.28	4.91	42.85	31.42
6.12 Prepares the departmental budget	14.28	20	14.28	14.28	37.14
6.13 Checks on the maintenance and security of her department's learning centre, equipment and stock.	2.85	9.38	17.14	28.57	40
6.14 Establishes effective links with library staff and other resource persons within the school.	42.85	40	9.38	2.85	4.91
6.15 Networks with universities, technikons, colleges, high schools and other primary schools to assist her department with current information.	3.27	3.27	20	34.28	40
6.16 Arranges a roster fairly to cater for relieving absent teachers.	4.91	0	4.91	40	49.18

Respondents were asked to study a list of sixteen functions, devised from the literature review. Between 82.85 % to 91.20 % of educators strongly agreed that of the sixteen role functions, eight were well executed by female heads of department. The eight functions for which the female head of department was strongly rated are detailed. Answers to questions 6.1, 6.3, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 6.10 and 6.14 indicated very clearly that respondents strongly agreed that the female head of department played an important role in specific duties. In particular 88.56 % rated her ability to align her department's goals and policies to that of the school; 89.08 % agreed that she assisted her team by engaging them in multicultural education; 89.18 % strongly agreed that she consulted with senior management regarding her teams' subject allocation; 88.56 % were supportive of the fact that she prepared and shared both syllabus and curriculum content as stated in 6.6; 91.02% were highly supportive of her planning and controlling of continuous assessments, tests and examinations; 82.85 % agreed that she was excellent at maintaining links and working closely with the library staff and other resource personnel in her school. In essence this indicated that female heads of department were quite capable of supervising routine duties.

However, Table 4.1 indicated low responses to questions 6.2, 6.4, 6.12 and 6.15. Analysis revealed that female heads of department received only 6.54 % support for her consultation with both males and females on her staff regarding important decisions; 18.30 % agreed that she was able to successfully assist in the preparation of the departmental time table as only 34.28 % agreed that she was coping with budgeting and finance duties. A mere 6.54 % found her assisting her department's functioning by networking with other primary and secondary schools, as well as tertiary institutions. This could possibly mean that it was the policy and practice of the school for females not to be involved in budgeting and finance duties.

The Bar Chart in Figure 4.1 illustrates the degree of support received from respondents for different aspects of her functions. The numbers on the horizontal scale correspond to the numbers of each of the statements given in Table 4.1.

FIGURE 4.1



Distribution of results as illustrated in Table 4.1 and Bar Chart figure 4.1, indicated that the female head of department was highly rated for routine supervisory duties but received very low responses for the more challenging and demanding responsibilities, which had been previously discharged by male heads of department. This seemed to indicate that respondents' perceived that gender played a dominant role in her inability to perform these duties successfully. Prior to females gaining access to management positions, males were entrusted with duties such as the compilation of the time-table, auditing, budgeting and financing, maintenance and repairs to the school building and equipment, as well as liaising with outside agencies and educational institutions. One of the reasons for female heads of department being rated so poorly in respect of these duties may be lack of training and experience, when compared to the additional training and exposure that males were known to experience in their duties at schools.

Furthermore it may be concluded from the responses to Part 2 of the questionnaire that the guidance the female head of department was expected to offer was minimal and that her relationship with her staff was largely one of control. This is indicated by her ratings for the usual tasks of inspecting teachers in the classroom, checking record books and following through on pupils' performance. These are "control-evaluative" functions that do not require any special expertise and are not gender-specific: they could be done by either male or female heads of department.

Discussing the problems of the functions of department heads in elementary schools in England, King and Hill maintain that the basic problem confronting department heads is one of achieving an "appropriate balance" between the requirements of the position and its satisfactory application (1993:251). Examples from the research in the Isipingo schools also indicated that female heads of department should create an appropriate balance in the delivery of their functions. This was especially so with regard to duties that bordered on the routine, the clerical and, the supervisory domain. They should be seen as functioning more professionally regarding the upliftment of the standards in their departments.

Female heads' of department role was often not seen as administrative, but as "care givers" and as "nurturers". They thus found themselves confronted with the intensely prejudiced position taken by both Level One and senior management as women capable only of performing mundane and unchallenging duties. It would seem that because of the poor response received for the "masculine type" of duties (as described above) there was a gender bias against female heads of department in the Isipingo primary schools. According to Paechter, women in the United States of America are often seen in jobs similar to the "wife-mother" domesticated role: they are considered best in careers as nurses or teachers (both nurturing and caring) (1998: 12-13). The main problem that a female head of department experienced, as concluded from Part 2 of the questionnaire, was that of not being recognised as capable of exercising authority and making important

administrative decisions and she was constantly compared to her male colleagues in the same role.

#### **4.2.2. TABLE 4.2: EFFECTIVENESS IN ADMINISTRATION**

This Section (Part 3) is designed to determine respondents' perception in how efficient female heads of department are in the administration of their duties. The results in Table 4.2 (Page 46) cross-tabulated the views of respondents.

TABLE 4.2

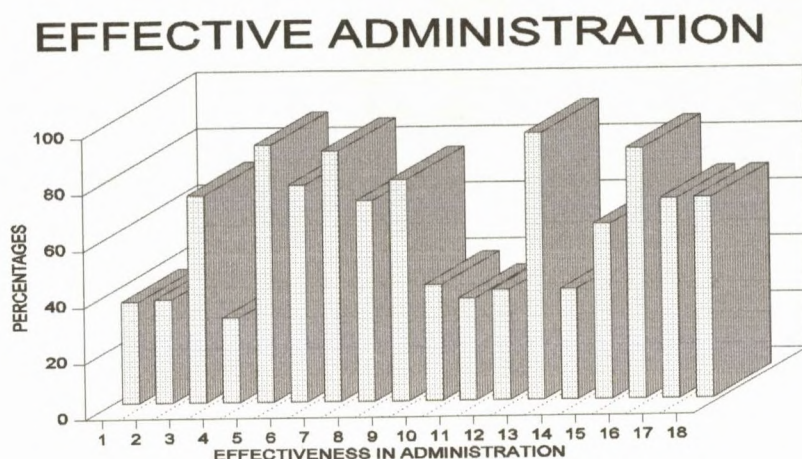
## POSITION OF RESPONDENTS: EFFECTIVENESS IN ADMINISTRATION

7. THE FEMALE H.O.D.	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
7.1 Plans ahead to achieve departmental vision and goals.	14.75	21.31	8.2	37.71	18.03
7.2 Prioritizes tasks to meet urgent deadlines.	19.67	17.14	21.31	27.71	14.17
7.3 Sees that tasks are completed effectively.	24.59	49.18	4.91	9.38	11.47
7.4 Creates a sense of shared purpose and direction for her team.	9.38	11.42	19.67	34.18	24.59
7.5 Consults her team timeously on issues concerning her department.	57.14	34.28	6.55	0	2.85
7.6 Communicates her intention clearly and concisely.	37.14	40	11.47	3.27	9.38
7.7 Appears to be under stress on most occasions.	40	49.18	2.85	3.27	6.55
7.8 Takes on more responsibilities than she can cope with.	31.14	40	8.2	11.47	9.38
7.9 Only trusts herself to do most of the tasks.	37.71	40.98	6.55	6.55	8.2
7.10 Delegates tasks and duties to other members of the team.	21.31	20	9.38	37.14	13.11
7.11 Leads by example by taking on extra work.	20	16.39	14.75	24.59	24.59
7.12 Treats her team fairly by an equal distribution of work load.	18.03	21.31	9.83	27.71	24.59
7.13 Praises good work.	49.18	45.71	0	0	2.85
7.14 Socialises with her staff.	19.67	19.67	8.19	26.22	26.22
7.15 Resolves conflict situations fairly.	32.78	29.5	9.83	11.47	16.39
7.16 Encourages her staff to engage in excursions, sports, debates quizzes, etc.	49.18	40	4.91	3.27	3.27
7.17 Attends to the timetable, training and induction of student teachers.	40	31.14	21.31	4.91	2.85
7.18 Provides pastoral care to probationary staff.	34.28	37.14	19.67	9.38	9.38



The Bar Chart in Figure 4.2 gives a graphical representation of the support received from the respondents for the different aspects of Table 4.2. The numbers in the horizontal scale from one to eighteen correspond to the numbers of each statement given in Table 4.2.

FIGURE 4.2



The statements in this Section were designed to gauge respondents' perception of how effective female heads of department were in their administrative duties. The results are crossed-tabulated in Table 4.2 while the bar chart, Figure 4.2 supplies a graphical overview of the ratings achieved for each statement. The analysis of results displayed an erratic degree of support for each of the statements selected. This showed that the responses received lacked congruency between what the head of department perceived as being her priority as an effective administrator, with what she actually accomplished.

