



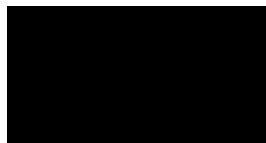
**Experiences and Practices of Black Women Teachers: A Case Study of a Rural Secondary School in Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa.**

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Technology in the Department of Public Management in the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Durban University of Technology.

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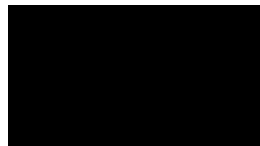
## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the experiences and practices of black women teachers in one rural school in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. A case study was conducted in one school in Umbumbulu, KwaZulu-Natal. The aim of this study was to elicit women teachers' experiences of the gender relations that exist within a school setting and the mechanisms they used to cope in a male dominant teaching environment. It is important to understand that both men and women construct gender. Men play an active role in shaping women's identity and controlling behaviour. For this reason, the study also gave a voice to male teachers. Semi-structured interviews with the school principal, head of departments and teachers were used to collect data. The findings revealed that cultural beliefs and expectations of rural women swayed gender discrimination of female teachers at the school and some female teachers' complicity accepted their roles of subordination and subscribed to what they called, 'The Zulu Way'. Most of the female teachers in this rural school believed that care giving was one of their principle responsibilities as teachers. Male teachers performed duties that required being outside the classroom, especially, disciplining learners and doing sports. The general perception at the school was that men are tough, make good decisions and learners also give them more respect. Female teachers were expected to mainly do tasks that are menial and other routine activities like filing and record keeping, while the male teachers were more often exempted from these tasks. Traditional Zulu culture was drawn upon by most male teachers to exercise their power over women and a tool to promote patriarchy and gender inequalities in the school. However, there were a few voices of resistance from male teachers - men who are able to see the gender matrix for what it was: a flimsy, sometimes harmful, way to organise the world and their personal and professional lives. In addition to voicing the needs and challenges of rural women teachers and highlighting the gaps that need to be addressed to improve their status, this study identified the available opportunities to challenge the barriers that these women face.

## **DECLARATION**

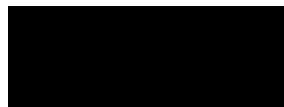
### **Experiences and practices of black women teachers: A case study of a rural secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

I declare that the thesis herewith for the MTech: Public Management at the Durban University of Technology is my own original work and that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. The thesis does not contain other person's data, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. All the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



Nikiwe Zuma

I hereby approve the final submission of the following thesis.



Dr. Vijay Hamlall

On this 27<sup>th</sup> day of August 2018, at the Durban University of Technology.

## **DEDICATION**

This piece of work is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Mfaniseni Mngoma (Cenge) and the late Mrs. Philile Mngoma (MaZikode); my eldest sister, Thobile Mkhize, who taught me valuable lessons in life and struggled by all means to ensure that I get proper education.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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- All my colleagues, especially Sibongile Hadebe and Dudu Ntshingila who were my source of inspiration to complete this study.
- My niece, Hlengiwe Msomi; my friend, Dudu Dlungwane for your incredible assistance, support and inspiration, you were real lifesavers.
- The provincial Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal for letting me to use one of their schools to conduct this research.
- The principal and staff of the school under observation for eagerly assisting in this research.
- The DUT library staff, especially, Ms. Sara Mitha in guiding me and ensuring that I obtained all the resources needed.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ACE – Advanced Certificate in Education  
AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome  
B.Ed. – Bachelor of Education  
B.Sc. – Bachelor of Science  
DSG – Development Support Group  
GETT – Gender Equality Task Team  
HDE – Higher Diploma in Education  
HIV – Human Immune Virus  
HOD – Head of Department  
M.Ed. – Master’s in Education  
NGO – Non-governmental Organisation  
RCL – Representative Council for Learners  
SASA- South African Schools Act  
SDT – School Development Team  
SGB – School Governing Body  
SMT – School Management Team  
SPTD – Senior Primary Teacher’s Diploma  
STD – Secondary Teacher’s Diploma  
DoE – Department of Education

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1. INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduces this research study. The rationale, the problem statement, the background of the study, and the school in which the research was conducted are discussed. The chapter explains the purpose of the research, briefly discusses the literature review, research design and methodology, data analysis and provides an introduction to the succeeding chapters.

#### **1.2 Background of the Study**

This study explores the experiences and practices of black women teachers in a rural secondary school in Umbumbulu. The study focuses particularly on the gender relations that exist within the school setting and the mechanisms that black women teachers use to cope in male dominant teaching environment. The Constitution of South Africa and the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2) (Act 108, Art.9 (3): 1996) embraces the fundamental issue of equity, which states indisputably that:

Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law. Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken. The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language or birth.

In South Africa, however, women are generally discriminated against and experience greater challenges in performing their duties than males (Hutson, 2007).

For the purpose of confidentiality, the pseudonym, Siyabusa High School was used throughout the study instead of the actual name of the school. The researcher is a post level one teacher, but not employed at Siyabusa High School. Siyabusa High School is located in a

rural community where women are regarded as subordinates to men and occupy low status like being primary caregivers at home.

The community is headed by the chief with the assistance of the izinduna. It is a poverty-stricken community where about fifty percent of the learners live with their grandparents as their parents work away from home. Many of the learners are orphans due to HIV/AIDS endemic. Very few learners are born inside wedlock and receive proper family care, consequently, the rate of teenage pregnancy and poverty is rapidly increasing. Some of the learners drop out of school and very few of those who finish matric go to university. Most men in the community have moved to urban areas for employment while women are left at home to take care of the children. Some men are unemployed, while others are being retrenched because of lack of education and necessary skills. Women and the girls clean the house, cook for the family, fetch water from the river and wood from the forest since development and infrastructure is still lacking. The boy children are responsible for cleaning the yard and herding cattle and goats in those families who have livestock. Most families live in mud houses with only a few with brick-houses, except the RDP houses. The living conditions of the learners' increase feelings of insignificance, frustration, vulnerability and lack of safety.

Women normally comply to the instructions of men as family heads and leaders without questioning their authority.

According to Mnisi (2015:1):

The ideology of looking down upon African women with respect to their leadership skills was further perpetrated by the apartheid regime in South Africa, which segregated people according to race and culture. Historically, African women faced triple oppression as they were oppressed by colonial perceptions, their own communities and also by the apartheid regime.

Botes (2014) concludes that women nowadays are still faced with gender-based discrimination in South Africa, which is mainly a patriarchal nation. On the other hand, men are regarded as superior, are normally in charge of the family and make most of the decisions. Their girls and boys in the community of Umbumbulu are raised to follow the traditional gender roles. Botes (2014:1) maintains that “while rural women are often silent, hidden and under-appreciated,

they represent probably the world's most powerful untapped natural resource, and they are surely more than ever before a key to world stability and understanding".

According to Botes (2014:2) "women in South Africa face discrimination in various sectors of their lives, especially in the workplace where society sees women and their careers rather differently from the way it sees men and their careers". Kendall (2010:235) maintains that "one of the central causes of the subordination of women in the twenty-first century is sexism: aspects such as negative attitudes towards women, prejudice and discrimination lead to 'gender-inappropriate endeavours in the workplace'." Botes (2014:2) identified barriers such as "cultural and traditional issues, prejudice and stereotypes as well as a lack of promotion and employment as perceptions of gender differences in the workplace". Most black rural women see it fitting to play similar roles at work as those played at home, where men are in charge and enjoy privilege and status (Lefkowitz, Shearer and Espinosa-Hernandez, 2014).

It is significant to understand that both men and women constitute gender. Men play an active role in shaping women's identity and controlling their behaviour. For this reason, the study also gives a voice to male teachers. While the focus of this study is not on men and masculinity it is important to understand how men negotiate their identity since they are active players in the construction of female identities. Therefore, men are also included as participants in this study.

### **1.3 Aim and Purpose of the Study**

The aim of the study was to elicit black women teachers' perspectives and experiences and to examine the gender relations that exist in a rural school in the post-apartheid era. The voices of black women generally in South Africa have been rarely considered in the literature and those of black women teachers are virtually non-existent. Ratele (2001) argues that there can be no question that conditions in apartheid South Africa have affected constructions of masculinity. Like black men, black women were also deeply affected by the atrocities of the apartheid regime. However, men, even during the apartheid era, benefited from patriarchal dividends (Connell, 1995). Hence, this study further examined the way in which women teachers managed and addressed issues of gender bias in a rural secondary school in Umbumbulu. This study further explored whether persistent dominance of males over females exists and will consider voices of possible resistance from male teachers. The study also sought to understand what factors make it possible for men to question and resist rigid gender norms.

This study makes recommendations of how teachers can cope and handle problems that emanate from gendered jockeying for position.

#### **1.4 Problem Statement**

The problem addressed by the study was to identify the challenges that black female teachers faced in the performance of their duties and the barriers they encountered in their quest for upward mobility within the school's management structures. At this particular school, only female teachers are in management positions but continue to experience serious challenges in their managerial duties despite the fact that female teachers make up 68% of the staff population. Morojele (2013) explains that in order to shape and accentuate discriminatory gender associations, the fascination of forms of masculinities over femininities is indoctrinated in children's mentalities as a cultural groundwork. In South Africa in general, a gender mainstreaming approach has been difficult to implement, despite many gender equality laws and policies in place.

Some of the legislations that were established within the South African Constitution to guarantee gender equity comprises Employment of Educators Act no. 76 of 1998 and Employment Equity Act no. 55 of 1998. The Constitution grants every person with intrinsic dignity and the right to have his or her dignity respected and protected. This signifies that women should also be accepted, recognised and have their dignity respected and protected. However, conditions stipulated in the above legislation are very different from the reality that women face.

Female teachers in this research setting occupy lower status roles and subsequently less authority and power. They are regarded as people who cannot make important decisions regarding the school operation in the rural community where they are working. The female teachers struggle to assert authority and to garner respect from their learners in comparison with their male counterparts. In this research setting, the top management positions at the school are occupied by females. However, despite occupying positions of authority, they have little power, especially over the male teachers.

#### **1.5 Rationale**

Women teachers in general, being the majority of school-based employees, also experience difficulties securing promotions and appointments as managers or middle managers (Chisholm

and September, 2005; Moorosi, 2011). Gendered power relations are difficult to change because of the inevitable technical and hierarchical approaches of institutions (Goetz, 2006). This means that many men still support the oppression and subordination of women regarding them as second-class citizens. This patriarchal dividend holds sway in both private and public institutions (Morrell, Jewkes, Lindegger and Hamlall, 2013). Mkhwanazi (2009) and Tabane (2009) also argued that many efforts to shift power in government for greater gender equality has been difficult or disappointing, despite increasing numbers of women in parliament. Karlson (2010) questions why the gender mainstreaming approach has been so difficult to implement, given the conditions of the early, strong commitment of the national government to this approach and the clear need to continue to act on gender inequalities in education.

There is a dearth of research studies accessible that address challenges faced by black female teachers. Similarly, meaningful practical solutions will be found by detecting difficulties encountered by female teachers and the effect on performance. Subsequently, the door to conduct additional studies on the effect of such difficulties on teacher performance and relationship with administrators and students will be unlocked.

The intention for undertaking this study is engrained in my own experience as a post level one professional teacher, who has taught for twenty years in different rural secondary schools. Working with both male and women teachers all these years in the education field has offered opportunities to observe how black women themselves experience challenges in rural secondary schools. The problems that female teachers face continue to occur even when they have been promoted to management positions, hence, they become more frustrated. For example, I have observed in my former school that the ideas from female teachers were not taken seriously by the male teachers even if they were good ideas. Such conditions lead to little professional growth amongst the teachers because there are no shared responsibilities and therefore distributive leadership is discouraged. I was, therefore, very interested to find out if my experiences were shared with other black female teachers practicing in rural communities.

Most studies conducted on black women teachers in rural secondary schools are on leadership. To my knowledge, sparse research has been conducted on black women teachers' experiences in all spheres. In this regard, this study attempts to address the gap in the literature that focusses on the everyday lived experiences of black women teachers and managers.

## **1.6 Research Aims and Questions**

The overall aim of the study was to explore the practices and experiences of black women teachers in their performance of their duties in a rural secondary school in terms of the existing gender relations.

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify the challenges that black women teachers face in the performance of their duties by exploring their common experiences.
- To investigate the gender relations that exists at the school.
- To investigate the division of labour within the institution.
- To investigate the role that men play in gendered relations at the school.
- To explore the agency that black women teachers may have in the gendered dynamics that exist within an institution.

Stemming from the above objectives the following critical questions were asked:

- What are the challenges that black women teachers face in the performance of their duties?
- What are the gender relations that exists at the school?
- What is the extent of sexual division of labour within the institution?
- What roles do the men play in steering gendered relations at the school?
- Do the black women teachers have agency in the gendered dynamics that exist within the institution?

## **1.7 Definition of Key Terms**

### **1.7.1 Gender**

D’Hease and Kirsten (2006:76) defines gender as the “socially built power relations amongst men and women characterised by a set of provisions of culturally flexible features and roles that men and women perform on daily basis”. Gender, therefore refers to the roles that society expects of males and females (De Vos, 2005; Reddy and Reddy, 2007).

### **1.7.2 Gender Equality**

Wombeogo (2007) asserts that gender equality is the state where both men and women are at liberty to make choices and develop their individual capabilities without any set restrictions by



stereotypes, rigid gender roles and prejudices. Moreover, gender equality is attained once aspirations, desires and diverse activities of women and men are equally cherished and favoured and “when women and men enjoy similar opportunities and human rights across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision-making” (Wombeogo, 2007:41).

### **1.7.3 Gender Inequality**

Agarwal (2000) describes gender inequality as the concealed or noticeable divergences between males and females. Kittay (2013) explains this concept as social constructions that lead to diverse privileges and opportunities for women and men.

### **1.7.4 Gender Stereotypes**

According to Mnisi (2015), stereotyping signifies the perceptions of certain individuals who are prejudiced and deleterious regarding some groups. Moreover, stereotyping connotes the conviction that a trait is applicable regardless to an entire group of people. It means “assumptions about a certain group of individuals; these assumptions might or might not be true” (Diale, 2017:9). Brennan (2007) maintains that people that stereotype have rigid philosophies about specific groups, e.g. women.”

### **1.7.5 Culture**

Buthelezi (2001:18) argues that culture is “a set of shared meanings held by a specific group of people that serves as the social foundation for their organised way of life”. Additionally, culture is the way of life and a pillar that embraces history of any nation (Langa, 2012). Higgs (2006:39) asserts that “culture is what makes a people, a people.”

### **1.7.6 Patriarchy**

Patriarchy is the structure of unequal power relations sustained through men’s domination over women (Connell and Connell, 2000). According to Tsabedze (2002:21) patriarchy implies a “hierarchy of social relations and institutions through which men are able to dominate women, and also younger men or who have less power”. Furthermore, Diale (2017:9) argues that patriarchy is a “social system where male counterparts hold primary power and control over property, women and children, while women hold domestic and child rearing roles”.

### **1.7.7 Masculinism**

Connell and Connell (2000) explain masculinism as the ideology that naturalises and justifies men's domination over women. Kenway (1995) argues that masculinity is developing and not static as it arises through one's interaction with contradictions and dynamisms within and among some social structures and circumstances surrounding him or her. Issues of social class, ethnicity, age, race and sexuality influence these broader social structures and create an imbalance of power between males and females and males and males (Mac and Ghail, 1996).

## **1.8 Review of Literature**

A literature study was conducted to inform the analysis of challenges faced by women teachers in the execution of their day to day duties. The data gathered from literature was critically synchronised, synthesised and evaluated in relation to the research questions. The focus was on black female teachers, the challenges they encounter in their everyday duties and how they can overcome these challenges. With the literature study, details regarding the South African policy against gender discrimination, men and patriarchy, gender discrimination—the cultural appropriation, gendering in the workplace and gender discrimination in the South African education system were explored. The study focuses on African perspectives with regard to the challenges that female teachers face.

## **1.9 Research Design and Methodology**

### **1.9.1 Research Design**

Babbie and Mouton (2014:72) affirm that research design “addresses the planning of scientific enquiry, thus designing a strategy for finding out something”. The study used a qualitative research approach to investigate the experience and practices of rural black teachers in one school setting. Qualitative researchers are concerned with how things work in a particular context (Mason, 2002). Leedy and Ormrod (2005) described qualitative research as being practically utilised to answer questions concerning the multifaceted nature of phenomena, typically with the intention of unfolding and getting the participant's own understanding of the phenomena. This study aims to elicit the views and experiences of black female teachers and the complexities of cultural practices with the social milieu of a rural school setting, which fits a qualitative research approach.

Qualitative research studies serve the following purposes: Revealing the nature of certain situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems, or people. It enables a

researcher to gain new insights about a particular phenomenon, develop new concepts about the phenomenon, and discover the problems that exist within the phenomenon; allowing a researcher to test the validity of certain assumptions, claims, theories, or generalisations within real-world contexts; and providing a means through which a researcher can judge the effectiveness of particular policies, practices, or innovations (Leedy and Omrod, 2005:134-135).

Researching black women teachers' experiences and practices will serve the above-mentioned purposes, hence, the qualitative approach was apt for the nature of this study.

### **1.9.2 Research Methodology**

“Research methodology focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used” (Babbie and Mouton, 2014:75). This study lends itself to a case study because it studies instances as they occur (Adelman, 2009); it is a study of a ‘particular’ context in a particular setting, that of one school in a rural area (Stake, 2006). In this type of qualitative research, the researcher “explores a single entity or phenomenon (‘the case’) bounded by time and activity and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time” (Creswell, 2013:98). The researcher used a case study in providing an exceptional case of real people in real conditions, enabling the researcher to have a clear understanding of ideas and how these ideas and abstract ideologies can fit together rather than presenting them with abstract philosophies (Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) also maintains that case studies include direct observation and interviews with participants, which allow them to have an advantage over antique studies. In case studies, the researcher strives to portray comprehensive understanding and thick description of real-life situations by employing many types of data, including participants' thoughts and feelings (Robson, 2002; Yin, 2009; Goncalve, Markus and Carpenter, 2013).

This study suits a case study approach in that it involves observing a phenomenon in its actual context, which was the teachers lived experiences, their feelings and thoughts about school and classroom practices of one particular school. The inference of this was that in this study, I was not necessarily looking for the findings that may be generalised to wider populations, even though the findings may be gainfully practical to similar contexts.

### **1.9.3 Research Paradigm**

The paradigm is defined by Samkange (2012) as the net that incorporates the researcher's philosophical theory of knowledge, ethical, ontological and systematical premises, with a fundamental set of principles that direct action. The study used the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist paradigm is a "paradigm wherein qualitative research methods are used" (Golafshani, 2003:60; Daymon and Holloway, 2011:104). According to Creswell (2013) the interpretivist paradigm is also described as social constructivism in which people form biased meanings of their practices as they seek understanding of the world they live and work in.

The interpretivist approach helped me to make strong, meaningful and reasonable arguments after searching my data for, and organising it around relevant, interpretive categories or themes. Furthermore, this approach helped me to weave sections of data together by theme and to present an argument that was fallibilistic (Seale, 1999).

### **1.9.4 Sampling**

The researcher used purposive sampling, in selecting a sample frame that was suitable to the particular needs of this study. According to Teddlie and Yu (2007), purposive sampling achieves representativeness, enables judgements to be made, focusses on particular, exceptional cases and gradually accumulates information from various sources to generate theory.

The sample consisted of ten female teachers. In order to fully understand the gender power that exists within the institution the views of five male teachers were also used. Fifteen participants made up the sample size all together. The age group of the participants ranged from 31 to 55 years. The sample was dominated by only one ethnic group, IsiZulu speaking people except for one black male from another Zimbabwe.

### **1.9.5 Methods of Data Collection**

Two interviews were conducted with each participant. Each interview lasted for approximately 50 minutes with an average interview time of 40 minutes. A Dictaphone was subsequently used for all the interviews and the interview transcripts were typed verbatim in order to maintain originality. The recorded data and the notes taken by the researcher contribute to the credibility of the research.

### **1.9.6 Data Analysis**

Content analysis was used by the researcher by way of offering a thorough and methodical investigation of the contents of the body of material gathered in order to identify patterns, themes and prejudices (Leedy and Omrod, 2005). Afterwards, data from the transcripts were organised and coded into small chunks of meanings or categories, which were grouped into themes. These themes were utilised to structure and direct the data analysis and presentation.

### **1.9.7 Ethical Issues**

According to Neuman (2003:98) ethical issues are “the concerns, predicaments, and conflicts that arise over the appropriate procedure to conduct research; they refer to the legitimate or illegitimate way involved in a moral research process”. In this study there was no damage caused to participants, neither physical nor emotional. The researcher informed the participants of the research process, aim and expectations from them during their participation in the research.

In terms of gate keeping, the written permission to conduct the study was granted by the Department of Education. Furthermore, the researcher adhered to principles of ‘informed consent’ and confidentiality. Participation was voluntary and informed consent was granted in response to request and permission letters that were given to participants prior to the study.

## **1.10 Outline of Chapters**

### **Chapter One**

This chapter presented an overall orientation to the study. This comprised a formulation of the research problem followed by the rationale and significance of the study, an enlightenment of the research design and research methodology applied, in order to find responses to the proposed research questions.

### **Chapter Two**

The aim of this chapter was to provide a review of the literature for the study based on broad debate about the experiences and practices of black female teachers in a rural secondary school.

### **Chapter Three**

The research design and research methodology for the pragmatic study were addressed. Deliberations in this chapter portrayed the kind of research paradigm applied, the research instruments utilised, sampling procedures, data collection and data analysis techniques.

### **Chapter Four**

An analysis and interpretation of the collected data was outlined and emerging themes were discussed.

### **Chapter Five**

This chapter drew conclusions and recommendations regarding the challenges that black women teachers face, accompanied by suggestions for further research.

#### **1.11 Conclusion**

This introduction contextualised my research and served to identify the gap in the research on black women teachers' perspectives and experiences in South Africa. In this section I have presented and outlined the theoretical perspective employed in this study. The methodological process and aims of the investigation were explained, while key concepts and research questions were introduced.

The next chapter provides a broad review of literature on practices and experiences of black women teachers in the performance of their duties.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Definition of Related Concepts**

In this chapter I will critically examine a range of related literature that have a bearing on the main aim of this research which was to explore the practices and experiences of black women teachers in their performance of their duties in a rural secondary school.

The purpose of this literature review is to present the key concepts that underpin the research study, and to identify and discuss the literature surrounding these concepts. In the first section of this literature review I examined definitions and explanations of gender, gender equality and gender inequality, which are major concepts operationalised in this thesis.

The rest of the chapter is discussed under the following headings: South African Policy Against Gender Discrimination, Men and Patriarchy, Gender Discrimination—the Cultural, Appropriation, Gendering in the Workplace, Gender Discrimination in the South African Education System.

##### **2.1.1 Gender**

Lumby and Azaola (2011) maintain that gender is a socially built phenomenon, which is influenced by the one's history and choices, by the situation in the workplace, and by the people in their community and other surrounding factors.

Chisholm (2001) argues that gender is used to create discrepancies that distribute power and resources in all domains, such as, domestic, commercial, and political spheres. “Gender is like an empty binary construction into which meaning can be poured” (Khelan, 2010:188). However, Ringrose (2013:98) suggested that “being, becoming, practicing and doing gender are very different things for women and men of different classes, races, ages and nations”.

Gender is very complex subject, and it has been addressed in many different perspectives by different scholars who emerge from different disciplines, who have all contributed to giving meaning to the concept. The International Labour Organisation (2000) defines the concept as ‘what the society uses to differentiate between men and women’ and that these societal differences are subject to change over time and also vary extensively amongst cultures and

humanities. Gender can thus be expressed as “a doing, a stylisation of the self that is open to repetition and reinvention” (Bhana, Morrell, Hearn and Moletsane, 2007:135).

The International Labour Organisation (2000) further explains that gender is to be understood as the roles or relationships between men and women in a given social context. Therefore, gender refers to the roles that society expects of males and females (Reddy and Reddy, 2007). Henslin (2005:322) claims that “gender comes into play along with a number of different aspects such as sex, gender and gender roles, and each of these aspects plays a significant part when speaking about different social problems encountered by men and women”. Gender, therefore, refers to the socially cultured conducts attached to sex, while sex comprises biological differences of men or women (Perry and Jaggernath, 2012).

D’Hease and Kirsten (2006:76) defines gender as the “socially built power relations amongst men and women characterised by a set of provisions of culturally flexible features and roles that men and women perform on daily basis”. Gender refers to reliant and qualitative behaviour of men and women’s societal positions (Wombeogo, 2007). This study will adopt Reddy and Reddy (2007) and D’Hease and Kirsten (2006) definitions of gender since the aim of the study is primarily concerned with the relations that exist between men and women and the roles they play in society and the school in particular.

### **2.1.2 Gender Equality**

Burns (2007) asserts that gender equality has been a concern in numerous countries, and studies unveil that gender disparities have been a research focus for a range of years. Anderson and Brinkworth (2007) argue that social development and social justice cannot be attained in the absence of equitable distribution of resources for all or in the absence of respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Moreover, gender equality is attained once aspirations, desires and diverse activities of women and men are well-thought-out, equally cherished and favoured and “when women and men enjoy similar opportunities and human rights across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision-making” (Wombeogo, 2007:41).

According to South Africa’s National Policy Framework for Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality (2000), gender equality refers to a state whereby women and men can equally contribute to nationwide policymaking, cultural, public and financial development; reap



equivalent benefits from the results and realise their broad human rights and potential equally. The purpose of gender equalities is to restructure society to exterminate male domination by considering women's prevailing subsidiary positions within societal relations (Perry and Jaggernath, 2012). The Commission for Gender Equality (2007:6) describes gender equality as: “fairness of treatment for women and men according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. A gender equity goal often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women”.

Wombeogo (2007:54) asserts that gender equality is the state where “both men and women are at liberty to make choices and develop their individual capabilities without any set restrictions by stereotypes, rigid gender roles and prejudices”. Women and men’s opportunities, rights, privileges and responsibilities cannot rely on whether they are born male or female; nevertheless, they cannot either be the same (International Labour Organisation, 2000).

### **2.1.3 Gender Inequality**

Kittay (2013) describes gender equality as social constructions that lead to diverse privileges and opportunities for women and men. Agarwal (2000) explains this concept as the concealed or noticeable divergences between males and females. Gender inequality is the influence of gender roles between the male and female sex. Gender roles include behaviours and attitudes which are anticipated of men and women within a specified social culture (Agarwal, 2000).

Edwin and Jaggernath (2012) maintains that gender roles are learnt and taught at a premature stage within the society and culture some individual lives in, they are not presumed at birth, as one’s own biological sex. The family establishment, especially parents and guardians, has the major influence on the child’s life routine, career course and how one perceives his or her gender since they raise them by passing on values, morals, beliefs and principles at an initial phase (Mutare Teachers’ College, 2009; Edwin and Jaggernath, 2012). The gender inequalities are an outcome of these gender roles which are evident in family households and in the workplace. Most studies reveal that gender inequalities are cultured through one’s family and are ultimately imitated in the workplace (Mutare Teachers’ College, 2009).

## **2.2 Theoretical framework**

The theory that frames the discussion and analysis of this study is social construction of gender. This theory offers an understanding on how gender and sexual identities are constructed. Social constructionism perceives gender as being constructed and re-constructed through social relations in various contexts, for example, by the expected norms in schools, communities and families. Subsequently, there are different forms of masculinities and femininities constructed in any given context, depending on the social background (Shefer, Ratele, Strebel, Shabalala, and Buikema, 2007; Connell, 2005). Social constructionist theory enables young women and men to give meaning to gender and how identities are constructed by social procedures. Shaney (2014) proposes that knowledge is acquired and various realities are constructed through several communication and interactions with individuals. Consequently, by socially interrelating with countless people, influence in perceptions of the world is attained and numerous interpretations of knowledge are constructed (Shaney, 2014).

Paechter (2003) argues that social forces that construct gender roles and identities are constructed as early as birth. As soon as the doctor points out the sex of the child, the baby is instantly gendered and socialised (Paechter, 2003). Additionally, Meier-Pesti and Penz (2008) differentiate between gender and sex. Gender denotes the socially constructed behaviours of how men and women are anticipated to behave, while sex denotes the biological differences, ‘male or female’ (Meier-Pesti and Penz, 2008). The babies will be instantly treated differently, the minute the sex of the baby is determined. Paechter (2003) provides a reasonable example of the colour of the clothes the babies wear. Generally, the girls wear pink clothes and the boys are clothed in blue. This is evidence that the constructions of masculinity and femininity transpire at an early age.

Paechter (2003) identifies that constructions of masculinity and femininity are a result of the connection of historical, social and cultural factors. Throughout the world, people belong to a community whether close knit or not and part of the social environment is formed by community. “A community of practice is, put simply, a community engaging in a shared practice” (Paechter, 2003:452). Apparently, individuals tend to participate in certain standards that are believed to be shared by other members of the community. Thus, members become aware of social constructions of femininity and masculinity that are accepted within their context and tend to conform to these behaviours. Ratele (2016) maintains that in the construction of masculinity, men are directed by traditions and cultural beliefs of the society.

The social constructionist framework further argues that race and class are significant stimulations in the construction of multiple masculinities and femininities which are not equal, hence gender inequalities are displayed (Paechter, 2003). Elders may train boys to do specific tasks that need the strength of the boys whilst girls are taught to do chores that are traditionally feminine (Paechter, 2003). Through social interactions, these boys and girls develop awareness of gendered tasks. Furthermore, these boys and girls recognise that when they become adults, men will hold extra power and will be dominant as compared to women. Though particular identities are constructed based on social context, one needs to note that not all communities practice certain forms of masculine and feminine behaviour. Therefore, this study is viewed by utilising the social constructionist theory as the lens.

### **2.3. South African Policy Against Gender Discrimination**

After 1994, South Africa has developed a number of policies that have been implemented to fight against gender inequality, namely, Gender Equality Task Team (1997); South African Schools Act, no. 84 of 1996; The Commission on Gender Equality Act, no. 39 of 1996; Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (2013); Workplace Gender Equality Act, no. 179 of 2012. These policies have been created to redress the injustices of the past against gender inequality, with specific reference to women and children. However, in this section the aim is to look at gender inequalities in schools with specific reference to women teachers in South Africa.

According to Reay and Ball (2000:145) “many of the gender differences in organisational behaviour stem directly from gendered differentials in opportunities and access to power. The acquisition of power within organisations results in women playing out their gendered identity in significantly different ways to those realised in normative, socially subordinate femininities”. Female teachers occupying the position of power challenges traditional philosophies of femininity, therefore female managers should deal with many of contrary and contending tendencies because of the combination of a gendered socialisation which prepares females for comparative helplessness (Reay and Ball, 2000). “The inherent tension between being female and being a leader invariably results in adaptations and adjustments and the assumption of a femininity that is more congruent with leadership than traditional variants of femininity which are grounded in positions of relative powerlessness” (Reay and Ball, 2000:146).