Answers to question 7.3 (73.77 %) and 7.4 (20.80 %) are examples of the degree of inconsistency found in the effectiveness of her administration. In this regard she, on the one hand, demanded effective completion of tasks while at the same time she provided very little constructive purpose and direction to achieve them. Responses to 7.1, 7.2 and 7.4 (over 30 % consensus) indicated clearly that the respondents were consistently low in their rating of her planning, prioritising and implementation of the planned process. This was the case despite the responses received in 7.5 (91.42 %) in which she was



strongly supported for being a visionary planner who consulted with her team. In her eagerness to be recognised as an effective administrator 71.14% (7.8) strongly agreed that she took on more work than which she could cope with. This consistency in her management style was also verified in 7.9 by 78.69 % of the respondents who strongly agreed that she only trusted herself to do most of the work. Only 36.39 % (7.11) agreed that she led by example by taking on extra work herself, leaving 41.31 % (7.10) supporting the fact that she delegated tasks and duties to other members of her team. Conflicting responses such as these leave the researcher to conclude that despite the fact that she performed these functions, she was not able to achieve the objectives she had hoped to achieve.

73.77 % (7.3) strongly agreed that under her supervision tasks had been completed effectively, thus allowing the researcher to conclude that as a woman she often made concerted efforts to give of her best. In 7.6, 77.14 % strongly agreed that the female head of department made every effort to communicate her intentions clearly and concisely. This was especially important as she had entered what had been historically known as a masculine domain. Previously most male educators were promoted to leadership positions and were known to have managed primary schools excellently. In 7.7, 89.18% of the respondents strongly agreed that the female head of department appeared to be under stress on most occasions. This may perhaps account for the fact that only 39.34 % in 7.14 agreed that she socialised on a regular basis with her staff. Strong support for 7.13, 94.89 % was for her heaping praise on her staff in appreciation of their work. Teachers tend to give of their best when they receive positive reinforcement, especially from their superiors. The researcher discovered, as did Colgate, that females were generally considered to be "warm, nurturing, caring and pastoral type of personalities, who appreciate those with whom they share their work and experiences (1976:95).

From the analysis done in this Section it was evident that the female head of department was wrestling with both internal and external pressures and barriers to accomplish her administrative duties effectively. In order to overcome the internal barriers of low self-confidence and low self-esteem, she democratically consulted her team on issues concerning their department. This helped to boost her self confidence as was evident by the 91.42% support she received in 7.5. 78.69 % of the response to 7.9 indicated that she lacked assertiveness in engaging the help of her team to complete tasks effectively. The external barriers that she had to cope with as an effective administrator were linked to her capacity to socialise, therefore the low support of 39.34 % in 7.14.

#### **4.2.3. TABLE 4.3: STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TEAM BUILDING**

##### **4.2.3.1. INTRODUCTION**

The researcher submits that the move from the position of teacher to head of department involves a major transition from one type of activity to another. The new position demands not only a constantly high standard of teaching performance, but also effective management skills, including strong interpersonal relationships. She has to therefore devise appropriate staff developmental programmes which will increase both her own and her teams effectiveness. At a time of massive changes in our education system, it is appropriate that we should take stock of the way in which we encourage staff to develop their qualifications, experience and professionalism (Brew, 1995:1). We were concerned in 4.2.3 with the development of staff to fit roles and responsibilities and the part a female head of department could play. Hitherto staff development had been concerned with improving only teaching and learning in the primary schools. The needs of staff differ and programmes should be designed to deal with these differences. Robin Middlehurst in Brew suggests that "heads of department should provide a model of development both by being themselves engaged in it, as well as by setting up structures and systems wherein development can take place in all areas" (1995:95).

In this Section (Table 4.3) questions were designed to determine the attitudes of respondents towards female heads of department in their implementation of staff development and team building programmes. The results presented in Table 4.3 (Page 51) cross-tabulated the position of the respondents on the staff development programmes implemented at their schools.

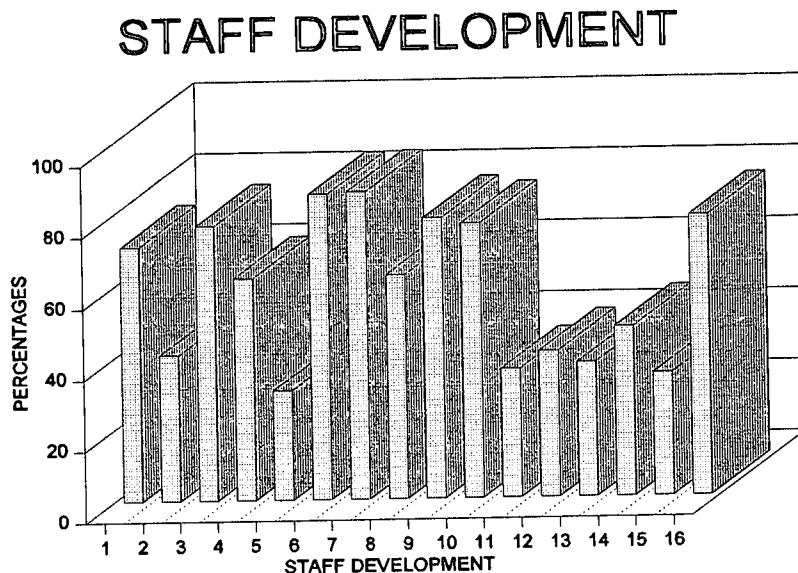
TABLE 4.3

## CROSS-TABULATION: STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TEAM BUILDING EFFECTIVENESS

8. FEMALE H.O.Ds:	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
8.1 Encourages her department's teachers to attend INSET courses.	31.42	40	19.67	4.91	4.91
8.2 Develops in-house training to introduce new techniques in teaching and learning programmes.	21.31	19.67	14.75	22.95	21.31
8.3 Consults her team before programming a team activity.	40	37.14	14.28	4.91	4.91
8.4 Consults with her team on choice of time and dates for staff development programmes.	29.5	32.78	8.2	13.11	16.39
8.5 Evaluates departmental progress by holding regular meetings.	16.39	14.28	13.11	27.71	29.5
8.6 Is friendly, approachable and fosters team spirit.	60	25.71	9.38	9.38	3.27
8.7 Gives direction to individual teachers to review and clarify tasks relevant to their subjects.	48.18	37.14	9.38	9.38	9.38
8.8 Encourages her departmental teachers to mutually observe and analyse each others lessons.	31.42	31.42	14.28	18.03	9.38
8.9 Encourages participatory and consensus decision making.	29.5	49.18	8.2	9.38	8.2
8.10 Identifies weaknesses regarding teaching methodology and finds solutions to remedy them.	37.14	40	14.28	9.38	9.38
8.11 Sets goals on where her department should go.	14.75	19.67	9.38	37.71	18.05
8.12 Translates vision/goals into concrete actions.	21.31	19.67	14.75	22.95	21.31
8.13 Ensures that her team works systematically and efficiently to achieve goals.	18.05	19.67	13.11	24.59	24.59
8.14 Is an "enrichment co-ordinator", providing techniques for teaching gifted pupils.	22.95	24.59	11.47	19.67	21.31
8.15 Trains teams to design and implement resources for pupils with learning difficulties.	16.39	18.05	13.11	27.71	27.71
8.16 Provides individual counselling and career advice to team members.	29.5	49.18	9.38	9.38	3.27

The Bar Chart in Figure 4.3 indicates the degree of support received from respondents for the different aspects of staff development and team building. A study of the Bar Chart reflects a degree of support for each of the statements selected. This indicated to the researcher the need to introduce training programmes in those areas that required it.

FIGURE 4.3



71.42 % of the respondents were in agreement that their teams were encouraged to attend in-service training, thus promoting their professional development. However, only 40.98% felt that they were provided with in-house training in new techniques of teaching and learning. 71.42 % in 8.1 acknowledged that they were permitted to attend external in-service courses for their development. However, since only 30.67 % in 8.5 agreed that the female head of department had follow-up meetings to determine the impact of these in-service courses, it was felt that her attempts at staff development were not consistent. With regards to goal setting as evident in 8.11 only 34.42 % agreed that she set departmental goals.

In 8.12, 40.98% agreed that she had actually implemented these goals and visions in her department. In addition to this, 8.13 agreed by only 37.72 % of the respondents who

indicated that female heads of department worked systematically and efficiently to achieve their goals. All these responses indicated that the female head of department lacked leadership in conducting her duties. A low response to 8.14 (47.54 %) showed that she was not viewed as an “enrichment co-ordinator”, who provided guidance to her team in developing the gifted child.

This, however, was to be expected of a person in her position as she had assumed her promotion from a Level One teacher to head of department without formal training to equip her in team building. This was verified in 8.15 as 34.44 % agreed that she also failed to design and implement sufficient resources for pupils with learning difficulties, as well as not providing effective training for her team in this aspect of teaching. 85.32% of the responses to 8.7 agreed that the female head of department gave direction to individual teachers to review and clarify tasks relevant to their subject, while 77.14 % (8.10) maintained that she identified weaknesses regarding teaching methodology and found solutions to remedy them. The high support for these statements showed that her primary function was seen as one of control and evaluation of the teachers’ classroom work.

A key assumption in this study is that concentration on evaluation by writing regular reports on individual teachers and supervising them in the classroom does not contribute significantly to the overall development of the school. This could be attributed to the fact that although the female head of department might possess the ability to identify teaching difficulties, she often did not possess the management skills and strategies required to formulate and implement a successful staff development and team building programme.

Staff development and team building is generally recognised to be the principal function of the head of department. To prove this the Bar Chart, Figure 4.3, illustrated the eight statements which were considered to be the most important on the basis of the ratings of the respondents (Table 4.3). A point that emerged from the analysis of this Section, as indicated in the Bar Chart 4.3, reveals that the female head’s of department

professionalism improved through her staff development programmes. This could cause a chain reaction that improves classroom craft and which would benefit the pupils, as evidenced in 7.16 (89.18 %). Furthermore, reinforcing her staff by complimenting and praising them for their good work in 7.13 (94.89 %) may impact positively on pupil performance. According to Glatter, teachers in England had been trained in appraisal, in assessment techniques, in counselling, as well as for leadership roles (1995:138-143). Colgate maintained that, as teachers in New York lacked special training in staff development and team building programmes, it made them the weakest link in the management plan (1976:124-125).

In answers to questions 8.2, 8.5, 8.11, 8.12, 8.13, 8.14 and 8.15, over 30 % indicated that they did not find female heads of department of much assistance in staff development. Probable reasons (following the research of Piek (1992:131), Dimmock (1993:150-153), Kemp and Nathan (1992:172-179) and others) are that this poor response may be caused by a lack of training, lack of role clarity and lack of time, due to the extra teaching loads female heads of department assume. The Isipingo primary schools have been most affected by heads of department having limited time to conduct staff development programmes, particularly in the last two years. All heads of department have been affected in this respect but in the case of female heads' of department non-delivery of staff development, this has been labelled as female incompetency.

Earlier in this study reference was made in Table 4.2, 7.15 that 62.28 % of the respondents saw the female head of department constantly engaged in conflict management. However, this need not be the situation in primary schools if she is providing well-structured capacity building programmes that enhance a co-operative and collaborative relationship amongst members of her team. Control of teachers' work to establish compliance with departmental requirements and an evaluation of their teaching competence may force female heads of department to assume a superior judgmental stance. This leads to uneasy tensions between the informal, spontaneous and collegial relationship that 85.71 % (question 8.6) indicated. Therefore, a healthy relationship

needs to exist between the team and the female head of department in order to create a climate conducive to a productive staff developmental programme. The success of female heads' of department implementation of a staff development programme is largely dependent on how well she gets on and is accepted within the circle of her team. Female heads' of department relationships with their teams in terms of their values, beliefs and norms, as well as how the team interacts to further its goals, can hinder or promote their attempts at ensuring a successful staff development programme (Glover and Law, 1996:25-30).

In question 8.15, 34.44 % respondents found that the female head of department was not effective in providing guidance and direction for her team to work with children needing special and remedial help. Several reasons could be cited for this: perhaps her own lack of confidence or expertise due to lack of training. It could also be attributed to the fact that she had to contend with the external social barriers that are discriminatory, as Glover and Law note "communities do not accept women in leadership positions ..... and potential colleagues and subordinates do not want to work with women" (1996:41).

**4.2.4 . TABLE 4.4: FACILITATION OF THE LEARNING PROCESS**

This Section was designed to gauge the respondents' perception of the female head's of department facilitation of the learning process. The responses assisted in determining whether the female head of department was viewed either negatively or positively with regard to this aspect of her role. Table 4.4 (Page 55) cross-tabulated the views of the respondents in this regard.



TABLE 4.4

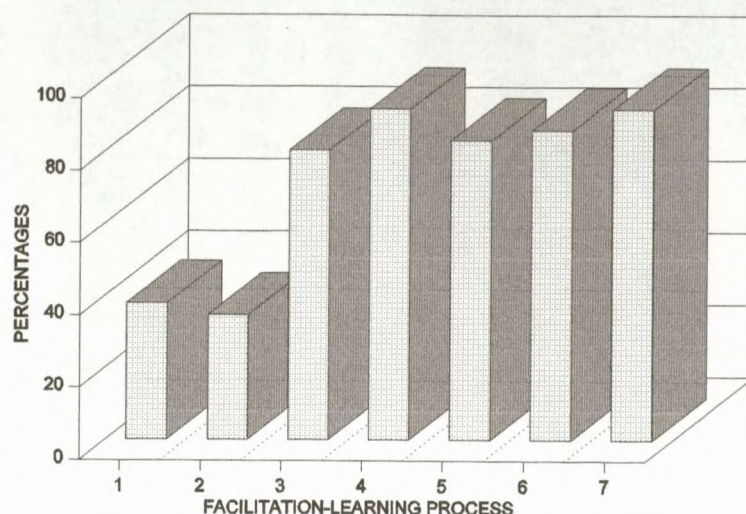
## CROSS-TABULATION : FACILITATION OF THE LEARNING PROCESS

9. THE FEMALE H.O.D.	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
9.1 Shares with her team films, computers, videos, stills, music and other teaching resources.	22.95	14.75	8.2	32.78	21.31
9.2 Provides training in the use of these resources.	14.75	19.67	11.48	21.31	32.78
9.3 Provides guidance to the team for the Continuous Assessment Programme.	42.85	37.14	11.42	4.91	4.91
9.4 Supportive of the new OBE or Mastery Learning Programme.	40	51.42	3.28	3.28	3.28
9.5 Encourages co-operative learning and communications between learners.	45.71	37.14	11.42	4.91	3.28
9.6 Encourages inter-group interaction between team members.	40	45.71	4.91	4.91	4.91
9.7 Is balanced and fair in dealing with learners from different backgrounds.	60	31.42	3.28	3.28	3.28

9.1 and 9.2 have scores of 37.70 % and 34.42 % respectively. Both indicated that staff did not agree that female heads of department had provided them with technical resources and training to facilitate the teaching and learning process. 91.42 % of the respondents to 9.4 indicated that the female head of department had supported them in developing the new OBE programmes. In this regard 79.99 % in 9.3 had acknowledged that she had provided them the training to cope with the new assessment programmes as well.

FIGURE 4.4

## FACILITATION-LEARNING PROCESS



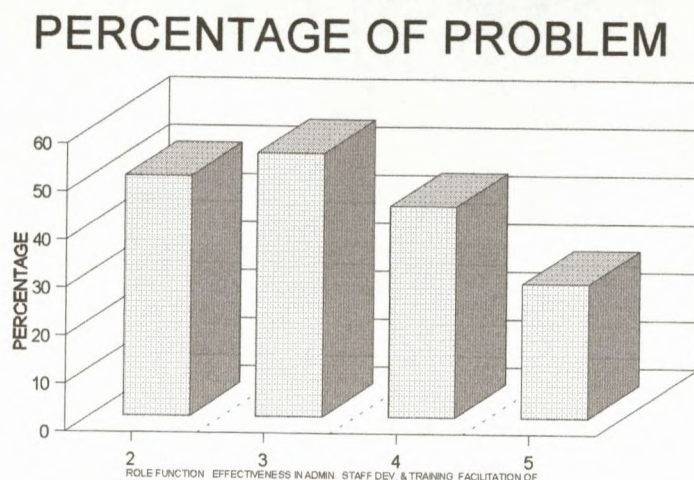
The Bar Chart in Figure 4.4 shows the level of support respondents gave to the female head's of department facilitation of the learning process. 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6 and 9.7 on the horizontal scale of the Bar Chart received the strongest support. Although the Continuous Assessment Programme aligned to OBE, is a fairly new approach, both (9.3 and 9.4) received strong support of 79.99 % and 91.42 % respectively. These are closely linked to the female head of department having encouraged learners towards co-operative learning and communications, as expressed by 82.85 % of the response received in 9.5. At the same time the female head of department had encouraged inter-group interaction between the team as evidenced by 85.71% in 9.6. All these have been conducted in a balanced and fair manner when she trained her team to help learners from different cultural backgrounds.

In attempting to facilitate the learning process the female head of department may have found herself ill-equipped to provide the required specialist guidance. Such a problem was not unique only to a female head of department but also to a male head of department. However, as the research showed female heads of department were blamed for not being able to provide expertise. This was seen as gender deficiency.



### 4.3. CONCLUSION

FIGURE 4.5



From the analysis of the questionnaire the researcher concluded that problems linked to school administration could be problems confronting either a male or female head of department. However, since this research focused on the female head of department, some problems were seen as peculiar to her management. Moreover, if the female head of department displayed characteristics such as emotionality, sensitivity, gentleness and intuitiveness in the conducting of her duties she would have been considered weak, unstable or incapable as an administrator. This had been implied by the very low scores she had attained in questions 7.1, 7.2, 7.4, 7.11, 7.12 (20 %-40 % consensus). Should the female head of department have displayed what would be termed as typically male characteristics in her management style such as aggressiveness, objectivity, decisiveness, competitiveness and independence ( as was evident in answers to question 6.1, 6.3, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8 and 6.14, where a consensus of over 80 % was received for the effectiveness of her administration), it would have been concluded that she was viewed as being “paternally masculine” or domineering. Such strong level of support in this section of the questionnaire with a consensus of 80 % agrees with Wrigley’s views that to be accepted as a leader of worth she had to adopt the stance of “Think Manager, Think Male”

(1998:149-168). The low level of agreement to question 9.1 and 9.2 (consensus of over 30 %) highlights the respondents' view of the drawback they would experience due to lack of knowledge and expertise in the management of modern technological equipment.