## **2.4 Men and Patriarchy**

Patriarchy is defined as the structure of unequal power relations sustained through men's domination over women (Connell and Connell, 2000). Morrell (2003:50) reports that "in South Africa, despite the gender-friendly policy environment of the late 1990s, patriarchy remains strong and gender relations unequal". Hartmann (2010:175) contends that "patriarchy is evident on all the social structures that enable men to control women's labour".

Ngcobo (1999:6) describes "how in a typical African tradition, men lead and women follow". Magwaza (2001:25) confirms that "the Zulu society has always been largely patriarchal. Its women have been given minimal or marginal opportunity to air their views. She argues further that feminism is viewed by many as having no relevance to African culture because - it leads women away from their families and responsibilities". Webb, Schirato and Danaher (2002), maintain that most women misrecognise the figurative violence to which they are subjected by being complicit in their own gender power. In this study I found similar evidence of: (a) Women being subjected to gender discrimination because of cultural beliefs and (b) Some women complicity accepting their roles of subordination and subscribing to what they call, 'the Zulu way'.

According to Connell (2002) men take pleasure in most areas of life, including status, supremacy, liberty, finance, self-confidence and personal growth, since the communal dominion is said to be conquered by them. In addition, Connell (2002:6) maintains that "there is uneven respect with whole genres of humour, based on contempt for woman's triviality and stupidity". He further argues that females' bodies are still promoted as substance of consumption by males which is portrayed in serious pornography and prostitution.

On the other hand, society plays a huge role in giving men the idea that their masculinity should dominate in society and women should submit to them. Chisholm (2001) reasons that patriarchy originated and is interrelated to gender roles, as well as the collection of behavioural and societal norms which are socially suitable for those of a particular sex. He further asserts that most studies were very keen to understand why men are stereotypically expected to pursue professional fulfilment outside the home while women are naturally associated with domestic roles.

Men, in the household of traditional black African and patriarchal culture, are regarded to be the prime wage earners and resolution makers. Furthermore, women's sexuality is limited and they are anticipated to execute the roles of child-bearers, child-minders and housekeepers whilst they are ruled out from getting access to monetary possessions (McFadden, 2003). Reddy and Reddy (2007) argued that African girls are not given equal education as boys when they grow up. Instead, they are loaded with many responsibilities like taking care of children and fetching water from faraway places, which eventually makes them weak, unhealthy and unsure of life. It is generally believed that men are always at a higher level than women and control all the resources and decision-making. The community mostly hears men's opinions on problems and solutions, because women generally remain silent and are usually discouraged or forbidden to speak in public. Women who are too intelligent and have knowledge and experience are often not given an opportunity to express their opinions, which is a serious loss for the community (Reddy and Reddy, 2007).

Traditionally women are expected to nurture the family, and surrender the role of a breadwinner to men (Forson, 2013). "These pressures could be destructive or advantageous to women's functioning, since these women who are at the receiving end of remarks, are exposed to gender stereotypes. Societal pressures of women to be married and raise children still pose a threat in exploring certain life opportunities" (Diale, 2017:23).

#### **2.4.1 Hegemonic Masculinity**

Langa and Eagle (2008); Lindegger and Maxwell (2007) assert that hegemonic masculinity is perceived as founded upon, entrenched in and supporting patriarchy in our culture. Psychosomatic research through the concept of hegemonic masculinity, or comparable concepts, usually presumes that it is a specific structure of masculinity that grants several males supremacy over other males and females (Davies and Eagle, 2007; Henderson and Shefer, 2008; Langa and Eagle, 2008). Oxlund (2008:61) declares "powerful and dominant versions of masculinity subordinate less dominant masculinities as well as women".

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005:77) affirms that hegemonic masculinity can be defined as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy which guarantees the dominance of men and the subordination of women". It is not always the most powerful people who are the greatest obvious bearers of hegemonic masculinity and hegemony is probably recognised only if there

is shared communication between cultural ideal and institutional power (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell (2014) maintains that hegemonic masculinity is constantly created in relation to women and various inferior masculinities. Hegemony is “an accomplishment, an expression of social control, and apparent in the ability to impose a definition of the situation, to set the terms in which events are understood and issues discussed, to formulate ideals and define morality” (Connell, 2014:108).

In the study by Morrell, Jewkes, Lindegger and Hamlall (2013) it was apparent that not all men are equal, but the probability to gain independently from patriarchy unified them all despite of their position inside the masculinities ladder. The study further highlights that a critical dynamic of hegemony is that it is voluntarily activated and not imposed on anyone.

Most men may contribute to the perpetuation of domineering forms of masculinity by not raising any questions, objections or opposition to oppressive gender systems, even those men who never use violence in their own lives. Furthermore, the majority of men derive ‘the patriarchal dividend’ of hegemonic masculinity, although they do not appear to support oppressive forms of masculinity (Morrell, Jewkes, Lindegger and Hamlall, 2013:83).

Hegemonic masculinity is frequently utilised as a central form of masculinity, a philosophical power fixed in patriarchy, used to domineer contending manhood and women. The impression constantly appears to presume the sermon of power inequality (Henderson and Shefer, 2008) either amongst males only or among males and females (Joseph and Lindegger 2007). In the study of coloured boys in one secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal, Anderson (2009) demonstrates how fierceness towards girls and other boys is widespread and is adding to the formation of hegemonic masculinity. She associates hegemonic masculinity with violent masculinity. Sathiparsad (2007:15) confirms that hegemonic practices of masculinity are repeatedly connected to “prevalent male violence against women and this is confirmed in a rural setting where school boys smack their girlfriends in front of their peers to earn their respect”.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity is now widely used in discussions of masculinity and refers to those dominant and dominating forms of masculinity which claim the highest status and exercise the greatest influence and authority. Hegemonic masculinity

makes its claims and asserts its authority through many cultural and institutional practices – particularly the global image media and the state, and although it does not necessarily involve physical violence, it is often underwritten by the threat of such violence. Hegemonic masculinity is associated with heterosexuality, toughness, power and competitiveness and the subordination of women (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005:26).

## **2.5 Gender Discrimination–the Cultural Appropriation**

Langa (2012) maintains that the Zulu society is amongst the most patriarchal nations of the world and it remains to be highly patriarchal. “In the Zulu culture, men and women do not enjoy equal status, as it occurs in most African cultures” (Langa, 2012:46). Mostly, black women are confronted with being wife material, and being entrenched in African culture by fulfilling certain responsibilities to keep the family close, full of love and warmth (Forson, 2013). Forson (2013) further argues that operating in the philosophy of preserving perfect families creates restrictions in women’s life experiences and hinders their opportunities in general.

Copenhaver (2015) maintains that gender stereotyping originates from traditional beliefs and has an influence on how both males and females are perceived, with males frequently attributed features such as control, self-assurance and assertiveness. Consequently, society rejects females more, rather than incorporating them. South African women continue to fight against chauvinist traditional attitudes in their societies and within the school settings (Reilly and Bauer, 2015).

Countless women, mostly black African women subjected to patriarchy “in rural and traditional settings, remain submissive and silenced, a symptom of imbalanced gender power” (Morrell, 2003:50). De Wet (2008) supports this notion by highlighting that most of the South African women become powerless when convening gender issues in cultural patriarchal communities. “Gender ideologies become the basis of social norms, practices and rules; these processes in turn inform masculine and feminine identities. Masked as culture, these identities and ideologies become stubbornly defended as traditional and immutable” (Subrahmanian, 2005:398).

Diale (2017) argues that in most African societies, it is alleged that possibilities of getting a spouse and starting a family will be restricted when a black woman becomes professionally ambitious. The paramount importance of gender equality needs to be understood by individuals, society and the government, in order to minimise gender discrimination (Diale, 2017).

### **2.5.1 The Role of Men in Gender Relations**

Bhana, de Lange and Mitchell (2009) believe in the significance of men to play an imperative role in contradicting gender inequality since gender relations concern both females and males. UNAIDS (2000:6) states that “men should be perceived as part of the solution to gender inequality”.

Connell (2005) maintains that men are inescapably involved in gender matters. This is simply because existing patterns of gender inequality mean that most resources necessary to execute women's entitlements for justice, are often managed by particular groups of men. According to Connell (2005) studies have constantly revealed that forms of gender inequality are intertwined with communal descriptions of masculinity and men's gender personalities.

To move towards a gender-equal society often requires men and boys to think and operate in new ways, to reassess customary images of manhood, and to restructure their relationships with women and girls. The education of boys and young men is certainly an important issue for gender equality. It is rightly regarded as a key to the prevention of violence against women; it is important in breaking down gender segregation in the workforce; and it is crucial to improving the health and well-being of boys and men themselves. Such changes are already happening in numerous parts of the world, but definitely not in all situations or with all men and boys (Connell, 2005:19).

Connell (2006) argues that it is vital for men in government to act wisely to achieve positive gender equality outcomes, since most of public sector policy-making positions are occupied by them. Studies on gender in governments reveals substantial diversity in viewpoints and practices among men. Some men in governments who have intense vows to justice and gender equality give backing to obligatory transformations, whilst several conservative men exercise their organisational influence to uphold the status quo and hamper the progression of women (Gherardi and Poggio, 2001; Connell, 2006). Schofield and Goodwin (2005) contend that for



positive gender equality results, it is imperative to have backing from men in the highest organisational levels of the state. Having a pro-active chief executive entices support from other men in the organisation, which makes gender equality possible both in national and local government. Not only equality procedures need backing from men in authority, but it is also essential that they support the women implicated in gender equality developments (Schofield and Goodwin, 2005).

The UNPFA (2005) maintains that since males are progressively challenging philosophies of ‘masculinity’ that limit their humankind, the struggle on gender equality and violence against women would gain from the support and participation of males. Gender transformation emphasised by the new Constitution made male teachers susceptible, drawing on the ‘crisis of masculinity’ address, which countersigns views about male domination and legalises self-justifying opinions about male power, which made difficulties in developing alternative forms of gender relations (Shefer, Ratele, Strebel, Shabalala and Buikema, 2007). Bhana, de Lange and Mitchell (2009), in their study, contend that male teachers are perceived as being crucial to the progression of gender change, because of their significant position and involvement with kids and young people. Graham (2012) further adds that the social principles and practices of male teachers are significant to the victory of gender equality. In most South African rural settings, teachers and young people originate from social upbringings where philosophies and social ethics tolerate gender inequalities. Subsequently, the emphasis on noticing how male teachers in a rural setting provide sense to gender-based violence has a practical determination (Graham, 2012). Bhana, de Lange and Mitchell (2009) believe that rigid philosophies of masculinities are secured by enticing the patriarchal background of Zulu culture.

There are divisions of interest among men on gender issues. There are individual as well as cooperative efforts to generate new models of masculinity and new conducts of ‘being men’ (Hamlall, 2014). Further, many interests are relational rather than egotistic. That is, they are constituted in the social relations one shares with other people. Most men have relational interests that they share with other women. For instance, as parents they need child-care provision and good health services for children, or as workers, they need improved conditions in terms of job security and health and safety. Aboriginal men share with aboriginal women an interest in ending racism. Gay men share with lesbians an interest in fighting sex-based discrimination. Very few men have a life-world that is blocked off from women – that is

genuinely a ‘separate sphere’. In each of these relationships men have an interest in gender equitable reform (Hamlall, 2014).

Lynch, Brouard and Visser (2010) argue that there are always voices of resistance – men who are able to see the gender matrix for what it is: a flimsy sometimes harmful way to organise the world and their personal lives. These men who ‘resist’ these rigid or patriarchal versions of manhood often like men in some traditional ways, such as participating in sports, but they question the notions that women should be subordinated, or that menial work is for women. Lynch, Brouard and Visser (2010) stress that it is important to listen to these voices and to seek to understand what factors make it possible for men to become respectful, non-dominating and caring in their relationships with women.

Reid and Walker (2005:109) and Morrell (2001:87) maintain that “in South African rural contexts, gender and generational systems in which males governed at all stages, from the system of chieftaincy that regulated access to land, to the sexual division of labour inside the family had been legitimated”. Gender equality sermons encountered powerful opposition at its every step because of challenging customary traditions, such as the Zulu tradition (Dworkin, Hatcher and Peacock, 2012). Zulu masculinity is infiltrated by women’s financial mobility and the condition of a rights critique. This becomes problematic since women endure massive domestic errands in rural settings, and challenging gendered roles, generally poses intimidations and violations, especially, physical violence (Hunter 2010).

## **2.6 Gendering in the Workplace**

Connell (2014) uses the opinions of socialist feminism to enlighten matters surrounding power inequalities in the workforce. This ideology maintains that the position of women in the household became their origin of dependence on men and their subordination to men, since the resources required for existence were historically mostly outside the home.

In Africa, black women generally do not enjoy equal rights, opportunities and privileges as men (Kittay, 2013). Black women’s needs and aspirations are not being equally valued and favoured as those of men (Anderson and Brinkworth, 2007; International Labour Organisation, 2000). The ability of a black woman of making choices and freedom in decision-making goes with restrictions set by stereotypes, inflexible gender roles and biases (Wombeogo, 2007; Reddy and Reddy, 2007). Black women have unequal power relations to men, since men have

dominion and supremacy over women (Connell and Connell, 2000; Peacock, 2013; Heise, 2012), while women remain submissive and subordinate to men (Chisholm, 2001; Morrell, 2003; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Connell, 2014).

Current studies and literature on the gendering of organisations has been strongly affected by arguments in and around feminism and crucial men's studies (Richardson, 2005). The series of themes and issues have been massive and include organisational administration, philosophies and communication, experiences and voices of gendered individuals, gender divisions of labour, gender divisions of hierarchy, influence, authority and headship in organisations (Williams, 2013). This literature will serve to inform the analysis of this study. Although most of such areas have been investigated to some level, much ought to be done. The key issue and focus of this study does not replicate the emphasis of previous work but rather reports new guidelines of black women's experiences in a particular South African context, albeit within the framework of some ongoing and tenacious patterns both in organisations and management studies and within the academic enquiry itself.

Women have traditionally borne the brunt of gender-based discrimination in the workplace in South Africa and around the world. This discrimination can take the form of: not being hired or promoted because they have disclosed that they are pregnant or assumptions that they soon will be based on age and marital status; not being groomed for senior management positions within the company because of assumptions about their inability to display strong leadership; being paid less than male colleagues for performing the same jobs despite having similar or superior qualifications; bullying; and sexual harassment. Differential treatment accorded to women based on their age, physical attributes and grooming also constitutes discrimination (Vetten and Ratele, 2013:67).

Vetten and Ratele (2013) argues that much of this discrimination is built on patriarchal traditional and spiritual beliefs, which spread into the workplace. Moreover, "discrimination is the effect of misconceptions of the different leadership, problem-solving, and communication styles exhibited by women compared to men, and inflexible attitudes towards accepting and accommodating these differences" (Vetten and Ratele, 2013:94).

According to Moorosi (2010) an increasing number of women are becoming economically active and joining the labour force. Furthermore, more than 50% of scholars at South African universities are females, and women also comprises about 52% of the national population work-force. Consequently, women can be more industrious and faithful than their male colleagues if they are well rewarded. These rewards include reasonable remuneration, opportunities for career development and equivalent access to these opportunities (Moorosi, 2010).

Bobbitt-Zeher (2011) states that the workplace is experienced by males and females fairly differently. Some aspects documented are wage discrepancies, industrial gender exclusion and gender variances in authority. Discrimination in many forms have been documented in some studies, including in hiring, promotions, wages and performance evaluations (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011). Reskin (2000) argued that there is a challenge to realise how discrimination materialises in actual work situations. Ridgeway and England (2007) noted that traditional theories about gender are typically viewed by some researchers as a foundation to discrimination against women in the world of work. Women in careers subjugated by men may be subjected to prescriptive gender stereotypes, where men will penalise womankind through discrimination for nonconformity from gendered prospects (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011). Ridgeway and England (2007) also believe that organisational structures, policies and practices are other causes for sex discrimination. Bobbitt-Zeher (2011) contends that such policies and procedures are legitimised; usually portrayed as gender-neutral, while formalising men's rights in the workplace. "Women working in occupations traditionally dominated by men may be the most vulnerable to gender discrimination and sexual harassment" (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011:24). Other studies found that an increased existence of women may intensify harassment, as men understand women's increased existence as a danger to their supremacy (Chamberlain, Lindsey, Crowley, Tope and Hodson, 2008).

The discrimination narratives paint a picture of women workers as viewed first as women, and second as workers. Women's personal lives and roles are expressed as wives and mothers, which make them less invested and less reliable workers. Institutional actors more often use facially gender-neutral policies in ways that treat women and men workers differently, especially in ways that disadvantage women (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011:36).

In the study conducted by Commer (2011) it was found that gender discrimination turns the employees emotionally fragile, since simple peace-loving employees are malformed into paranoid and suspicious, frightened and irritated individuals. Furthermore, it was discovered that gender discrimination at the workplace prevails more in the public sector than in the private sector, gender discrimination decreases job contentment in women workers, reduces devotion and passion in women workers and raises anxiety levels in women workers.

Tallichet (2010) notes that the perception of gender in comparison to the division of labour in the world of work, and in comparison, to subjects of power and control, is an ill-fated, baseless stereotype. He further states that the gendered division of workplace labour is entrenched in mistaken philosophy of inborn gender differences in qualities and aptitudes, and functions through several control mechanisms. Tallichet (2010:698) states that “these control mechanisms are primarily exercised by men over women and serve to exaggerate differences between the sexes, especially surrounding women’s presumed incapability for doing male identified work”.

The study of de Lange, Mitchell and Bhana (2012) on women teachers, found that women are represented as being less proficient and holding substandard positions, and being powerless to access ‘freedoms’ like their male colleagues. Moreover, women teachers had to forfeit promotions of school leadership to escape community accusations that they had sex with a man in authority to secure a promotion. The female teachers also voiced that the inequality is perceptible, starts at home and further spill over to the school, the workplace and the community at large.

Chabaya, Rembe and Wadesango (2009) recognise some of the factors alleged by female teachers as the major causes for constant under-representation of females in school leadership positions. Their study cited the following factors as the main obstacles: (a)Family attachments, where women were not ready to assume positions distant from their husbands and children and (b)Women’s poor self-esteem and absence of self-confidence which incorporates mythologies, stereotypes and chauvinism associated with the attitudes and capabilities of women. According to Coleman (2004:7) “women were discovered to be more likely than men to refer to lack of confidence or their own perceived faults that stopped them thinking they could become school heads”. Lack of required support from immediate families, as well as, the education system was also pointed out as one factor that hinders gender imbalance in school headship. “All

women in the project described being ‘pushed’ into principalship by others. In other words, women tend to find it difficult to make independent decisions related to their own advancement” (Chabaya, Rembe and Wadesango, 2009:9).

Eagly and Carli (2007) assert that men are coupled with leadership as they often exhibit self-assured masculine qualities that denote headship, such as domination, while women are less fitting to be viewed as leaders since they tend to display public traits such as empathy. The masculine leadership style is alleged to entail ‘command and control’, while the feminine style is perceived to be ‘facilitative and collaborative’. However, both systems of leadership have their significance. Female leadership styles, as research confirms, have affirmative results for organisations regarding infrastructures, consultations, structure, and authority (Oakley, 2000). “Neither should it be assumed that it is only men who discriminate against women – women are also guilty of discriminating against other women” (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011:41).

Research on the link between women and school headship found that women, even those who were competent, had a tendency of hesitating to penetrate previously male dominated positions due to lack of confidence and low self-esteem, which emanated from gender role stereotypes (Chabaya, Rembe and Wadesango, 2009). These gender stereotypes could be instilled in social organisations which include the family and the education system.

## **2.7 Gender Discrimination in the South African Education System**

The Department of Education and Culture (2010) maintains that there is still discrimination against women, as can be seen in the relatively few women in highest management positions in education, regardless of the majority of women being teachers. It is argued by Younger and Cobbett (2014) that there are active measures to reverse this discrimination, but it will take time to realise these objectives.

Mathipa and Tsoka (2001) further maintain that studies on discrimination against women within the South African education system unveils the importance of preventing women from being endorsed to administrative positions, specifically, in secondary schools. This situation needs to be challenged, particularly, since women are just as proficient as administrators as their male complements (Greyvenstein, 2000). Cubillo and Brown (2003) also support the idea that the experiences of women who desire and attain administrative posts are controversial and worthy of further investigation so that a clearer picture can be depicted.

The Department of Education states that women in this country have been subjected to negative stereotyping for centuries. Women are often still expected to be submissive and more dependent on others. They are certainly not expected to be assertive and ambitious, and to strive for positions of leadership. They further argue that this persistence of the negative stereotyping of women is at least partly due to the roles most men and women continue to occupy. Women are still regarded as the homemakers, whereas most males are employed outside the home. Such stereotyping is reinforced by hundreds of signals that are given and received in society every day when there are few women in top management positions in education.

Gender-based stereotypes have precisely put women in nurturing, subservient roles, while men are perceived as a more domineering and more antagonistic gender (Greyvenstein, 2000). According to Moorosi (2006) cultural stereotypes attribute school principalship with masculinity, which hinders women's career progress in education management. One result of the negative stereotyping of women is that they are sometimes not credited with having the innate ability to be successful. Their success is attributed to external factors such as excellent teaching. The Department of Education and Culture (2010) maintains that schools must aim at shifting these attitudes by instituting gender awareness programs that transcend barriers both in curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Educational headship posts have been assumed by more women, worldwide (Soberhart, 2009) but the qualitative practice in South Africa implies that typecasts about men and women leaders are still rampant, and females in leadership are marginalised and destabilised by their male counterparts (Coleman, 2007; Moorosi, 2010; Muzvidziwa, 2007; Stratchan, Akao, Kilavanwa and Warsal, 2010). The patriarchal custom of dominating women upholds the power disparity in school leadership, while there is still an obligation for gender equilibrium on school management teams, with both genders contributing from their leadership potencies (Gurian and Annis, 2008). It has been perceived as a norm that leadership is for men, and that men should look down upon women (Muzvidziwa, 2007).

One of the objectives of The Commission for Gender Equality (2007) is to encourage gender parity and to supervise what is taking place in education as means of addressing gender discernment. Nevertheless, Subrahmanian (2005:397) "finds the lack of a universally accepted definition of gender equality in relation to education goals makes measuring progress towards

its achievement hard to achieve”. Spring (2008) further argues that human rights include ‘the right to education’. Subramanian (2005) asserts that a thought of gender equality in education should be coupled with gender fairness and needs to be understood as the privilege ‘in’ and ‘through’ education. This would involve a tougher center of attention on gender-aware educational settings, procedures and results and the recognition of biased practices and the infringement of human rights. Christie (2010:8) argues that “schooling should be an agency for social change, and that education is a socio-cultural practice, where young people are given access to formal knowledge codes in mediated relationships by others”. Classrooms can offer different practices that challenge social customs, since an extensive part of children’s lives is spent in schools which serve as construction places (Gosselin, 2007).

Gender discrimination in South Africa is not a direct product of apartheid, but the former cannot be divorced completely from historical and traditional racial and ethnic biases. Gender inequality in leadership in South Africa is multi-faceted and complex and despite national intentions, women’s careers are still gendered (Moorosi, 2010:47).

Madziyire and Mapolisa (2012) recognise that the advancement of women has been obstructed undesirably by tradition and the system how women are mingled. By means of education, particular descriptions of gender are formed, adapted and conveyed to each new generation. Mutare Teacher’s College (2009) maintains that gender consciousness in educational institutions is vital since it is a phase where individuals are clued-up and come to understand the presence of gender disparities in men’s and women’s roles. Learning institutions have a tendency of replicating the gender order in diverse systems, thus, the school as one of the main establishments for the creation of gender is perceived as the major spot for socialisation (Mutare Teacher’s College, 2009).

Chisholm and September (2005) contend that South Africa is a guarantor and participant to tools which have been approved by global and local bodies to advance gender parity. According to Wadesango, Rembe and Chabaya (2011) various strategies have been formed to promote gender equality at all stages in the education division. The procedure started by establishing the Gender Equality Task Team (GETT) by the National Department of Education in 1997 to give direction on the launch of a lasting Gender Equity in the Department of Education and how to attain gender justice in the division (Wadesango, Rembe and Chabaya, 2011).



Another aspect of improving gender justice in education acknowledged by the GETT and the Department of Education is the invention of a core curriculum which is gender sensitive (Chisholm, 2003; Redpath, Morrell, Jewkes and Peacock, 2008). The fact that the curriculum should offer a complete structure for teachers, parents and students to comprehend the entire denotation of gender equality matters in the syllabus was emphasised. “The introduction of Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement emphasised the necessity of eliminating gender stereotypes in teaching materials, classroom practice and school experience” (Redpath, Morrell, Jewkes and Peacock, 2008:39).

According to the Department of Education (2005), gender equity policies on their own will not tackle gender inequalities at the school level. Education and gender awareness programs need to be executed on a continuous basis at all phases. “Teacher education needs to equip teachers to promote an understanding of the profound nature of gender inequity and to overcome the barriers to learning” (Oxfam, 2005:5). According to Wadesango, Rembe and Chabaya (2011) gender awareness can be achieved by making sure that training in gender equality is included in both pre-service and in-service institution based and school based programs. Gender equity ought to be a fundamental theme throughout the program and not a once off event. It must be accompanied with follow up support and supervision. It is also obligatory to develop the capacity of district education officials, mostly the education development administrators and subject advisors in order for them to maintain gender equality in the classroom. The Department of Education should make certain that school level guidelines for gender neutral tactics to teaching and learning are developed (Wadesango, Rembe and Chabaya (2011).

Teachers persuade children’s social growth ‘through the ways they construct classroom practices’ and so it is crucial for female teachers to be able to monitor and engage in manifestation of their role in shaping gender communication, approaches and skills. Teachers have to discover their own spiritual and cultural uniqueness regarding gender equality in order to create ‘safe spaces’ or meaningful teaching and learning to occur with regard to gender matters (Gosselin, 2007:24).

### **2.7.1 Women and Leadership in Schools**

Chabalala (2006) maintains that leadership involves control, influence, obedience and competition. It is characterised to emphasise superordinate holding power and influence over a group of subordinates.

Ntuli (2012:3) contends that:

Leadership is a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. It involves inspiring and supporting others towards the achievement of a vision for the school that is based on clear personal and professional values.

He further states that leadership is influence and consent, not coercion or authority, and should be viewed as independent from positions of authority (Ntuli, 2012). Chabalala (2006) argues that the rise in the number of females in leadership positions in schools is too slow. In education, leadership is still dominated by men. Mnisi (2015) affirms that some socio-cultural stereotypes still subvert women's leadership, despite explicit policies on gender equity.

According to Chabalala (2006) the society perceives women's lack of 'appropriate' leadership style as the cause to the slow advancement of women to leadership positions in organisations. Female teachers are also anticipated to match leadership styles that are suitable to the men's 'world', as soon as they enter the male-dominated headship. The alleged masculine 'modes of leadership' are branded by efficiency, classified authority, and it emphasises control. These qualities are applied by humankind to down-rate women when a leader is required (Chabalala, 2006). Mnisi (2015:2) further upholds that in South African rural communities' female school principals are "devalued, side stepped, not supported, ignored, patronised and silenced because of their gender". Consequently, the female school principal's effort is compromised and continually criticised by fellow colleagues, particularly male teachers, and other ambitious, incompetent prospective school principals (Mnisi, 2015).

Chabalala (2006:65) embraces that:

Successful managers are indeed perceived to be very similar to men, and not to women, despite celebrations of the so-called 'feminine modes of leadership'. Women in leadership also face normative pressures to behave 'feminine', while at the same time they balance the male mode of leadership with the female mode of leadership. This has repercussions on the well-being of women leaders, and creates a perception that leadership is meant for men. This perception demotivates potential women leaders, and they ultimately shy away from applying for leadership positions. Inequalities and exclusions are maintained not only by a firm belief in the stereotypes accorded to

gender roles in society, but also by an unwillingness to accept change towards a more equitable position for men and women.

This is also complicated by men's rejection to admit that women are their equals. This approach ensures that women do not partake similarly with men in leadership (Ntuli, 2012). Kellerman and Rhode (2007:26) assert that "it is important to create opportunities that will enable women to occupy positions of influence, both politically and economically, in order to enhance decision-making". Furthermore, Syed and Murray (2008) argue that females lead differently to males and hence females in general have precise traits, features and abilities that are advantageous to organisations and teams.

According to Nijat and Murtazashvili (2015:5), "the focus on placing women in authority without examining their leadership skills may undermine efforts to empower women because women who come to positions of authority by virtue of their gender alone cultivate an impression that women leaders are tokens in their positions." Therefore, women put in positions of power in rural areas should display leadership traits and have competency to reach significant transformation in order for men to be convinced of their authority (Nijat and Murtazashvili, 2015).

Lumby, Azaola, de Wet, Skervin, Walsh and Williamson (2010) assert that most female principals have an advantage in owning qualities assumed to be associated with their femininity, such as having healthy relationships with people, possessing multi-tasking skills, being adaptable or systematised. "Principals feel that females are able to work harder than men, are more orderly and on time, and that female strength and perseverance enables them to endure hardships and better manage their schools. For some, such qualities are not only advantageous to their role but essential to achieve it in the first place, having to outperform men to be appointed" (Lumby, Azaola, de Wet, Skervin, Walsh and Williamson 2010:46).

### **2.7.2 Challenges of Black Women in Leadership Positions in South African Schools**

Women have held only a minor number of leadership positions, although the history of educational leadership in South Africa reveals that, statistically, women have conquered the education career in South Africa (Department of Education, 2006). Universal studies affirm that womankind in educational headship are a minority, both in evolving and highly developed republics (Celikten, 2010; Chisikwa, 2010). Peters (2003) supports the idea that women are

regarded as ‘non-traditional’ leaders since historically, they have not been considered serious candidates for leadership positions. According to Cubillo and Brown (2003:99), “South African women suffer with private inner matters such as professional experiences, conflicts, passions, ambitions, drives and self-confidence”.

Chikoko and Jorgesen (2012) used case studies developed from the data of women principals to address gender inequity in educational leadership. The first case is of a female principal of a large rural boarding high school. The study found that as the first female principal of a high school in her area, she had to work much harder than her male counterparts, often at the expense of her family and well-being.

The second case is a principal of a deep rural secondary school where she had an encounter of being rejected by the parents and the public as a female school principal. This was also the case with her staff who would only listen to her male deputy principal and not to her. Her male deputy principal was taken seriously by everyone. It affected relations in the staffroom where some male teachers were not friendly with female colleagues and said that they cannot be ‘ruled by women’. She was one of a few women principals with a Master’s degree, but her qualifications were meaningless, just because she was a woman. She also struggled in her character as a mother and a spouse because of long hours she had to spend at work. The findings showed that women had experienced discrimination throughout their career phases even after their appointment (Chikoko and Jorgesen, 2012).