As concluded from the analysis in this Chapter a female head's of department low support in certain areas of their management could be attributed to several factors. Firstly, she could have received such negative responses as a result of a lack of preparation for and clarity in her role. This lack of preparation to become an effective head of department could have been compounded by her own internal problems, such as her low level of confidence and self esteem. She could have also become a victim of prejudice due to the external barriers she had to contend with, mainly associated with her social and inter-relationship with her team. In this regard question 7.14 supported by 39.34 % indicated that she did not enjoy good social relations. Furthermore, by a response of 89.18 % to 7.7 she appeared to be highly stressed. The external barrier of limited time to cope with management duties, due to her own increased teaching load, could have contributed to her attempting too much in too little time, so that she would not be labelled as incompetent. Increase in teaching loads have not been peculiar to female heads of department but, since it is a female head of department with whom respondents were interacting, they associated her leadership as being too stressful for her, thus endorsing their negative response to her leadership. Table 4.1 of the questionnaire highlighted scores of up to 80% concerning the respondents' view of her role related to the control and evaluation of her department's record books and assessment programmes. Emphasis on this area of her management could have influenced the low response received in Table 4.3. In question 8.5 respondents indicated by a support of only 30.67 % that she evaluated departmental progress by holding regular meetings. It could be concluded by the findings in this study, as illustrated in bar chart Figure 4.5, that a female head of department experiences varying degrees of problems in the execution of her duties.

#### 4.4. SUMMARY

The main focus of this study was on the analysis of data obtained from Table 4.1 to Table 4.4. Evaluations were done on the female heads' of department discharge of their functions, their effectiveness in administration, their staff development strategies and the facilitation of the learning process in the Isipingo primary schools of the Durban South Region. The analysis of the responses indicated that the respondents did experience problems with the management of female heads of department. The area that required much attention and in which they lacked expertise was that of staff development and team building. (bar chart Figure 4.5). Analysis of results of this Chapter also indicated that the female head of department was largely seen as a "care-giver and nurturer". She was also often engaged in controlling, and performing evaluative duties and was not rated very highly for the more challenging tasks.

Furthermore, problems in management could be attributed to the fact that despite her performing the many functions expected of a head of department, she was often not able to accomplish the objectives she had set out to achieve. This could probably account for the negative responses that was received in almost all sections of the questionnaire. The levels of the responses and hence the area of problems were explicitly illustrated in the bar chart Figure 4.5. It was felt that knowledge and awareness of the difference between males' and females' style of management were important in the present system in educational management if both sexes were to work harmoniously. The acceptance and acknowledgement of female heads of department without experiencing any negativity was vital if equal opportunity was to be a reality and not mere tokenism in the primary schools of the Isipingo area. The analysis gave the researcher an insight into the need of professional women to learn to cope with these problems and work to change them. This would give meaning and focus to their gender identity in the primary schools.

The following Chapter, Chapter Five, will provide recommendations and come up with conclusions as strategies for female heads of department to implement in education.

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## CHAPTER 5

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

*"If we wish to find out what works, we must start with our own values and personal situation. Management is best conceived as constructive self-fulfilling prophecies, acting in ways to make happen what we most believe in".*

*(Bancroft, N.H. 1995: 177)*

#### 5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Changes come slowly. Traditions are hard to break. Incumbents in heads of department positions in primary schools have to cope with stereotypical behaviours from all role players who are subject advisors, principals, deputy principals, teachers, parents and pupils. Primary schools have traditionally employed large numbers of female staff both in the senior and junior primary phases. Despite this, data indicates that the movement of females into heads of department positions is rare - 4 162 out of 85 000 educators, who are mainly women (Ramnarian, 1999). As referred to in Chapter 1, only 12,8 % of the 78% female educators in KwaZulu Natal hold promotion posts. Historically the stereotypical characteristics of male heads of department, that of aggression, rationality and objectivity, have been held to be of more value than the emotiveness, passivity, gentleness, nurturing and caring, of female managers (as the researcher pointed out in Chapter 2). Today the mainly male dominated field of management in schools frequently provides evidence of sexist responses and prejudiced attitudes towards female heads of department. Such attitudes and mindsets have, according to the findings of this research (in Chapter 4) revealed problems for female heads of department in certain management areas. Their attempts to be effective leaders managing teams, that, at times, do not have faith in their capability to cope, increases the burden of the mammoth tasks they confront daily.

In both primary and secondary schools men and women interact with each other against the background of a dominant patriarchal culture. Male gender power is used against women through exclusion, non-consultation and isolation in decision making: women are the teachers and men are the administrators. This unfair balance of power results in the devaluation of the female head of department and places her in a position where she is seen by all as a subordinate who is unable to provide leadership.

Female heads of department according to data obtained in this study, were not rated very highly in many of their roles. There may be several reasons for this, as outlined in Chapter 2, but the undeniable differences between feminine and masculine expectations, attitudes and behaviour in the school environment, may cause female heads' of department insecurities. The primary school environment is largely dominated by female staff; yet sexist attitudes and behaviour have become the norm. The female head of department, has to take responsibility, as an important member of the management team, especially regarding aspects for which women can take responsibility, in an attempt to hold on to optimum power for themselves. Aburdene and Naisbitt in Mega Trends for Women write that: "The important point for women as well as their male colleagues is to begin preparing for the future today" (1993:18). Thus female heads of department should examine the areas that need to change. They should become assertive and empowered, and make an effort to ensure that they are acknowledged as worthy of their posts.

#### **5.1.1. STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TEAM BUILDING**

Many changes have been recommended by educational role players so as to cater for the difference in the management styles of both men and women. Because of this, would not management in primary schools in KwaZulu Natal benefit from the combination of male and female differences in values, attitudes, priorities and principles in their management functions? The school environment would become less stressful, and more fulfilling, if these differences were understood by all role players and both sexes shared in the development of better social, ethical and political practices to create a climate for equality



of opportunity and development. In this regard a respondent to the general section of the questionnaire noted that "merit should be the only criteria to determine leadership. The choice of either a male or female to head a department becomes irrelevant. The experience, expertise and knowledge of the candidate is of prime importance".

Both male and female members of staff found that the inability of female heads of department to cope with staff development programmes had been largely due to a lack of training. They had devoted most of their management time to report writing, controlling and evaluation and other close supervision activities, which were seen as authoritarian and diametrically opposed to the participatory style of feminine leadership. In their role as team builders they were not seen as being in touch with their staffs' needs and priorities. A response that pertinently reflects this is quoted from the general section of the research questionnaire: "Younger, more suitably qualified heads of department are urgently needed to uplift the professionalism of the staff. The Department of Education must provide guides for teacher appraisal and a strong code of conduct to allow the head of department (male or female) to perform their duties effectively. At present the head of department is merely a figurehead with more free time than the Level One educator".

Broadhead et al. isolate key variables required for improving primary schools through the school's developmental, planning and team building exercises. Although the female head of department is process orientated in her staff development programmes, she could not separate her personal feelings as a colleague, friend and counsellor towards her team when implementing the programmes (1996:278-290). Research findings regularly support the view that staff, who work and develop together as a cohesive group, are more effective and productive than those who do not come together. Despite her efforts, the female head of department, in this research, did not gain much support in her role as a staff developer and team building co-ordinator. Although women have a particular ability for a collaborative style of leadership, they require assistance in co-ordinating meaningful group activities, so as to achieve direction and productivity in their departments.

The difficulty of implementing a good staff developmental programme in the Isipingo primary schools is not unique: it applies to all primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. This is because female heads of department are promoted straight out of the classroom and have had no training. Referring to American schools, Kelsall and Kelsall, for example, also state that few administrators are genuinely skilled in planning and managing an effective staff developmental programme for their teachers (1969:11).

To install a professionally developed team in the English education system, Jones indicated that the female head of department should perform a variety of roles in a cyclical management style, where communication was open. When applied to a female head of department, these roles call for specific activities. As a facilitator, the female head of department should create an environment that will help to achieve a cohesive goal-orientated group. As the head of department, who is in touch with the different levels of performance of her teachers, she has the advantage of knowing about their strengths and weaknesses. She would thus be able to assist her team members to critically examine their problem areas as well as guiding them towards possible solutions. As a change agent, she could act as a catalyst in assisting the group to develop a collaborative, collegial relationship, within which her teachers could function effectively. As the resource person the female head of department should be ready to supply her teachers with information, useful textbooks and general teaching materials. Finally, as a trainer to improve individual and group skills in specific areas of weakness she should conduct regular workshops, seminars, demonstrations and practice sessions with invited personnel from outside her institution (1993:10-13).