The third case was of a principal of a high school with one hundred and eighty-three scholars and eleven staff members, of which, seven of them were females. She adopted a mothering approach to the learners in overcoming the school’s low enrolment and its underprivileged location. The school performed well, educationally, ranging between eighty to ninety percent. She experienced a ‘pull-her-down syndrome’ because of the culture that a woman cannot lead. She was falsely accused of cheating during the examination, followed by an official prolonged enquiry. She was convinced that the allegations were caused by her achievement of better results than men. Despite of all the challenges she faced, she used her mothering expertise constructively to manage the school.

Parsaloi and Steyn (2013) assert that the majority of cultures allocate roles to gender, which clarifies how people learn from their environment through the socialisation procedure, which

they then internalise and later use to inform their options regarding leadership positions. Powell and Graves (2003) argue that once females feel that they are underprivileged, they may not be keen to protest in available highest leadership posts than equally competent men. Furthermore, women internalise these obstacles, creating a psychological glass ceiling (Burns, 2007). Mitroussi and Mitroussi (2009) affirm that women frequently have to prove themselves before they are acknowledged, and thus require huge psychological power, confidence and dedication to survive the pressure.

In the study conducted by Lumby and Azaola (2014), the female principals claim that they are willing and prepared to confront difficulties they encounter at work, because they are mothers themselves. Other women principals claim that their male counterparts lack mothering experience, consequently, they lack expertise essential to manage a school and women are regarded as born leaders since they lead from home.

Mestry and Schmidt (2011) maintain that the patriarchal culture, which is deeply rooted amongst all ethnic groups, persists to dominate in numerous societies and schools in South Africa, putting restrictions on women's progression into senior leadership positions. Bush and Heystek (2006) affirm that much evidence indicates that women are critically under-represented in leadership positions. Cotter (2004) also asserts that women and men continue to experience different privileges in practice, since women still endure discrimination and have dissimilar power sharing, particularly, in education. There is still high proportion of men in management posts, even when women are well qualified. Subsequently, male social patterns are alleged to be the custom, in which females frequently find it problematic to be acknowledged as colleagues by their male counterparts (Cotter, 2004). Coleman (2002) and Brunner (2002) argue that females bring diverse principles and potentials to the character of principal than men do.

According to Lumby and Azaola (2014:37):

Women who wish to achieve and enact leadership roles must therefore contend with stepping outside the acceptable notion of what it is to be a woman in order to match the leadership prototype. By so doing, they draw down disapproval for transgressing the boundaries of being a woman. Women holding a principal role may face some

persistent and prescriptive stereotypes which mean, whether competent or not, nurturing or not, they will be transgressing one prescription or another.

Mestry and Schmidt (2011) conclude that ‘competence’ was regarded almost uniquely to notions of masculinity, control and performance, while ‘incompetence’ was associated with femininity.

### **2.7.3 Gendered Division of Labour in School Contexts**

Division of labour comprises work specialisations between teachers, such as attentions of females in domestic science, language and literature teaching, and males’ concentration in science, mathematics and industrial arts. It suggests the establishments of masculine regulation and honour and involves feminine subordination (Seidman, 2003). Connell and Connell (2000) argue that in order for people to comprehend the gender regime of a school, it is crucial for one to realise the manner in which gender relations intrude on a variety of teachers, how they react and the approaches they pursue.

According to Mathis (2011:16):

Division of labour is frequently mapped onto a social hierarchy in which males' freedom to venture outside of the home and presumed control over women is perceived as superior and dominant. As such, rather than working to destabilise the historical notion of patriarchy, much literature assesses the origins of patriarchy, or a social system in which the male gender role acts as the primary authority figure central to social organisation, and where fathers hold authority over women, children, and property.

Narang (2014) maintains that some teachers perceive boys and girls as having diverse interests in co-curricular activities. The boys are distinguished as vocal and tough, thus preferring outdoor activities, whilst girls are viewed as weak and creatively inclined thus preferring music and dance over other activities. Furthermore, they analyse these differences as biological and not as a societal construct. The teachers assumed that heavier errands such as lifting furniture were appropriate to masculine bodies while lighter errands such as carrying registers suitable for feminine bodies. Most teachers had a tendency of choosing girls for errands such as cleaning the class and practicing songs while they would pick boys for errands such as lifting furniture, opening jammed drawers, monitoring the class, and arrangement of furniture. Girls were let off

with lighter punishments like changing of seats while boys were generally given harder ones like pulling of ears (Narang, 2014). This mentality also filters through to the manner in which educators operationalise and carry out their duties. The concentration of men in supervisory positions is not uncommon, and reflects an association of masculinity with authority. Almost all studies of gender issues in the workplace have found that managers exercise formal power and that men are in control of this power (Mac and Ghail, 1996). Further, social patterns of gender relations construct the idea that men are better leaders and better at making decisions (Connell, 2000). The management set-up in most South African schools serve to reify the common notion that women have better aptitudes for language and social skills while men dominated the more prestigious subject areas like Technology, Mathematics and Science (Mestry and Schmidt, 2011).

Chabaya, Rembe and Wadesango (2009) propose that this gender typecast is a significant attribute of discriminatory practices which subsequently result in girls underperforming in, and abandoning school.

According to Rarieya, Sanger and Moolman (2014:2):

Gender inequities in everyday South African life filter into the classroom in multiple and interrelated ways: through teachers' attitudes about gender; the curricula in general and specifically; gender and sexual violence against girls; and learner vulnerability to unplanned parenthood. These factors impact on learners' career aspirations and achievements, as well as their sense of agency.

Moreover, Leathwood and Read (2009) further raise queries about the supposed gender parity at higher education institutions, where there is ongoing deficiency of women from what are regarded as 'traditionally masculine' fields such as geology, political science, quantitative courses, chemistry, and physics.

Sang, Masila and Sang (2012) argue that gender inequality raises concerns about opportunity distribution justice, and since women and men possess similar abilities and talents, should therefore be rewarded and treated equally. However, generating equal opportunities for men and women will not automatically lead to gender equity because of gender role ideology.

According to Ponnusamy (2002), teaching is commonly assumed to be females' work.

Nevertheless, in the pre-industrial era, in numerous countries including South Africa, the majority of the teachers were males (Ponnusamy, 2002). The study of Kerr, Kerr and Miller (2014) on rural women found strong evidence that women are anticipated to fulfil the characters of child-care and domestic work, consequently, this qualifies them for the classroom and taking care of learners.

#### **2.7.4 Agency of Women**

Agency refers to the process where women and men make usage of their legacies and benefit from available opportunities to accomplish anticipated outcomes (Moore, 2016). Hence, agency is significant to realise why gender results are equivalent or inadequate and how they arise. Naturally, women are at a disadvantage throughout the countries since women and men's abilities in making operative choices vary in a series of areas. This section put emphasis on a range of consequences strictly connected to women's ability, or inability, to make selections. Such results are correlated and regularly compound each other. Subsequently, a woman's capacity to choose and perform at any given time somewhat replicates fundamentals put previously in her childhood.

According to Disney (2008:83):

Agency means women's experiences of making the most of their situation, in the following ways: her ability to rise above the situations she is pressed with; participation in the community; assertion of identity; and how she continues to survive and make changes for herself and her immediate environment and community. This definition gives importance to a woman's individual context, is open and reflects a new approach to women's self-determination and narratives of the self. It is ironical that it is feminism's deepest belief that women's voices must come to the fore, but when they do, we find these voices often scuttle our assumptions about what should be the right or legitimate form of agency.

Jewkes and Morrell (2011), in a study of sexual agency of young women, maintain that gender disparities provide men substantial relational control over young women, mainly in conditions of dearth and where sex is significantly rewarded. Young women are frequently portrayed as targets of men, but this does not explain women's pragmatic sexual agency.



Most women voiced extremely compliant femininities, with control capitulated to men, as a 'choice' that gave their lives more cultural meaning. (Jewkes and Morrell, 2011).

The study by Smith (2011) on factors influencing women's career decisions reveals that, while acknowledging the authenticity of constraints on women's lives and choices, her study found that the women teachers possessed agency in the manner in which they approached their careers. She argues that women's consciousness of their peculiar potential for agency, and how they choose to exercise it, is a crucial consideration in realising female teachers' career paths.

According to Smith (2011:50):

There is a need to move beyond an analysis in which the existence of barriers to progression is taken as a given and assumed to be a major career-shaping force, to an analysis that affords scope for taking into account the multifarious ways in which women exert their agency in the career context, making conscious and positive choices which may be at odds with traditional, hierarchical notions of career.

The study of de Lange, Mitchell and Bhana (2012) noticed that girls grieved that their women teachers were letting them down by keeping quiet when they were expecting them to voice out, protect them and 'lead'. It was worse when they silenced the girls to be 'good girls'. They recommended the possibility for gender workshops to equip all teachers to contribute towards changing the status quo. Women build up their idea of headship from the involvements they may have undergone as young girls (Kamau, 2010; Chisikwa, 2010). Hence, empowering womankind starts with empowering young girls at every footstep of the schooling hierarchy. According to Jewkes and Morrell (2011) schooling institutes are a chief background for gender interferences. The South African new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for Life Orientation comprises a concentration on gender and specifically highlights how women use their agency in different contexts (Department of Education, 2011).

Lumby and Azaola (2011) indicated how South African female educational leaders often bigoted themselves. These female teachers have a tendency to strengthen the perception of masculinity and femininity in the schoolroom by utilising commentaries that assess and put

limitations between upcoming work and what is understood as suitable. These commentaries constitute part of the concealed syllabus which in turn, become exclusionary actions to other career paths leading to positions like school management. Moletsane, Mitchell, Smith and Chisholm (2008) maintains that it is significant that such female teachers have been cultured and can contribute to the growth needs of the public, since gender disparities in families, societies and educational establishments remain pervasive.

There is extensive global literature on femininities crossing many academic studies, remained supportive in contributing to the understanding of the teacher's roles in this particular study. Women can and do make choices in the constructions of their femininity and in the manner in which they exercise their agency. Women may choose to exercise agency at various stages of their particular encounters and may find that their agency can be constrained at certain points of their encounters (Jewkes and Morrell, 2012). In directing to women's agency in South Africa, the constraints cannot be underestimated and while there are solid traditional origins that add to these constraints, women are not completely and totally passive without any choice in negotiating their power under conditions of patriarchal inequality (Outwater, Abrahams and Campbell, 2005).

## **2.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the literature review with regard to experiences and practices of rural women teachers was described. In the next chapter, the research design and methodology, the research context, the participants, sampling techniques, the data collection procedures, the data analysis procedures and ethical issues will be discussed.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the research design and methodology utilised in this study is discussed. The pertinent issues related to research design, research instruments, sampling procedures and processes are discussed. “Methodology refers to that range of approaches used in research to gather data, used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007:89). Specific tools that were used in this study to collect information and to analyse data are discussed.

Subjects concerning dependability of the research tool and the credibility of findings are discussed. This is followed by orientation to ethical issues that were considered and addressed in my study. The chapter is concluded with a summary emphasising the main procedures delineated.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

Babbie and Mouton (2014) affirm that research design deals with the planning of scientific enquiry, by doing observations and interpret these observations. Furthermore, Yin (2003:19) maintains that “colloquially a research design is an action plan for getting from here to there, where ‘here’ may be defined as the primary set of questions to be answered and ‘there’ is some set of (conclusions) answers”. The research design is essential to advance proper planning and structuring of the study in such a way that the ultimate validity of the study is maximised. In this study, a qualitative approach supplemented with primary data to investigate the experience and practices of rural black female teachers in school setting was used. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) described qualitative research as being practically utilised to answer questions concerning the multifaceted nature of phenomena, typically with the intention of unfolding and getting the participant’s own understanding of the phenomena. In a qualitative approach, “the researcher studies the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or materials” (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2003:430). According to Mertens (2005), qualitative research engages an interpretive, realistic approach to the world. In this type of qualitative research, the researcher explores one unit (‘the case’) restricted by time and activity and gathers comprehensive information by utilising diverse data collection measures throughout a constant period of time (Creswell, 2013).

According to Leedy and Omrod (2005:134-135):

Qualitative research studies serve the following purposes: revealing the nature of certain situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems, or people; enabling a researcher to gain new insights about a particular phenomenon; developing new concepts about the phenomenon, and discovering the problems that exist within the phenomenon. Furthermore, other purposes are: allowing a researcher to test the validity of certain assumptions, claims, theories, or generalisations within real-world contexts; and providing a means through which a researcher can judge the effectiveness of particular policies, practices, or innovations.

Cooper and Schindler (2006:196) purport that “qualitative research seeks to describe, translate, or understand the meaning of a phenomenon through a collection of interpretive techniques.” Researchers employing qualitative methods are placed by Daymon and Holloway (2011) under interpretive paradigm since their emphasis is on meanings rather than measurements. Furthermore, Golafshani (2003) groups qualitative study together with the interpretivist paradigm as this paradigm is dominated by interviews and observations. The study elicits the views and experiences of black female teachers and the complexities of cultural practices with the social milieu of a rural school setting, which fits a qualitative research approach. The methodology that was employed by gathering the information included consultation of books from the university libraries, relevant articles in various journals, internet sources and interviews with rural school teachers and any other available sources.

This school is in the rural area of Mid – Illovo in Umbumbulu. The school has an enrolment of 328 learners with eighteen teaching staff members, thirteen females and five males including two Heads of Department. In terms of the current staff establishment, the school qualifies to have 11 teachers including one principal and two Heads of Departments (HODs) who should manage three sets of different streams. The school is losing 7 teachers, by a process of redeployment due to declining learner numbers. There is one school secretary for the whole school with a computer, a printer, a photocopier and there is a telephone in her office. There are thirteen classrooms in the school, but only ten are being used due to the declining enrolment. There are no science or computer laboratories.

### **3.3 Interpretivist Research Paradigm**

The interpretivist paradigm is a model which employs qualitative research methods (Daymon and Holloway, 2011). The paradigm is defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2008) and Samkange (2012) as the net that incorporates the researcher's philosophical theory of knowledge, ethical, ontological and systematical premises, with a fundamental set of principles that direct action. According to Creswell (2013:101) the interpretivism paradigm can also be referred to as "social constructivism in which people seek understanding of the world they live and work in by developing subjective meanings of their experiences". Schwandt (2000) concurs with the notion that the interpretivist paradigm operates with connotations, thus, for a researcher to comprehend a specific social exploit, the researcher has to recognise the connotations that generate the exploit. Babbie and Mouton (2001) argue that the interpretivist paradigm is based on the hypothesis that human phenomena are principally distinct from natural phenomena because human behaviour creates some meaning and all human actions have a constituent of historicity. This implies that researchers intend to interpret (hence interpretivism) or understand human behaviour, rather than explain or forecast. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) concur by arguing that the interpretivist paradigm strives to comprehend and recognise the universe in terms of its players with strong emphasis on meanings and interpretations.

Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) highlight that interpretivism model involves comprehending in context and appends to our understanding of human phenomena.

These meanings are focused towards certain objectives, diverse and multiple and they lead the investigator to search for the complexity of views instead of tapering into a few categories or ideas. Therefore, the objective of the study will rely as much as possible on the views of the participants about the situation (Creswell, 2013:24-25).

The interpretive approach helped me to make strong, meaningful and reasonable arguments after searching my data for, and organising it around relevant, interpretive categories or themes. Furthermore, this approach helped me to weave sections of data together by theme and to present an argument that was fallibilistic (Seale, 1999). In the succeeding section, I discuss the methodology that I utilised to gather and analyse the data.