In order to ensure that this departmental development strategy is effectively implemented, it is recommended that the female head of department familiarises herself with the theory and practice of team building. Team building does not imply that a training programme by female heads of department will give the department a feminine perspective. In this regard the statement by Greyvenstein may be relevant to the primary schools of the Isipingo area. He wrote: "the question of what keeps a woman out of a man's world

might change to the question of, what changes can be made in the male world to facilitate women”(1996:15). Thus it is important to note that in the training and development of primary school teachers there are unique contributions which female heads of department can bring that will facilitate the training of their teams. Some such contributions would entail conducting workshops on: the strategies for developing an effective team; learning to co-operate with parents; the characteristics of effective staff appraisal; the management of change and conflict, as well as the development of stress management skills (Squelch and Lemmer 1994: 70- 59).

The changes that will result from well structured team building programmes need not lead to a female-dominated department ,where “female-power” reigns supreme. The outcome that may be expected as a result of a development programme in primary schools of mixed gender and diversity should be a teaching and learning environment in which feminine patterns of management are integrated into a balanced managerial culture, where feminine attributes are introduced, not as substitutes for masculine styles, but as complementary to them. Staff development and team building programmes should, therefore, aim to be a balanced combination of feminine and masculine traits. This would involve feminine traits of being holistic, process-orientated, inclusive, collaborative, emotional and caring. This was clearly expressed by a respondent in the general section of the research questionnaire who is quoted as stating that: “We have two very efficient female heads of department who are extremely competent and very, very dedicated to their jobs. They do a good amount of counselling and caring towards the staff. They are authoritative but able to manage staff in an amicable manner”.

Masculine traits, on the other hand, include a linear, result-orientated, hierarchical, territorial, stoic and combat type of an approach. Nancy Bancroft maintains that by combining feminine and masculine characteristics in a staff development programme positive changes are possible in a primary school environment (1995:51).

To increase the pupils' performance it is important for a female head of department to embark upon a programme of "self-alignment" in which she helps other staff members to increase their abilities, to discover and use all their qualities, to enhance their own lives and those of others, with whom they come into contact. A well-structured and well-defined staff development programme would thus help drive the learning process forward, especially when primary schools are confronted with new objectives and curricula, such as Outcomes Based Education. As the female head of department is more holistic and people-centred in her approach, she should capitalise on these skills to provide the teachers in her team the strategies for growth and development. She should be aware of their previous experiences, their readiness and motivation to learn and their orientation to the learning situation.

A female head of department has to devise ways and means to develop greater professionalism among her teachers. She should aim to develop them as Beare and Slaughter maintain, not as "employees" but as "professionals" (1994:92). The "employee" being one who needs to be told and constantly spoon fed about his duties, while the "professional" has commitment, is task focused and is more flexible in meeting demands and adapting readily to change.

From an analysis of the data in this research, it is evident that the female head of department has not had adequate training so that she can provide guidance in the area of technical and networking skills for her team. She has to be assertive in her drive to negotiate with educational suppliers, liaise with local colleges and universities regarding teaching practice and in-service courses. She should also be assertive and possess expertise to be considered an effective leader, as has been clearly expressed by a respondent who noted that "the head of department should have the expertise, knowledge and experience to function in a leadership role to win the confidence and respect of one's juniors". She has to use her networking skills to gain the support of all important outside agencies to develop her institution. Her increase in duties and responsibilities as well as an increase in her teaching load, may allow her little time to adequately execute her

duties. Nevertheless she should take care not to default in any area of responsibility, lest she be labelled as "incompetent because she is a woman". If a female head of department wishes to be recognised she has to take on responsibilities and tasks, which many men do not have. Thus female heads of department should develop up-to-date knowledge of the latest skills and technology, which would be of particular use in primary schools. They should be creative in getting things done. Women have to establish their competence before they are recognised as leaders, unlike their male colleagues, who are assumed to possess the necessary competence.

An important aspect of an effective leader is the power to delegate duties and responsibilities so that tasks are adequately and timeously accomplished. In this research the heads of department were not successful in their attempt to delegate duties adequately thus leaving them highly stressed and frustrated. A case of interest is that of a first female head of department in an Isipingo primary school, who found that she had difficulties in leading her department successfully because of the attitude of members of her team. This may be due to the fact that they always had male heads of department in that school.

According to Peters, a commonly held belief was that because heads of department were promoted straight from the classroom, they were basically "teachers" who did everything themselves, rather than being effective administrators who delegated tasks to other teacher aides (1976:99). Peters further maintains that most heads of department have learned their role "on the job" and have little or no knowledge of techniques of decision making, delegation or communication (1976:100). However, as this research has focused on the female head of department, such limitations, when evident in her administration often causes members of staff to view her competence negatively.

As internal affairs of present-day schools become more complex and their external links and commitments expand, the female head of department will come under greater pressure and stress if she continues to deal with everything herself. It is therefore recommended that a well-balanced distribution of duties and responsibilities through

delegation to capable members of her team will help to free her for more supportive, staff developmental functions.

#### **5.1.2. PARTICIPATION AND DELEGATION**

The findings in this study suggest that female heads of department were aware of the fact that participative leadership and decision making strategies were essential to create the conditions, which were conducive towards promoting and developing their team. Working with teachers, who function for the most part within the relatively insulated conditions of their classrooms, female heads of department need to grasp the significance of involving teachers in decision making. Through such involvement, teachers in primary schools may obtain precise information about problems, solutions and decisions. Participation and delegation also contribute to group cohesiveness and encourage maximum effort.

According to Greyvenstein, staff delegation and participatory management will only work when the leader has the required skills, the staff have a favourable attitude, the task is complex, non-routine and requires high quality decisions (1996:78-90). The female head of department in the primary school will often find it difficult to involve teachers. Engaging her staff in participatory, democratic and a delegatory style of leadership does not imply that she is relieved of responsibilities, nor is her own work load reduced in any way. In a patriarchal workplace participatory management may be interpreted by both male and female staff as an abdication of duties by the female head of department. They may even perceive it as an inability to perform her tasks. Her constant aim as manager should be to win support for her decisions through regular consultation, and as a respondent in the general section of the questionnaire stated: "The key to management at head of department level is not to take on all responsibilities herself. Delegation is the answer. She should utilise her team's strong points to the fullest. No one person can be expected to be excellent in all aspects of education".

In the long term, female heads of department in primary schools should work towards changing attitudes concerning feminine patterns of management. In her research Nancy Bancroft advocates that organisations, in this case primary schools, “start valuing the feminine attributes and alter their working environments to reflect the principles of collaboration, team work, human concern and intuition” (1995:178).

The researcher found that respondents did not view attempts of female heads of department to communicate and engage in friendly staff relationships very positively (Figure 4.2: 7.14). A probable reason for this may be the internal barriers confronting them daily. These are linked to a low level of confidence and self doubt as far as competence was concerned. Such low self esteem may be linked to the fact that following promotion they were expected to perform tasks and duties that were previously done by men. Although the female head of department performed many leadership and managerial tasks aiding the smooth running of the school, she should co-operate with male and female staff so as to improve her own level of performance. Extensive management skills training may therefore be required to prepare her for this important function. This would further encourage and uplift her from an unfriendly work environment in which she may experience exclusion and isolation. Thus the success of the female head of department is dependent on her ability to interact with her teachers on a collegial basis; to treat them as equals; to share information and power with them; to work directly with them in their analysis and appraisal of their own teaching and to discover and implement solutions to current departmental problems. All these require of the female heads of department interpersonal and communication skills.

Good interpersonal skills should be developed by the female head of department. Her diagnostic ability to assess problems and to find solutions to them, as well as her ability to provide motivation and incentives, should be used to meet the needs of her school. Therefore potential problem relationship issues should be identified and resolved before they interfere with getting the job done.

The female head of department does not need to make any personal sacrifice in order to become an effective leader. She should develop attitudes and abilities to cope with gender opposition without being gender biased. To be successful in their interpersonal relationships female heads of department need to establish boundaries between "self" and "others". They should also aim to find a better balance of feminine and masculine approaches in their leadership styles of the primary schools. This was clearly evident by a respondent to the questionnaire who is quoted as saying: "I do not see why women should experience problems because they are women. If they are effective, good in their position in carrying out duties - strong personalities and can handle situations, the fact that they are women - should not be a consideration. They need to be good with people and children" These views are interestingly contrasted with another respondent who concluded that "..... the head of department was merely a figurehead with more free time than the Level One teacher". This indictment requires serious attention for good relations in the department.

#### **5.1.3. DEVELOPMENT OF FINANCIAL BUDGETING AND TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT**

In order to succeed the female head of department should balance two sets of expectations: firstly, one which is role-related and secondly, one which is gender related. To succeed she has to have a keen sense of awareness of what to do. On the one hand she is expected to do everything a female does; to know about the academic work of her department as well as being responsible for the caring and nurturing of her staff and pupils. In addition she is expected to perform duties without any training for her role as a financial and economic manager of her department. Aspects of financial, budgeting and technical control were always undertaken by male members in the schools. This function is more difficult for the female heads of department when she finds herself called upon to perform duties and functions that had previously been done by men.