### **3.4 Research Methodology**

Babbie and Mouton (2001) define research methodology as those approaches, systems and measures that are utilised in the procedure of executing the research proposal or research strategy. “Research methodology focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used” (Babbie and Mouton, 2014:75). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002:44) further describe methodology as “that range of approaches used in research to gather data, used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction.” The study lends itself to a case study because it studies instances as they occur (Adelman, 2009); it is a study of a ‘particular’ context in a particular setting, that of one school in a rural area (Stake, 2006; Leedy and Omrod, 2005). Rule, Davey and Balfour (2011:302) purport that “a case study is characterised by focusing on a single instance of a phenomenon, its location and interaction with a particular setting, its in-depth investigation and richness of data, and its use of multiple sources”. This is a single case study strategy since “the researcher studies and draws conclusions about one case” (Yin, 2009:50). A case study is an experimental inquest that explores an existing phenomenon within its realistic situation, mainly when the restrictions among the phenomenon and situation are not evidently defined (Yin, 2003). Yin (2003) further affirms that a case study proposal permits the investigator to study definite cases such as the people, clusters or such organisations as schools. The researcher used a case study in providing an exceptional case of real people in real conditions, enabling the researcher to have a clear understanding of ideas and how these ideas and abstract ideologies can fit together rather than presenting them with abstract philosophies (Yin, 2009). Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) contend that a case study is reasonably explanatory, and provides rich longitudinal material regarding people or precise settings.

“A case study may be useful for investigating how an individual or program changes over time, perhaps as a result of circumstances or interventions” (Leedy and Omrod, 2005:135). Furthermore, Willis (2007) explains that a case study strategy enables the researcher to accumulate rich, comprehensive material in a reliable situation. The benefit of using a case study is that it allows the investigator to search for a series of evidence that will be summarised and analysed to acquire the best potential answers. Numerous sources of evidence are used, allowing for convergence (Gillham, 2000). Yin (2009) and Leedy and Omrod, (2005) concur that case studies are valuable than antique studies by engaging participants in direct observation and interviews. In case studies, the researcher strives to portray thorough understanding and thick description of real-life situations by employing many types of data, including

participants' thoughts and feelings (Robson, 2002; Yin, 2009; Goncalve, Markus and Carpenter, 2013). Yin (2009) also asserts that such understanding encompasses substantial contextual settings, since they are appropriate to the planned phenomenon. Djuric, Nikolic and Vukovic (2010:176) view a case study "as an instance of a more general category and that to conduct a case study means investigating something which has significance beyond its boundaries."

This study suits a case study method in that it involves exploring a phenomenon in its real-life context, which was the teachers' lived experiences, their feelings and thoughts about school and classroom practices of one particular school. The inference of this was that in this study, I was not necessarily looking for the findings that may be generalised to wider populations, even though the findings may be gainfully practical in similar contexts.

### **3.5 Population and Sampling**

#### **3.5.1 Population**

"A population refers to the group to which the researcher would like the results of a study to be generalisable; it includes all individuals with certain specified characteristics" (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009:341). Babbie and Mouton (2004) further contend that the population for a study is typically a cluster of individuals around whom we want to draw conclusions. Moreover, White (2005), described a population as all feasible elements that can be involved in the research. This study's target population consisted of black female and male teachers who were teaching in a rural secondary school in Umbumbulu. Ten female teachers and five male teachers who have been in the school for more than three years were the key participants in this study.

Participants in the study consisted of a non-balance sample: black female and male teachers in the Umbumbulu area. The criteria for participating in the survey were that the participant must be a teacher who teaches at Siyabusa High School in Umbumbulu. Among the key participants were the School Management Team (SMT), which comprised of the principal and two HODs, who were females. The other participants were post level-one teachers. The key informants were interviewed to explore pure and expressive material concerning the nature and the level of the experiences and practices of rural black female teachers. The recruitment procedure involved approaching teachers who represent the richest source of information. This included

all levels of teachers from the most senior teachers and cascaded down until the researcher reached the number of candidates required for the study.

### **3.5.2 Sampling**

According to White (2005) and Madzidzela (2008) sampling is defined as the procedure of selecting a percentage of the population to represent the total population.

The researcher applied purposive sampling to satisfy the precise needs of this study. According to Teddlie and Yu (2007), purposive sampling achieves representativeness, enables judgements to be made, focusses on particular, exceptional cases and gradually accumulates information from various sources to generate theory. Fimyar (2014) also maintains that purposive sampling is mostly employed for accessing 'knowledgeable people'. This means that selection of the sample size is based on individuals with thorough information on specific subjects, and having access to networks because of their power, expertise and proficient role. The study aims to explore existing gender relations by drawing on the day to day school practices and lived experiences of black female teachers.

The sample consisted of ten female teachers. In order to fully understand the gender power that exists within the institution, the views of five male teachers were also obtained. The age group of the participants was between 31 and 55 years. The sample was dominated by mainly one ethnic group, IsiZulu speaking people and also included one black male from Zimbabwe.

### **3.6 Preliminary Visit**

After permission had been sought from the principal of the case study school, a preliminary visit was undertaken by the researcher as part of the field work, a week before the date of interviews. The researcher designed an interview schedule with semi-structured questions to be answered by respondents, in view of the qualitative nature of this study. Firstly, the researcher undertook a preliminary visit prior to the date of interviews, to explicate the purpose of the study and why certain questions had been selected. The other reason for the preliminary visit was to choose the purposive sample, so that ethical issues could be discussed only with the selected participants. The researcher was assisted by the principal who was also included in the sample.



During the preliminary visit, the researcher made it clear to the participants that all interviews were to be tape recorded to intensify the validity of the study. The researcher also disclosed to the participants that partaking was optional. The researcher shed light on the entire procedure of interviews, including the probing and follow-up questions that are sometimes asked to get further clarity of the matter in question. None of the participants had problems with the use of the Dictaphone. The preliminary visit helped to identify rooms where interviews would be conducted and dates for interviews for each participant were set. The preliminary visit assisted the researcher in assigning some codes to the participants; their telephone numbers were also taken for purposes of confirming dates for the appointment.

### 3.7 Participants

A summary of participants' demographic information is accessible in Table 3.1.

Some teachers lived in rural areas, such as Adams Mission and Mangamazini. Others lived in townships close to where the school is situated, like Umlazi and Westmond. Few of them lived in nearby suburban areas, such as Isipingo and Amanzimtoti.

**Table 3.1. Participants' demographic information**

<b>Teacher Pseudonyms</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Highest Qualification</b>	<b>Subject Specialisation</b>
Thuli	Female	43 years	She lives in a rural area. She is the HOD for Languages. She has 19 years teaching experience and 8 years of being a HOD. She has been at this school for 8 years. She is currently teaching English in grade 9 and Creative Arts in grades 8 and 9. She is an SMT member who is involved in administration, monitoring learners' and teachers' work,	B.Ed. Honors	English and History

			netball and working close with learner support agent.		
Mike	Male	38 years	He lives in an urban area. He has 8 years teaching experience and has been at this school for 6 years. He is currently teaching Mathematics in grades 10, 11 and 12. He helps with IT support and fixes laptops when there are problems. He is involved in discipline and soccer.	Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.)	Mathematics and Statistics
Ntonhle	Female	42 years	She lives in a rural area. She has 14 years teaching experience and has been at this school for 5 years. She is currently teaching Accounting in grade 10 and Business Studies in grades 10, 11 and 12. She is in the financial committee.	Secondary Teachers' Diploma (STD)	Accounting and Business Studies.
Phumelela	Male	45 years	He lives in a rural area. He has more than twenty years teaching experience and has been at this school for 8 years. He is currently teaching Technology in grade 9, Social Sciences in grade 9 and English in grade 10. He is responsible for Technology Department, a chairperson of the School Development Team and involved in athletics and soccer.	Senior Primary Teachers' Diploma (SPTD)	English, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences.

Phelo	Female	52 years	She lives in a township. She has 28 years teaching experience and has been at this school for 20 years. She is currently teaching Social Sciences in grade 8 and English in grade 11 and 12. She is a guidance counselor (career guidance), a liaison teacher who liaises with the Representative Council for Learners (RCL), educating girls about teenage pregnancy and also involved in cultural activities and netball.	Higher Diploma in Education (HDE)	English and History
Zinhle	Female	59 years	She lives in a township. She has 23 years of experience and has taught at this institution for 10 years. She is currently teaching Technology in grade 8 and Mathematical Literacy in grade 10 and 12. She helps in cleaning the school and she is also a netball convener and a choir conductor.	ACE in Mathematical Literacy	Mathematics, Life Sciences and Mathematics Literacy
Happy	Female	49 years	She lives in a township. She has 25 years teaching experience and has taught at this institution for 24 years. She is currently teaching IsiZulu Home Language in grade 9, 11 and 12. She is a lay counsellor, advising on personal issues, a chairlady of the catering committee and	Secondary Teachers' Diploma (STD)	IsiZulu

			she is also involved in discipline, ladies' soccer and athletics.		
Angie	Female	32 years	She lives in a township. She has 5 years of experience and has taught at this institution for 4 years. She is currently teaching Mathematics and Natural Sciences in Grade 8 and 9. She helps in organising events like Heritage Day and she is also involved in netball.	Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.)	Mathematics and Physics
Zanele	Female	42 years	She lives in a rural area. She has 13 years teaching experience and has taught at this institution for 12 years. She is currently teaching Life Sciences in grade 10, 11 and 12. She is involved in netball and is a member of the catering committee.	ACE in Mathematics	Mathematics and Life Sciences
Muzi	Male	49 years	He lives in a township. He has 19 years teaching experience and has been at this school for all these 19 years. He is currently teaching Agricultural Sciences in grade 10 and 11 and Life Orientation in grade 12. He is a member of the School Governing Body and School Development Team. He is also involved in sports.	B.Ed. Honors	Agricultural Sciences and Life Sciences

Elsie	Female	50 years	She lives in a rural area. She has 24 years teaching experience and has taught at this institution for 22 years. She is currently teaching Life Orientation in grade 11 and English in grades 10, 11 and 12. She conducts morning assembly. She is also involved in gospel music and the debating society.	Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics	English
Bheki	Male	51 years	He lives in a township. He has 23 years of experience and has been at this school for 10 years. He is currently teaching Mathematics Literacy in grade 10 and IsiZulu in grades 8 and 10. He is involved in athletics and is a member of the disciplinary committee.	Post Graduate Diploma in Education	IsiZulu
Khaya	Male	44 years	He lives in a township. He has 20 years teaching experience and has been at this school for all these 20 years. He is currently teaching EMS in grade 8 and 9, Life Orientation in grade 8 and Mathematical Literacy in grade 11. He is an SGB member and a sports organiser.	ACE in Mathematical Literacy	EMS and Mathematical Literacy
Dumile	Female	52 years	She is living in a township. She is the HOD for Commerce. She has teaching experience of 24	Master's in Education (M.Ed.)	Accounting and Economics

			<p>years and has been at this school for all these 24 years.</p> <p>She is currently teaching Economics in grades 10, 11 and 12. She is involved in a lot of administration work, like compiling a composite timetable and examination timetable, controlling educators' and learners' work and maintaining discipline at the school.</p>		
Joy	Female	50 years	<p>She lives in a suburban area. She is the principal of the school. She has 27 years teaching experience and has been at this school for approximately 20 years. She has been a HOD for nine years and is now a principal for one year. She is currently teaching Geography in grade 10, 11 and 12. She manages the school, the governing body, the teachers, the learners and the curriculum. She works hand in hand with the Learner Support Agent that has been recently introduced at the school.</p>	B.Ed. Honors	Geography

### 3.8 Data Production Techniques

#### 3.8.1 Interviews

The interviews were used because they are a flexible instrument for collecting information and allows diverse body senses to be utilised (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). Cohen, Manion

and Morrison (2002) and Gall, Borg and Gall (2006) describe the process as liaising with participants in their personal terrain, language and on their peculiar terms, which allows them to interpret situations from their personal viewpoint. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002:267) during the process, “case study researchers typically spend an extended period of time on-site with their research participants. A substantial amount of data is gathered from a wide variety of sources to present a description of the phenomenon or experience from the perspective of the participants”. Yin (2003) states that interviews are the most crucial source of case study information and they contain rich specific information. Interviewing is a significant way for the researcher to confirm the accuracy of, or to validate or to contest, the impressions she or he had acquired through observation (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2009). Two interviews were conducted with each participant. Each interview lasted for approximately 50 minutes with an average interview time of 40 minutes.

All interviews were conducted in English. Sometimes participants used words from their vernacular language (IsiZulu). I had to translate those words into English when transcribing the data. Most of the interviews were done at the school in the unused classroom during breaks and free periods. At first, some teachers were reluctant to partake in the interviews, portraying some negative attitude. As the interviews proceed, they showed great enthusiasm. Two participants whom we arranged appointments with during preliminary visit pulled out because of some urgent commitments. No one dropped out after doing the first interview. During the first interviews, some of the participants were more reserved, and they were more open during the second interviews.

The interviews did not always go according to plan. Interviewing the targeted population was a challenge because of the difficulty to conduct interviews during school hours as teachers were sometimes busy with their day to day duties. Opting to conduct the interviews after school hours was also a limitation as most of the teachers had other personal matters to attend to. Sometimes I would confirm the appointment the previous day, only to find that I could not conduct the interview as the participant would be busy with some urgent school matter or duty. I would then reschedule the appointment for other days. Some of the rescheduled interviews were conducted during school vacations.

### **3.9 Data Recording and Analysis**

According to De Vos (2010) the researcher ought to exhibit awareness that systems for recording observations, interactions and discussions should not encroach exceedingly on the on-going flow of everyday proceedings. A Dictaphone was utilised for all the interviews and the interview transcripts were typed verbatim in order to maintain originality. The researcher did all transcripts and typing as it grants the researcher the chance to become engrossed in the data and to get a sense for the cumulative data as a whole. The responses of the participants from the audio recordings were played repetitively and cautiously transcribed to familiarise the researcher with the data. The researcher confirmed with participants where clarity was necessary. To gain the appreciation of tone, pitch, accent, pauses, silences and emphasis, an evidence of the interview was kept by both written transcript and audio recordings. In order to protect the data, I had made back-up copies of all data and kept it in a safe place.

According to Opie (2004), one can begin to comprehend the social authenticity which triggers any research findings, only through qualitative data analysis. White (2005:82) describes qualitative analysis as “a systematic process of selecting, categorising, comparing, synthesising and interpreting data to provide explanations of the single phenomenon of interest”. Additionally, qualitative data analysis refers to “working with the data, organising them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesising them and searching for patterns” (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003:64). The analysis involved controlled reading, recalling, understanding, processing and synthesising ideas in a way that offer both empirical and hypothetical responses to the key research questions formulated in the study.

Content analysis was used by the researcher by way of offering a thorough and methodical investigation of the contents of the body of material gathered in order to identify patterns, themes and prejudices (Leedy and Omrod, 2005). Schreier (2012) claims that qualitative content analysis is one of some qualitative approaches for analysing information and understanding its connotation, that is presently accessible. Content analysis is divided into manifest and latent analysis. “Latent analysis is more of a qualitative nature and occurs when the researcher interprets the underlying meaning of text. This requires the researcher to have a visibly stated idea of what has been measured by thoroughly defining the latent variables” (Thayer Evans, McBride, Queen and Spyridakis, 2007:270). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) confirm that the intention of latent analysis is to support the summative content analysis with the aim of assisting the researcher to realise the contextual use of words.