The writer noted that there were negative gender-stereotypical responses to a female head of department's management of matters relating to budgeting and finances. The problem that arises from this is that there are separate expectations, one for women as women in their pastoral, caring and nurturing capacity, and the other for women as heads of department in their capacity to improve educational and academic ability of their teams. However, these attributes did not indicate that she was competent enough to make decisions on matters concerning finance and budgeting as 34.28 % of respondents indicated in 6.12. Aware of these expectations the female head of department should attempt to blend her nurturing, caring and pastoral capacity with her educational and academic excellence in leading her team . Table 4.1, 6.3 and 6.7 and Table 4.2, 7.18 verified that the qualities of nurturing, caring and educational upliftment of her staff had strong support (Consensus of 80 %). Coleman et al. maintain that females "should emphasise their professional characteristics without reference to gender. They have to learn to be players and to take control of their careers and responsibilities. This means having integrity and being responsive. They should be visible to volunteer and to take on assignments that were typically considered those of male managers, for example, in the areas of finance and economics" (1996:3-8). In this regard the female heads of department of the Isipingo schools (as indicated in Table 4.1, 6.12) supported the financial and economic responsibilities of the female heads of department, including the drawing up of the budget for her department.

Requisitioning of funding for multicultural education in the department was popular (89.80 %, 6.3). The use of these funds for additional teachers and learning aides such as textbooks and equipment was well planned. In 7.16 she received 89.18 % support in the quest to ensure funding that enabled her team to put into place meaningful extra-curricular programmes. The researcher's experience is that most female heads of department in the Isipingo primary schools raised funds by fetes and markets for their needs in their departments.

#### 5.1.4. TRAINING TO MANAGE COPING SKILLS

As noted in Chapters 1 and 2 primary schools have traditionally employed large numbers of women but very few of them have moved up to the level of heads of department. In addition to coping with their own sense of self doubt and confidence, they have to learn to cope with problems of discrimination in their own school. Historically the stereotypical characteristics of the male head of department, that is aggression, rationality and objectivity, have been more valued than those of female head of department, namely emotiveness, passivity and gentleness. The widely male dominated field of management in schools provided evidence of sexist attitudes and practices, particularly in resistance to female leadership. Woods and Hammersley refer to the fact that one of the most important hurdles for women in management in all countries has been a persistent discriminatory stereotype that associates management with a male mode (1993:69). As researched in the New York and England's educational systems, Levin and Lockheed maintain that there should be in place a management training programme that involves a paradigm shift from the stereotypical attitude in which management is equated with masculinity. They draw attention to the urgent need for a well-structured management training programme that can "facilitate task-orientated organisational arrangements, greater staff involvement, broader power distribution, better human relations and more skilful conflict management". They also caution that such training should not limit itself to equipping incumbents with increased management competence within an "existing paternalistic framework" (1993:29-32). In the Isipingo primary schools Table 4.3 indicated that there was a consensus of between 60 % - 75 % for female heads of department to engage in developing human relations, staff involvement and good conflict management skills (Figure 4.2 - 62.28 % in 7.15).

The research covered in this project showed that both male and female members of primary schools, who responded to the questionnaire (Chapter 4), had come through a culture of being supervised by men throughout their teaching careers. This meant that female heads' of department duties and responsibilities were always open to comparison

with that of the male heads of department. It had been a combination of male dominated bias and influence that resulted in the devaluation of the female head's of department delivery of her functions. This was proved in 6.13 when only 12.23 % agreed that the female head of department could attend to matters pertaining to maintenance of the school buildings and stock control. Such a response caused the female head of department to be perceived as subordinate and incompetent. The research by Walters and Manicom on women managers indicate that "they experience far more stress than their male counterparts and this is caused by the specific pressure female heads of department face as a minority of high visibility and isolation with little or no support" (1996:91). Relevance of this statement becomes very pertinent in this research as 89.18 % in 7.7 viewed the head of department as undertaking her duties stressfully, while only 41.31 % in 7.10 found her delegating duties to others and isolating herself by taking on extra tasks, as in 7.9 (78.69 %).

As the education system in South Africa changes to acknowledge female leadership, the concept of management as masculine has to be changed. If women are to develop as leaders in upper management, they will have to develop effective methods to cope with stress. They have to learn to manage their roles without becoming stressed as a result of the tremendous responsibilities and the limited time available to them to perform their duties. Khayatt, mentions that anybody who accepts promotion automatically accepts the stress (1997:126-140). It is therefore imperative that learning to cope with stress is important for becoming competent and worthy of the post.

The writer recommends that the Kwazulu-Natal Education Department take a twofold approach to meet these challenges: firstly, all new educators should be inducted into the profession, and secondly, they should be encouraged to attend INSET courses. Focus on such induction programmes should incorporate the "partnership" model which is a way to structure human relationships based on "linking" rather than on force or fear. In this research 71.82 % in 8.1 agreed that female heads of department encouraged her team members to attend INSET courses.

According to Aburdene and Naisbitt the training programme should enable staff to accept that "it is not about women taking over, but women and men together expressing their full potential - neither superior nor inferior" (1993:55). Training programmes such as in-service training for new and qualified teachers, heads of department and deputy principals would assist them to accept an educational environment where both male and female are accepted and given recognition and where their differences are freely expressed and utilised for everyone's benefit. For this to happen all role players should begin with a partnership between men and women.

Training programmes for educators across the spectrum, according to Woods and Hammersley should help to remove the unwarranted assumption that leadership is a masculine characteristic demanding physical and mental toughness and the ability to approach difficulties unemotionally (1993:60).

Training of teachers with this in mind does not claim the innate superiority of women as managers and leaders but clearly recognises feminine traits of leadership and management. Such training programmes should not suggest that women have a "natural capacity to manage better, but to submit that the styles of communication and organisation with which women are familiar are effective management styles (Beare and Slaughter 1994: 85-90).

Furthermore, the education department should structure a management training course for all management personnel of schools. An intensive planned preparation for this programme would make, especially the female heads of department, more effective in time management skills, which would strengthen them in their ability to cope with the pressures of their role. They could also be helped to increase their sensitivity and their need to foster professionalism and understanding of both masculine and feminine management styles. A well planned and comprehensive training and development programme for heads of department in primary schools should aim to equip them to cope with technological, financial and economic innovations, networking and curricular

changes. Possession and implementation of such skills would help the female head of department to win recognition, support and respect from her staff and colleagues. It would also enable her to recognise and deal with transformational issues as they arise, rather than making errors and being accused of failing and associating these failings as gender weaknesses. Such training programmes could help her to develop interface communication skills, increase her level of consultation, co-operation, collegiality and understanding of her own and her team's limitations, abilities and creativity.

#### **5.1.4.1. TRAINING FOR GROUP DYNAMICS**

From a discussion of participative leadership and decision making processes and interpersonal and communication skills, it is increasingly apparent that successful departmental management also requires a firm grasp of group dynamics. Only if she understands the forces that operate within a small group involving both males and females will the female head of department be able to develop sound strategies to increase the effectiveness of her department.

Group dynamics is a field that has been intensively studied and its applicability to management widely researched. Drawing on this body of knowledge, Shaw concludes that an effective group will display the following characteristics:

- a clear grasp of its goals and purposes;
- flexibility in selecting appropriate procedures of functioning;
- a high degree of communication, co-operation, and understanding among group members;
- ability to initiate and carry out effective decision making;
- appropriate balance between group productivity and individual needs;
- a participative leadership and power-sharing relationship between the head of department and her team;
- a high degree of cohesiveness but not to the point of stifling individual freedom and creativity;

- intelligent use of the differing abilities of members based upon their cultural, age and sex differences;
- no domination by the head of department or by any of the group members;
- objectivity about reviewing its own processes, problems and solutions; and
- a balance between rational and emotional behaviour and the difference in the interactive behaviours between males and females (1976:14-30).

This description of the characteristics of an effective group in fact represents a concise description of a highly effective subject department in primary schools. A knowledge of group dynamics involving both male and female behaviour patterns will provide heads of department valuable insight for both managing departments as well as motivating their teachers in the achievement of personal and group goals. Therefore a training programme for heads of department should provide them with a theoretical and practical grasp of the ways in which small groups of males and females develop their values and norms, and the reasons for the way in which they behave in a given situation.

Gender differences should not be viewed negatively but in the light of how they could be utilised to get the best results. Such training programmes would benefit both the heads of department and the teachers as there should be a change in the preconceived ideas about the inability of the sexes to work together harmoniously in an integrated environment. Group dynamics training would enable both sexes to respect each other despite differences in gender, age or culture. The female head of department has to lead them in such a way that they will be trained to work together to change their ways of interacting and communicating with each other. They have to learn to be “different but equal” (Ramnarain 1999).

To implement Curriculum 2005 and OBE, with its group approach and its philosophy of being “different but equal”, the female head of department has to assist her team to come to grips with this innovation in teaching and learning. She has to ensure that all organisational changes have been effected for OBE to be put in place. Her purpose

should be to enable teachers and pupils to fulfill the demands of this new curriculum by adequate planning and provisioning of resources. This means that she does not have to accept the way things are. Change could be brought about by the energetic and assertive efforts of the female head of department. Once this concept of change towards the OBE curriculum has been accepted, both teachers and pupils would be engaged in decision making and problem solving on an equitable footing recognising the contribution of both males and females. This would encourage their growth and development, towards moving away from discriminatory and biased attitudes towards the opposite sex. A well planned OBE programme with active group participation will encourage healthy acceptance and appreciation of both male and female differences and similarities, thus leading to a more harmonious co-existence, understanding and appreciation of the philosophy of being "different but equal".

#### **5.1.5. REDUCTION OF TEACHING LOAD AND INCREASE OF TIME FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENT**

A problem that heads of department experienced was an increase in their teaching load and thus a decrease in time to conduct their managerial tasks. The findings in this research indicated that female heads of departments tended to concentrate on controlling and evaluating functions to the detriment of staff development. This imbalance in departmental management have been intensified as a result of the increased teaching load of heads of department. Clearly a continuation of the decline in departmental management effectiveness is certain to influence the standard of teaching and the quality of pupil performance. Even if female heads of departments received a grounding in management theory and practice, the limited time at their disposal is likely to act as a barrier to any significant change in departmental management, teaching standard and quality of pupil performance.

Therefore it is recommended that urgent attention be given to the reduction of the teaching load of all heads of department. Not only will this help female heads of

department to become more accessible to their teachers but will also allow them more time to plan and implement the management skills they would have acquired during training for the position. The reduction of the teaching load of heads of department should take into account those who have to supervise larger groups of teachers and control the departments that require greater attention in the primary schools. For example in this study of the six heads of department in the sample (Table 3.1) all of them had more than eight teachers in their department.

The stress and anxiety caused by an overload of responsibilities against limitations of time were apparent in the responses to the functioning of female heads of department (Table 4.2, 7.7) where 89.18 % strongly agreed that the female head of department suffered stress. These responses indicated that some female heads of department experienced an impact of increased teaching loads more intensely than others, especially since they may have been constantly compared with their male colleagues.

#### **5.1.6. REVISION OF THE CURRENT TEACHER APPRAISAL SYSTEM**

The present education system is saddled with an outdated system of teacher appraisal. Findings in this research indicated that female heads of department did not receive strong support in appraising their team members' work (Figure 4.3: 8.5, 8.14 and 8.15). Here a consensus of between 30 % - 40 % was reached for their strategies, in providing the requirements to promote quality education in their departments to the satisfaction of teachers. The formal appraisal of their team was an effort by them to prepare their staff for their tasks of coping with the demands of the primary schools.

The reasons to provide a well planned appraisal programme are twofold - firstly, benevolent, that is, aiming to assist teachers to gain a more favourable insight and assessment of their own work, and secondly, selfish, to ward off any criticism of their own teacher-supervisory role. The low scores of between 30 % - 40 % as referred to above, for their appraisal and supportive work could be the cause of tension, conflict and



lack of departmental cohesiveness. Besides problems such as those noted in Chapter 4, research on teacher appraisal suggests that, when it serves multiple functions, it often fails to achieve the primary purpose of staff development and improvement in pupil performance.

With reference to the system of appraisal in England and Wales, King suggests that too much time is spent on evaluative tasks by heads of department responsible for teacher appraisal, thus leaving them with "insufficient time for what should be their central function - encouraging and supporting innovation in their schools". He therefore argues that the "preoccupation with appraisal threatens to distract our attention from other aspects of individual and organizational development" (1986:15). When female heads of department fail to appraise their team members adequately, as in this research, they may be labelled as "incompetent". It is recommended that the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education implement a revision of the appraisal system so that female heads of department do not lose credibility in their appraisal efforts. With proper appraisal structures in place female heads of department should become more involved in decision making processes in their schools, especially in areas affecting appraisals, staff development and training. In this way they may be considered to become competent enough to occupy executive positions.

The need for a strong appraisal system was relevant in the KwaZulu-Natal primary schools as the staff from the Isipingo region found that female heads' of department leadership was difficult and problematic, especially since they experienced a sense of low self esteem.. The researcher came up with several recommendations that may assist female heads of department to cope with internal and external barriers referred to in Chapters 2 and 4. These are:

- a socialisation programme that helps to make girls aware that they are able to make a valuable contribution to managing an organisation, should be implemented in their learning programme

- sex-role stereotyping should be discouraged at school level. Girls should be encouraged into training for any field for which they show an aptitude, even if it is traditionally a male one
- women, should be socialised into believing that they have the right to work at management level. This could be helped by the presence of more women in top management (Duff, 1990:195-202).

Gender stereotyping should be discouraged at schools. Women should rid themselves of the internal barriers of low self esteem and a low confidence level. They should become professional and assertive in their quest to be acknowledged and accepted. They should become more positive when working in a biased masculine environment. Female heads of department may involve themselves in assertiveness training, which is based on psychological and therapeutic practices. There is no doubt that assertive behaviour can enhance self development and create confidence to help them cope in an environment set in a patriarchal culture (Coutts, 1996:55-60).

## 5.2. CONCLUSION

In conclusion the following recommendations are worthy of note: a concerted effort should be made by female heads of department to assist staff members develop healthy interactive relationships. In this regard the creation of acting head of department posts would assist in the preparation and training of incumbents for the actual post. When females are nominated as acting heads of department they would gain experience on discriminatory practices that prevail in the line of their work although discrimination may be considered obsolete by law.

Such acting positions would provide incumbents the opportunity to be promoted on merit. The knowledge that selection is only on ability would help many women to be respected by both male and female as their colleagues. However, should females be promoted without prior training for the position and according to the affirmative action laws which

benefit women, they may not enjoy the respect they deserve from their colleagues. Women should recognise gender bias in educational management and develop strategies to confront it. These strategies are both internal and external. To overcome discrimination and sex role stereotyping the following strategies may apply:

- women should change their attitudes towards their work. It is becoming obvious that, with changing economic structures, more women have to work for most of their lives. There is a need for them to begin accepting responsibilities for their careers and planning realistic objectives from the beginning
- developmental programmes should be instituted to inform women teachers of the opportunities and requirements for promotion
- meaningful work experiences should be generated. Given the opportunity to accomplish purposeful administrative tasks, women may recognise in themselves the ability to cope with management on a higher level, and thus aspire to it. Success helps the growth of self confidence
- women should prove to employers that they have the skills and attitudes required for promotion. Waiting, in the hope of being discovered, is not enough
- women who aspire to management positions should let their superiors know that they have the ability and attributes to cope with a job. Many respondents to the research questionnaire acknowledge that "merit and not gender, age or culture" be the criteria for promotion.

Women should be motivated to challenge patriarchal ideology, transform structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination. Their leadership skills should enable them to motivate and empower their teams to control both resources and information processes regarding budgeting, finances and modern technology. Such motivation involves:

- more senior men and women should take it upon themselves to foster a promising female aspirant
- the elimination of any form of discrimination in the educational system would serve as a motivational force for women to attain promotion into education

management

- there is a need for women to build favourable attitudes towards promotion posts. The stigma, that still appears to be attached to certain positions of management for females should be eradicated.

Empowering women also liberates and empowers men on both a material and psychological level. It would free men to work with women and open up the possibility of relationships with women based on shared responsibility and mutual respect. Women have in general grown up with friendly attitudes where they make concerted attempts to form alliances with everybody which becomes an asset in their working relationships. A female head of department relies heavily on subordinate participation in work-related decision making and should promote mutual trust by being open and candid in her interpersonal relationships. Chapter 4 showed that female heads of departments saw positive work relationships as “satisfiers” a term used by Herzberg in his model of motivation (Bancroft, 1995:170). Women should be empowered to communicate without fear of prejudice. Most importantly women wishing to get promoted should be competent, poised, visible and pleasant. As mentors they would serve to build up the confidence of women deserving recognition, as well as serving as motivational forces for aspiring women. (Lemmer and Badenhorst. 1998:99-128).

Greyvenstein regards the mentor process as an important element in the professional development of women for top management posts in education. She is a firm supporter of “women being mentors for younger women since it holds greater possibilities for success and efficiency.....” due to the fact that they are an example of women in management, they provide more personal support and understanding of attempts to balance personal and professional life demands, and they have a deeper understanding of the problems and barriers experienced by women (1996:28). A mentor is a vital motivational force for the advancement of female heads of department. Women are, by nature, reticent in presuming that they could become successful managers. They need the reassurance of someone who is in a senior position to give them sufficient self confidence

to become effective leaders in their departments. (Van Der Westhuizen. 1994:554-555).

The path of self development and self empowerment of the female head of department may be linked to her exposure to meaningful experiences. Given the opportunity to accomplish purposeful administrative tasks, as acting heads of departments or even as ordinary Level One teachers, women may recognise in themselves the ability to cope with management tasks on a higher level, and so aspire to accomplish them. Success may mean the growth of self confidence and this might lead to acceptance and effective leadership. The process of female empowerment is a "spiral involving changing consciousness; locating areas for change; planning strategies; acting for change; analysing outcomes; and changing consciousness once again. It is a process that affects everyone involved - activists, the collective, the community - and it cannot be top down" (Coutts. 1996: 89-91). Statistics from Table 4.1 to 4.4 in this research reveal that female heads of department in the Isipingo primary schools have a need to be empowered and trained to cope with such a "spiral of change".