Data from the transcripts were organised and coded into small chunks of meaning or categories which were grouped into themes through a series of steps. Transcripts were read carefully, considering the content, opinions were written down and notes were made. Topics were listed, putting similar topics together, forming key and exceptional topics. Interview transcripts were read with the aim of highlighting significant passages and ideas. The different highlighters were utilised to spot the identification of patterns and themes. These themes were utilised to structure and direct the data analysis and presentation. To uphold the claims the researcher was making, these themes were then presented to the participants and discussed using participants' precise words as verification of what they said.

### **3.10 Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness**

#### **3.10.1 Validity**

Cozby (2007) defines validity as the 'true' and accurate representation of information. Validity is also contended by Struwig and Stead (2001:96) as "the extent to which a research design is scientifically sound or appropriately conducted". Furthermore, Babbie and Mouton (2004) purport that validity refers to the extent to which the actual meaning of the concept under investigation, is effectively reflected by an experimental measure. In other words, validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure. For this study, the choice of a number of interviews as instruments for data gathering is one of the strategies adopted to ensure the validity of the study's result. Cozby (2007) distinguishes between internal and external validity. Internal validity in qualitative research does not inevitably deal with cause and effect relationships of dependent and independent variables but rather with instituting a phenomenon in an authentic manner, that is 'generative mechanisms' or casual powers' (Christie, Rowe, Perry and Chamard, 2000).

To ensure validity of this study, a heterogeneous sample (male and female, younger and older participants, those in management positions and those in lower levels) was used by the researcher. The participants were assured that their identities will not be exposed, so that they felt free to voice their opinions. As data were recorded using a Dictaphone, the interviews were replayed for respondents to listen to in order to authenticate the data gathered. The researcher used appropriate participants, teachers, who witnessed gender relations in their work environment continuously.

### **3.10.2 Reliability**

Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) link the term reliability to validity by asserting that reliability is the consistency of answers from one administration of an instrument to another, and from one set of items to another. “Reliability is a matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, would yield the same result each time” (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:121). The researcher consistently used simplified English and avoided ambiguity of questions in data collection, to make this study reliable.

The researcher conducted two interviews with the participants that enabled her to critically interrogate what was said, and to detect paradoxes, inconsistencies, avoidances and variations of emotional tone in subsequent interviews. This further provided an opportunity to verify some of the pertinent views from the first interview. It also gave the interviewees an opportunity to reflect on what they had said.

The researcher had constant access to the participants and gave them the transcripts to verify what they had said in interviews. The interviews served as several tactics of checking by letting the researcher to discover additional evidence to test the researcher’s emergent hunches and provisional hypotheses that the researcher may develop from observations.

### **3.10.3 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness refers to the neutrality of the research findings or decisions. In other words, this means the point to which a researcher can convince his or her audiences that the findings of an investigation are worth captivating (Babbie and Mouton, 2001; Babbie and Mouton, 2014). Consequently, “it was obligatory for the researcher to make sure that the procedures used to generate the findings to conform to the principle of trustworthiness” (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004:109). According to Thyer (2009) trustworthiness involves credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Streubert and Carpenter (2007); Babbie and Mouton (2004) hold the view that credibility denotes the belief and confidence that those who examine the report will have and accept the research findings as true. Schurink and Auriacombe (2010:441) affirm that credibility “emphasises striving for truth through the qualitative research process.” The researcher retained field notes and audio tape recordings to ensure credibility. These items will be readily accessible on request by selected people who are linked to the research. The researcher ensured that results from the data obtained were correctly and accurately interpreted during analysis. Several meetings, discussion and debates were held with my supervisor to interrogate the data to guarantee accurate interpretation. The study’s

credibility can also be maximised by acknowledging references properly and evading plagiarism so that readers can trust what has been written in a particular piece of study. To make this study credible, the precautions set above were followed and observed.

Dependability means that an inquiry must supply its audience with evidence that if the study was repeated with similar participants in the same perspective, its findings would be comparable (Babbie and Mouton, 2014). Streubert and Carpenter (2007) assert that dependability of the qualitative data denotes the constancy of data over time and over circumstances. The researcher accurately interpreted and cross-checked the data obtained with the respondents before final conclusions were made, to ensure dependability of the study.

According to Streubert and Carpenter (2007), confirmability relates to the recording of the findings and activities over time that is so evident that another person can follow it. This idea is confirmed by Babbie and Mouton (2014) when they assert that confirmability is the level to which the results are the creation of the focal point of the investigation and not the preconceptions of the investigator. In an effort to curtail prejudice, I used the similar interview schedule questions and the similar venue for all the interviews. During the interview process I endeavoured to continue being impartial and unbiased, not allowing my involvement as a teacher to have an impact on the clarifications of the responses. To ensure confirmability, the researcher discussed findings and observations with the participants of this study.

### **3.11 Ethical issues**

According to Neuman (2003) ethical issues are the concerns, predicaments, and conflicts that arise over the appropriate procedure to conduct research; they refer to the legitimate or illegitimate way involved in a moral research process. Struwig and Stead (2001) describe ethics as a system of morals, regulations of behaviour. Fraenkel and Wallen (2003:56) further define ethical issues as “the question of right or wrong and being able to conform to the standards of conduct of a given profession or group, and what is ethical is a matter of agreement among researchers”. This notion is maintained by Mertens (2005) by affirming that ethical guidelines in research are essential to safeguard against evident atrocities. In this study there was no damage caused to participants, neither physical nor emotional. The researcher informed the participants of the research process, aim and expectations from them during their participation in the research. The explanation of the type of the research was given prior to the beginning of the involvement in the study and attempts were made to give the clarification to all the

participants. All participants' privacy was guaranteed. For instance, the researcher gave each participant a code number and then labelled any document with the same code instead of the participant's name.

In terms of gate keeping, the written permission to conduct the research was obtained from the principal of the school concerned, and from the Department of Education. Furthermore, the researcher adhered to principles of 'informed consent' and confidentiality. No identifying information would be shared. The information on where the participants live cannot be revealed. This is to protect the participants from being identified, criticised or harmed in some way. Participation was voluntary and informed consent was obtained as request and permission letters were given to participants. (See Annexure A, Annexure B, Annexure C, Annexure D and Annexure E).

Generally, the interviews were conducted during break time and sometimes during free periods, depending on the appointment time scheduled with the participant. The interviews occurred in a school private classroom where the teachers were comfortable. This ensured that participants felt at ease in a familiar environment to talk openly about their views and experiences. The data was locked in a filing cabinet and computer documents were protected with an appropriate password providing access to only the researcher.

### **3.12 Limitations**

The scope of the research was confined to one rural secondary school in Umbumbulu in KwaZulu-Natal where gender bias is given little attention.

Due to the inability to effectively cover all the schools in this area in one single study, only a selected sample of teachers was used for this study. As a result, the small sample size of teachers from one school may have implication for wider generalisation of the findings from the study, especially in other school settings and communities.

### **3.13 Conclusion**

The objective of this chapter was to outline the research method utilised to gather data for the analysis of the research findings. The researcher used a qualitative strategy to collect data. Interviews were chosen as the strategies to collect data. In the next chapter, the data analysis and presentation of findings are described.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents and analyses data from the transcripts of individual interviews with teachers at one rural secondary school in Umbumbulu. The purpose was to explore the experiences and practices of black women teachers in their day to day functioning within a school setting. The study focuses particularly on the gender relations that exist within the school setting and the mechanisms that black women teachers use to survive in a male dominant teaching environment. The researcher ensured that the voices of the participants were not lost and hence, verbatim quotations are used in the data presentation.

The following themes are presented from the responses of participants at Siyabusa (pseudonym) High School:

- Gendered division of labour;
- Power play – “I hold the position, not the power”;
- Female teachers’ experiences with learners;
- Sexual agency of female teachers.

#### **4.2 Gendered Division of Labour**

Moorosi (2006) supports the notion that in the Zulu culture, there are still prevalent gender typecasts regarding the roles performed by men and women in the society. Generally, it is believed within traditional Zulu culture that men should be leaders and women should be followers (Mnisi, 2015). Men are traditionally regarded as superior, heads of the families and decision makers.

##### **4.2.1 Women are Care Givers; Men are Disciplinarians**

My interviews with male and female teachers revealed strong evidence of the view that men are seen as providers first and caregivers second. Although many men in this school setting share the primary breadwinner role with their wives and sisters, they still regard caregiving as a secondary role; they resist to be actively involved in caregiving. Below are excerpts from the data from female teachers:

Thuli:

I help in monitoring learners. That is what we [females] can do best, be it at home or at school.

Ntonhle:

They [females] are taking care of the learners; it's unlike with the males, you know the males, they are sometimes ignorant of the social issues that are faced with learners. Our partners [husbands] always leave the caring of children to us at home; in our [Zulu] culture they [men] just provide the money. The females are able to identify better with children than the males.

Zanele:

Most of the times they [females] are class teachers because they can monitor the learners, since the society also expects them to look after the children in their own families. We find that the males do duties mostly outside the class teaching, like sports, discipline and communicating with parents.

Angie:

Our role is to talk with the girls about their behavior. As females; it is our duty to talk to the girls. In fact, we can easily communicate with learners in the classroom, both boys and girls. Therefore, we spend more time as class teachers.

Joy:

Female teachers are good with kids. I like to spend time in the classroom. When I am not occupied with office work, I look for free periods. I will go there and talk to the learners about important social issues. I can take care of the learners.

In this school the female teachers are seen as inauthentic disciplinarians who belong in the classroom focusing only on teaching and pastoral care of learners. Female teachers are seen to have compassionate qualities and it is believed that female teachers connect better with the learners than their male colleagues. Female teachers believe that care giving is one of their principal responsibilities as teachers. This is a common view of females residing and working in rural settings. The primary role of a female in a rural setting is one of caregiver. Research by Pittman (2010); Kerr, Kerr and Miller (2014) on rural women found strong evidence that

women are anticipated to play roles of child care and domestic work. We see from the above testimonies that the female teachers at Siyabusa High are also expected to perform the role of looking after and caring for children as their primary function. The male teachers perform duties that involve being outside the classroom mainly away from the children. However, this is not in keeping with the duties and responsibilities of teachers as outlined in the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 where there is no gendered difference in terms of functions of male and female teachers. Furthermore, the Employment Equity Act (1998) guarantees equal opportunity to employment and promotion of all citizens regardless of gender.

Many of the female teachers don't seem to mind fulfilling the role of caregiver and spending most of their day in the classroom with the children. Comments like "female teachers are good with kids" and "I like to spend time in the classroom" are evidence of this mentality. Many of the female teachers also support the view that males are not good with children and are better off doing other duties: "the males, they are sometimes ignorant of the social issues that are faced with learners" and "We find that the males do duties mostly outside the class teaching".

Most of the men that were interviewed shared similar views to the female teachers that male teachers are better at other duties than teaching and taking care of learners in the classroom.

Mike:

I think the specific roles played by males here is mainly discipline...Male teachers are put in the forefront in terms of discipline, because they are tough. I can see that discipline is the most important thing ever at a school. So, in terms of conduct and all that I think the males should be put in the forefront since females can't do it properly as they are too soft.

Bheki:

More especially males are associated with discipline. There is a belief that if there are more females in a particular school, more especially in a high school, there is going to be a lack of discipline because of their leniency. That's why I say it's important for me to be a male teacher at this school...Males are better disciplinarians. Like I've been saying before that eh... it's from how we were raised by our parents. It's cultural and traditional.

Khaya:

The role played by male teachers it is a discipline one. ...Males handle serious discipline problems because they are strong and take good decisions. ...I think male teachers are better disciplinarians. As I've said before we were raised to have that respect of males as 'Zulus'.

Mike:

Well, for soccer, for soccer you find other female teachers don't want to participate in sports, generally they don't want to participate in sports. I think it's because they feel that they are not fit enough for sports. They are also always rushing home for cooking after school; they can't be delayed by sport practices. So, I find myself being one of the teachers who will participate so that learners can get involved in the sports as well so I just find myself there because no one wants to be part of it.

Muzi:

Females don't want to attend sport events on weekends, especially those who are married. They are always busy with their household duties like cleaning and washing since they are at work during weekdays. Tradition forces them to be 'good wives' to their husbands.

Male teachers hold the traditional notion that female teachers are too soft and lenient to handle serious discipline problems. Male educators believe that they should be put in the forefront in discipline as they are tough and can make good decisions. According to male teachers, learners also give them more respect as traditionally they think that they are better disciplinarians. They also highlight that female teachers cannot stay for sport practices after school since they are always in a rush for their household chores as women. Married women teachers rarely attend sport events over the weekends since they are culturally expected to be 'good wives' to their husbands and have time for their families. Participation of women teachers in sports ultimately becomes minimal.

However, there were a few teachers (male and female) who were unhappy with the gendered arrangements at Siyabusa High School.

Zinhle:



We are teachers and at the same time we are parents. So, we know how to treat the learners. Where I come from [township], women are allowed to discipline learners. But, what can we say, the male teachers won't be comfortable when we step into their toes.

Happy:

I would have loved to introduce ladies' soccer at this school. I like sports, especially soccer, a lot; I would like our girls to be part of 'Banyana Banyana' [South Africa's national ladies' soccer team] one day. I am used to seeing ladies' soccer being played in township schools. I once asked the principal if I can do it. I was told that I had to leave soccer to male teachers and the boys. She [the principal] was so concerned of what the School Governing Body (SGB) would say. She just said politely: 'Listen, you can't practice whatever you see in township schools here [rural schools]. Ladies soccer will turn girls into lesbians. Who will be accountable to the community?' So, I decided to back off in order to avoid trouble.

Some male teachers also rendered their voices of resistance:

Muzi:

Learners normally confide to male teachers. They normally discuss their problems with male teachers. Maybe male teachers understand.

Khaya:

You see male teachers can also take care of the learners in the class. Even female learners come to us for help. I don't mind spending time helping our children. I don't have to send them to a lady teacher. I feel good when I do these things for our children.

Phumelela:

I also talk to learners about social issues. Being a male does not mean that you can't guide or help learners with their social problems. I just see this as part of our teaching. Every teacher should do it without doubt.

The above teachers' views seem to be divergent to the traditional stereotypes of male teachers being better disciplinarians and doing sports outside the classroom and female teachers being the primary caregivers. Some female teachers believe that their caring and mothering skills qualifies them to handle discipline as they can relate to the learners' source of problems. Other

female teachers insist that they can do sports, but they are denied the opportunities due to societal traditions.

However, some male teachers argue that learners, especially girls, normally confide in them. This is because girl learners hold the belief that male teachers understand them better than female teachers.

The above findings are encouraging as it serves to challenge the stereotype that women are primary caregivers and men are secondary caregivers and to re-examine the assumptions about gender and care. These findings also highlight the caring capacity of male teachers. We see from the above testimonies that some male teachers accept the obligation of care and undertake tasks like counseling and other pastoral care. It is also encouraging that some male teachers derive reward from caring work of learners. The voices of resistance also challenge several rural demographic trends and trends in family and kinship and the social environment where women are seen as not having the capacity to function in roles of disciplinarian and sports coaches. The views of teachers above indicate that pastoral care of learners is not the malign experience for men that is often presumed from gender comparative findings.

#### **4.2.2 “We are not paper pushers”**

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, secretaries who produced a huge amount of paperwork became a female job as companies realised they could pay them lower earnings to do the job, especially in the United States. It later became the most popular job among women all over the world, including typists. Though the title has evolved since then, it remains the top female job (Kurtz, 2015). The idea of women being associated with administrative paperwork consequently became acceptable in the men’s mind in such a way that they looked down on it, even if it is part of their job. They are not keen to do administrative paper work despite the fact that they are earning the same salary as women (Liswood, 2015).