Although legislation has implemented equity in the work place there is a need for actual transformation to take place in which both sexes work towards integration and acceptance of each other. Both sexes must learn to understand and appreciate the others management style and work together in harmony to bring about effective and efficient working conditions in the management of primary schools. Some male and female staff resist change, while some female managers expect immediate change. This leads to their high stress as evident in 7.7 where 89.18 % positively identified with this. Female heads of department should work together with both sexes without feeling threatened. Female heads of department should accept that power is not something to be taken or exerted, but something which emerges through relationships with others (Aburdene and Naisbitt 1993:63). Table 4.3 with a consensus of 70 % - 90 % strongly support their attempts to establish such working relationships.

It is interesting to note that this view is also supported by Ramnarian who published an article which indicates that women in KwaZulu Natal are beginning to realise that they should become managers, who are "more task focused, more concerned with students, and more concerned with learning. Women are most likely to be visionaries and catalysts. .... It is not time for women to empower themselves. It is the time for women" (1999) .

### 5.3. SUMMARY

This Chapter began with a brief summary of the major conclusions of this research. Discussion then shifted to an identification of changes that were necessary to correct the problems that were apparent in female heads' of department management in the primary schools of Isipingo.

The central recommendation was that females be given systematic training for the position. Three additional recommendations were proposed because of the writer's conviction that appropriate organizational changes were necessary to support a revised Education Departmental policy. These additional recommendations were that the teaching loads of heads of departments be reduced, that senior females be given management training and that the present teacher appraisal system be revised.

Furthermore the use of a qualitative method of research in this study proved to be not only interesting but highlighted some areas of particular importance to female heads of department namely that, not every woman teacher would make a good head of department, but many feminine qualities could be attributes in leadership positions. After all:

"To command is to serve, nothing more and nothing less".

Murphy (1978:394)

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## ADDENDUM 1

96 Platt Drive  
ISIPINGO HILLS  
4110  
4 November 1998

Dear Principal

RESEARCH

Could you be so kind as to furnish me the following staff details in respect of your school. Please supply the number of personnel as per time table. The information is required to assist me with a statistical analysis for my Master's Degree in Educational Management dissertation.

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
All teachers			
Principal			
Deputy Principal			
Head of Department			

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

N. Singh (Mrs)



## ADDENDUM 2

66 Platt Drive  
ISIPINGO HILLS  
4110  
4 November 1998

Dear Colleague

RESEARCH

I hereby request your assistance in an investigation of the occupational trends and working conditions of female HODs with a view to providing recommendations for improvement. This study forms part of the requirement for a M. degree in Technology and Educational Management, for which I am presently enrolled at Technikon Natal.

I would be most obliged if both male and female educators, as well as management members of your staff complete the questionnaires and leave them with the school secretary. All information you supply will be treated confidentially and all questionnaires will be destroyed once the research has been completed. You are not asked to provide either your name or the name of your school, so confidentiality will be assured.

Your time and assistance are greatly appreciated. Should you be interested in receiving a summary of the investigation, I would be pleased to send it to you once the study has been completed.

Yours sincerely

N. Singh (Mrs)

## ADDENDUM 3

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PROBLEMS FEMALE H.O.D.s EXPERIENCE  
WITH REFERENCE TO THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF THE ISIPINGO AREA.**

**MASTER OF EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH PROJECT**

For a successful and a balanced education on a global basis, women must be seen to be equally capable of becoming leaders of educational institutions. The purpose of this questionnaire is to ascertain how educators react to the leadership of female H.O.D.s in primary schools. More specifically, the objective of this Study is to investigate the problems that H.O.D.s experience, mainly because they are women.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

- The questionnaire is strictly confidential.
- All questions require an honest response.
- The success of this study depends entirely on your cooperation.

*Thank you for the time spent in completing this questionnaire.*

## PART 1

### PERSONAL PARTICULARS OF EDUCATORS

(Please tick the appropriate block, where applicable)

For coding purposes:

#### 1. Gender

Male	
Female	

1-3

4

#### 2. Number of years of general teaching experience:

0 - 10 years	
10 - 15 years	
over 15 years	

5

#### 3. Category of educator:

Level 1	
Level 2	
Deputy Principal	
Principal	

6

#### 4. Qualifications of educator:

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7

#### 5. Type of school experience:

Primary	
Secondary	

8

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Rank the statement which best describes the female H.O.D.s role functioning by placing a tick ( ✓ ) on the appropriate square.
  2. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:
- 

## PART 2.

### ROLE FUNCTION:

#### 6. THE FEMALE H.O.D.:

	I strongly agree	I agree	I neither agree not disagree	I disagree	I strongly disagree
6.1 Establishes departmental aims, policy and objectives in keeping with the school's overall policy.					
6.2 Promotes equal opportunity of duties for both male and female staff.					
6.3 Supports staff in providing a multi-cultural education.					
6.4 Prepares the departmental timetable					
6.5 Is consulted by the deputy head and the principal for staff allocation.					
6.6 Prepares, circulates and reviews syllabuses and schemes of work.					
6.7 Checks on the standard of the test questions, marking and moderation of tests.					
6.8 Controls the proper planning, preparation, teaching and assessment of work.					
6.9 Sees to the setting and marking of homework.					

	I strongly agree	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I strongly disagree
6.10 Establishes a uniform procedure for the continuous assessment of pupils.					
6.11 Arranges all testing programmes and executes them in a well organized manner.					
6.12 Prepares the departmental budget.					
6.13 Checks on the maintenance and security of her department's learning centre, equipment and stock.					
6.14 Establishes effective links with library staff and other resource persons within the school.					
6.15 Networks with universities, technikons, colleges high schools and other primary schools to assist her department with current information.					
6.16 Arranges a fair roster to cater for relief of absent teachers.					

### PART 3

#### 7. EFFECTIVENESS IN ADMINISTRATION:

##### THE FEMALE HOD:

	I strongly agree	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I strongly disagree
7.1 Plans ahead with vision and goals that the department intends to achieve.					
7.2 Prioritizes tasks to meet urgent deadlines.					
7.3 Sees that tasks are completed effectively.					
7.4 Creates a sense of shared purpose and direction for her team.					
7.5 Consults her team timeously on issues concerning the department.					
7.6 Communicates her intentions clearly and concisely.					
7.7 Appears to be under stress on most occasions.					
7.8 Takes on more responsibilities than she can cope with.					
7.9 Only trusts herself to do most of the tasks					
7.10 Delegates tasks and duties to other members of the team.					
7.11 Leads by example, by taking on extra work.					
7.12 Treats her team fairly by an equal distribution of work-load.					
7.13 Praises good work.					



	I strongly agree	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I strongly disagree
7.14 Socializes with her staff.					
7.15 Resolves conflict situations fairly.					
7.16 Promotes her staff to engage in excursions, sports, debates, quizzes etc.					
7.17 Attends to the timetable, training and induction of student teachers.					
7.18 Provides pastoral care to probationary staff.					

## PART 4

### 8. STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TEAM BUILDING EFFECTIVENESS.

FEMALE H.O.D.s:

	I strongly agree	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I strongly disagree
8.1 Encourages her department's teachers to attend I.N.S.E.T. courses.					
8.2 Develops in-house training to introduce new techniques in teaching and learning programmes.					
8.3 Consults with the team before programming a team activity.					
8.4 Consults with team on choice of time and dates for staff development programmes.					
8.5 Evaluates departmental progress by holding regular meetings.					
8.6 Is friendly, approachable and fosters team spirit.					
8.7 Gives direction to individual teachers to review and clarify tasks relevant to their subjects.					
8.8 Encourages her department teachers to mutually observe and analyze each others lessons.					
8.9 Encourages participatory and consensus decision making.					
8.10 Identifies weaknesses regarding teaching methodology and finds solutions to remedy them.					

	I strongly agree	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I strongly disagree
8.11 Sets goals on where the department needs to go.					
8.12 Translates vision / goals into concrete actions.					
8.13 Ensures that team works systematically and efficiently to achieve these goals.					
8.14 Is an enrichment coordinator, providing techniques for teaching gifted pupils.					
8.15 Trains team to design and implement resources for pupils with learning difficulties.					
8.16 Provides individual counselling and career advice to team members.					

## PART 5

### 9. FACILITATION OF THE LEARNING PROCESS

#### THE FEMALE HOD:

	I strongly agree	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I strongly disagree
9.1 Uses computers, videos, stills, films, music and other curricular resources to share with and support her teachers.					
9.2 Provides training in the use of these resources.					
9.3 Provides guidance to the team for the new continuous assessment programme.					
9.4 Supportive of the new O.B.E. or Mastery learning programme.					
9.5 Encourages co-operative learning and communications between diverse learners.					
9.6 Encourages inter-group interaction between team members.					
9.7 Is balanced and fair in dealing with learners from diverse backgrounds.					

#### GENERAL

*If there are any other related issues about female H.O.D.s management that you wish to respond to, and are not accommodated in this questionnaire feel free to elaborate below*

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*Thank you, once again!*