Connell (2014) affirms that the society has restricted and trapped women through myths and stereotypes. Women’s self-perceptions are often distorted; depicting cultural values about women rather than reasonable appraisals of women’s significance. These self-images constantly take the form of diminished notions of capability and strength and inflated ideas of inferiority and weakness. In respect of being expected to do paperwork, the female teachers at Siyabusa had the following to say:

Thuli:

Females are very good in keeping the admin work up to date. Men don't like paperwork; they believe that it's a 'women thing'.

Elsie:

Females go the extra mile to fill forms and do all the paper work. The men say this is not for them. In fact, as black women, we are expected to do almost everything at home, especially those things that men take for granted because they are 'men'.

Dumile:

I have a problem with male teachers not submitting their work in time. Even if they [males] finish marking, they take time recording marks and other things related to paperwork. They [males] are very lazy when it comes to that [paperwork]. Sometimes I have to ask female teachers in my department to record marks on their behalf.

Most of the male teachers also expressed their reluctance to do paperwork at school.

Phumelela:

I'm not good with paperwork. Females do that well than us [males]. Males, [shaking his head] "we are not paper pushers".

Bheki:

I help a lot with sports and other things. I am very poor when it comes to recording marks, filling the forms, etc. My Head of Department (HOD) used to ask some female teachers in our department to do that for me, so that there can be progress. I'm always busy outside with ground duties.

The female teachers above argue that they do most of the paperwork, since male teachers are not good with it. Men still perceive filling of departmental forms, recording of marks, lesson planning and compiling of timetables as a 'women thing'. They affirm that they are not paper pushers. The school management also supports this idea as they see it fitting for them to ask female colleagues to do the paperwork for some male teachers. For example, Dumile, an HOD, once mentioned: "Sometimes I have to ask female teachers in my department to record marks on their behalf".

Research on gender and stereotyping in schools also reveal that women are expected to do most of the paper-work like recording, setting exam papers and filling. Men were reluctant to do these tasks and they were often not delegated to male teachers. The principal although being a female also shared the same mentality that females are better at doing and completing paperwork.

Joy, the principal, had this to say:

I always know that when I need paperwork to be done, I have to delegate duties to female teachers. I normally delegate completion of matric entries to the class teachers, but if the class teacher is a male, I prefer to give the task to a female teacher. Men do not like doing it, they say it needs too much concentration and they are afraid of making mistakes with such crucial documents. Female teachers dedicate themselves with paperwork. You always know that with them in your team, the work will be precisely done.

Studies have found that in some settings, monotonous and repetitive work was given to females (Liswood, 2015). There is evidence to suggest that male teachers like work where they are in command and make the decisions while the work that is believed to be less important is the forte of female teachers. This practice causes segregation amongst the staff. The female teachers feel that they are being undermined by the male teachers, whilst the male teachers expect patriarchal privilege. Some of the female teachers feel overloaded, because the management puts pressure on them to meet deadlines while carrying the extra burden of completing paperwork that the male teachers should be doing. This hampers productivity within the school and sometimes causes delays in submitting work timeously.

#### **4.2.3 Gendered Positioning**

Ponnusamy (2002) argues that sexual division of labour is a philosophy invented to set a higher value in work allocated to men than that allocated to women. The worldwide evaluation of culture as greater to nature is the fundamental justification for the devaluation of women. Prejudice in the family bleeds into every facet of society, and mostly the labour market (Cohen, 2004). According to Tremblay (2004), women's right of entry to certain jobs is restricted in a 'physical' and 'cultural' sense as well as an 'intellectual' nature.

In this particular school gender positioning among the teachers was very evident. Gender discrepancies within education are not new. Despite the effort by the Department of Education to address gender bias in schools, the female teachers at Siyabusa High School were given lower status tasks than the male teachers. Clear gendered distribution of work existed. There were important power and status differences between male and female teachers at Siyabusa High School. Low status was accorded to tasks and portfolios predominated by female teachers. This came out very strongly in interviews with female teachers.

Phelo:

I am a guidance counselor. All the problem learners are sent to me. This job is not regarded as very important. I am seen as a person who handles the washed-out ones.

Happy:

My job is to handle the catering when there are functions. It is not regarded as a high-profile position.

Zanele:

I am the library teacher. I spend most of my day in the library. The learners don't really come here to read. They get up to all sorts of nonsense that I must handle. I also clean and keep the library neat and organised.

Angie:

Most of the time cleaning here is done by female teachers and also the uniform thing. The maintenance of the uniform, it's the female teachers who have that.

Zinhle:

I am a choir conductor. This is a domain of a female teacher. In this school the choir is not as important as the soccer team. We get lesser funding than the soccer teams and less importance is placed on us.

It is evident from the data provided by female teachers that women are regarded as being good with parental care and welfare of people. The roles occupied by and duties performed by female teachers were regarded as less significant. According to Songca (2006:226) "in South Africa, the ideology of looking down upon African women with respect to their leadership skills was

further perpetrated by the apartheid regime, which segregated people according to race, gender and culture”. A study conducted by Nijat and Murtazashvili (2015) found that various women who occupy positions of power are unable to manage since they have slight or no radical support, feeble decision-making and enforcement control, and slight or no access to sources of both monetary and human capital.

Moreover, Morejele (2014:103) affirms that:

Gender inequalities are rife in South African schools. The dominant gender constructions and expectations in South African schools continue to give ascendancy to hegemonic masculinities over femininities in ways that do not uphold the principles of equitable gender relations. This is mainly due to teachers’ constructions of masculinities and femininities as innately tied to being a boy or a girl.

Similar patterns and matters of gender-related power and status have emerged from the interviews with male teachers.

Khaya:

Yes, I feel important as a male teacher because I do contribute in sports. I am the chairperson of the sports committee. I have to ensure that sports are on the right track. I give direction and instructions to coaches of different sports codes. I like working with male teachers more than females because males understand sports better. I get along with male coaches; they do not give me many problems as females do.

Bheki:

I am also a teacher representative of the School Governing Body (SGB). Here at my school, it is only males that represent teachers in the SGB despite of the fact that there are more female teachers.

Muzi:

I am in the School Governing Body; I am also a Site Steward. When teachers are experiencing problems, be it with the school management or any work-related issues they come to me for guidance and assistance.

Phumelela:

I am the chairperson of the School Development Team (SDT). I ensure that all the teachers, especially the newly appointed teachers are developed accordingly. I have to see to it that the Development Support Groups (DSG's) are doing what is required of them for the school to obtain better matric results.

The testimonies above indicate that male teachers perform duties and hold positions that are regarded as significant. The study by Sang, Masila and Sang (2012) indicates that gender is a decisive factor in engaging women in subservient positions, while men and their access to resources, supremacy and power is regulated by interconnection of their gender with other societal relations. Families socialises women to consent gender disparity, which expresses itself in imbalanced division of labour and control over resources. Nijat and Murtazashvili (2015:8) stated that “the predominant perception of women as victims and second-class citizens in relation to men” still prevails.

It is clear that at Siyabusa, the female teachers occupy lower status roles and subsequently less authority and power. They are regarded as people who cannot make important decisions regarding the school operation in the rural community where they are working. At times, they are given tasks that require day to day monotonous work which requires physical effort and less challenging mental effort. The males perform tasks that are regarded as important for the functioning of the school.

The top management positions at Siyabusa High School are occupied by females, the principal and the two HOD's. While they occupy positions of authority, they have little power, especially over the male teachers.

Every institution has a culturally authoritative form of masculinity and so too has Siyabusa where there is a hegemonic form of masculinity. It is one that renders male power as the norm and works with a gender hierarchy that places men above women. However, it does not automatically follow that all men accept or aspire to meet the institution's norms for masculine behaviour.

#### **4.3 Power Play- “I hold the position, not the power”**

Fiske (2010:546) posits that “power is the ability to exert influence or the amount of force one person can induce on another”. Swart (2007:203) holds the same view that power is “the ability to act on, influence or control the actions of others”.

Interviews with the principal at Siyabusa revealed that despite being in a position of authority, she had little power over male teachers.

Joy:

I suppose being in management and a principal is interesting and exiting; but the way things are done here at this school, it is very problematic and challenging. I have to consult with the male teachers before making any significant decisions regarding the management of the school. The SGB of the school would like for me to do so. If I act on my own, the male teachers watch my every move and look to criticise. I meet with serious resistance from the men. I am not entirely comfortable with this but this is the way it is here. Without the support of the male teachers, things can get very difficult. They can cause big problems. Using my authority to discipline the men is very hard. Sometimes I run out of words when I have to reprimand and discipline them. How can you discipline people when you feel inferior? I try to use the policies but this seldom works. I am also weary not to upset the male teachers as they can get nasty and also the governing body would not like that. You see, “I hold the position; not the power”. Despite being undermined, I am very proud because I can do my job and I am qualified for it. My position is not meaningless; my pay cheque is my consolation.

The men at Siyabusa High School are not holding positions of authority. They are however acutely watchful of the actions and decisions of the principal. The men try to read every signal in the actions of the principal. As a result, the principal tries to fit in by acting in a way that she believes the men would approve which leads to her compromising her self-efficacy and internal locus of control. Because she feels threatened by the male teachers she is confused as to how to use her power and this makes her powerless to a large extent.

Management of the school should be in line with the South African School’s Act, which protects against discrimination in any form At Siyabusa High School female teachers are however discriminated against even the female teachers that hold positions of authority. Joy indicates that being in the managerial position is meaningless if you are a female teacher. The



community is not comfortable with women being the policy-makers and decision-makers. They insist that decisions are made with male teachers' consultation and approval. They hold a belief that men should give direction and instructions to women.

Botes (2014) study parallels the finding of this study, and maintains that the male teachers are so infatuated with power and prestige that they become hostile opponents. These male teachers accomplish their goals by behaving in a dominating and conniving way. "The overall description of female teachers' conceptualisation of power is a behaviour that is destructive in nature" (Botes, 2014:86).

McCarry (2009) argues that a model of gender wherein men are perceived as more dominant, is still approved by young men. The domination of, and the biased practices against females, can be traced back to the patriarchal character of the community (Zulu, 2012). This study found similar evidence of male domination and supremacy. Joy found that in order to function as a female principal in this school and community she had to yield power to the male teachers.

The two HODs that I interviewed also shared similar experiences:

Dumile:

Being in school management is very difficult in this community. Both the SGB and the parents are watching our every move. I am careful to consult the male teachers before any final decisions are made regarding the Commerce Department. I don't have power over the men because as a female you cannot discipline and reprimand them; you see if they are not on your side then you have got problems. Departmental policies are mostly pragmatic only when they are used in favour of male teachers, otherwise they are often ignored.

Thuli:

In this school, being a female HOD means you have to shed your power and authority to male teachers in your department. You can only give some ideas and suggestions, but not the final word. We [female teachers] are the majority in the Language Department and there are only two males. No departmental meeting is held if one of them [male teachers] cannot make it to the meeting. We have to postpone the meeting till they are both present at work. Men are fully accommodated in all spheres, otherwise you will be in trouble with the SGB and with the males themselves.

The School Management Team (SMT) of Siyabusa High School seems to be overpowered by the SGB in most instances. The female management have little say in the management of the school regardless of the positions they occupy. The female teachers' views and ideas who are not in management are not considered at all, whereas the male teachers' opinions are extremely favoured. Subsequently, gender disparity prevails in the decision-making of the school.

Makhaye (2012) argues that male teachers feel uncomfortable to take orders from a female manager since they get threatened by a woman who is strong and they think of her as a challenge to their hegemony. We see similar evidence in this study where female managers who do not conform to, threaten or challenge the hegemonic notions of masculinity at this school are not only undermined, but are also at risk of being spurned. Hegemonic masculinity is reflected in their "practices, aspirations and oppressive gender relations and identities" (Morrell, Jewkes, Lindegger and Hamlall, 2013:11). In view of the enactment of this type of masculinity at Siyabusa High School, the female management succumb their power to male teachers.

This practice however comes at a price. They are not fully accepted by the men that they work with while they are also alienating themselves from other women at the school.

Interviews with some female teachers confirmed the above allegations by stating the following:  
Happy:

Having female management in the school gave us hope that we [females] are going to be well represented, however, it is not the case. Sometimes I feel sorry for them because I don't think they understand what they are doing. The female management is being subdued by male teachers and the SGB who would like things to be done their way. I was also very interested in representing teachers in the SGB. I just see it as a growth and development process to be part of the policy-makers in the school. But what can we say, the SGB chairperson made it clear that no female teacher will be part of them, since all the management offices in the school are full of them [female teachers]. Nevertheless, there is nothing we can do, we just go with the flow. We are living in fear and confusion in our own place of work. I love to teach but maybe somewhere else. Being a female, I am somewhat disappointed with the female management at our school.

Angie:

The female management in the school is always taking the men's side. Our [female's] voice is not heard. We are completely dissatisfied about this. I tried to talk to them [female management] so that they accommodate our views, but the answer I got was that their jobs are at stake and we [females] should understand and protect them. They rather be submissive than to risk losing their jobs by being noncompliant and be in trouble with the SGB. As a female I do feel for them but I think our sisters have lost it. Being a black woman in this community means being a subordinate. Even minor cases that can be handled by class teachers are always postponed for SGB hearings and male intervention. This is done because most of us [class teachers] are females. Our decisions cannot be trusted, irrespective of the fact that we can utilise the school policy as our guide. The principal and HODs although they are females, they play the same game.

Ntonhle:

I think it is high time that female teachers stand their ground. The female management in our school is entirely failing us [females]. This makes me angry. We cannot trust them anymore. I was victimised for telling them [SMT and SGB] to be fair and treat men and women equally. They told me that I would have done the same thing being in their position. That is not true; given the position, I would teach men that they have to trust our skills in management. I will make use of my qualifications to excel and fight for my rights. What can we do? When are we going to be developed and be fully liberated? How can we move forward if the men are leading in the background? I think maybe I should look for another school.

Some female teachers are disappointed with the female management. They feel that the female management lacks integrity and have let them down by not being more forceful and allowing the males to dominate them. They are beginning to believe that the situation is hopeless – “what can we say”, “what can we do”. The mindset and mentality of the female management at this school serve to strengthen the barriers of change in terms of gender power and equality. The female teachers find it increasingly difficult to navigate this fraught environment and find it very frustrating to function as females in a male dominated schooling community. They believe that the men as default leaders are derailing their chances of advancement.

The female teachers feel that they can't trust the female management and this makes them feel insecure, as no one is supportive to them, and they seem to be devoted on self-preservation and job hunting than executing their duties. They feel betrayed by the same people they believed will stand by them. Trust is a significant aspect that augments the cooperation of the group, as well as the workers' performance. Some of the respondents pointed out that most female teachers are subjected to a sense of terror and horror when approaching their management and male colleagues. Ghilic-Micu and Stoica (2003:16) believe "that fear can be seen as the opposite of trust in the workplace... fear can be induced by the lack of trust and can influence employee turnover, marginal work, and sometimes sabotage among other behaviours". In my study I did not find any evidence of sabotage or desire to sabotage but rather a sense of hopelessness and wanting to opt out of the school. Botes (2014) concludes that the regular experience of fear will affect individual's well-being adversely. We see evidence of female teachers' uneasiness and unhappiness in the data: "We are completely dissatisfied about this"; "We are living in fear and confusion in our own place of work"; "This makes me angry". The relationships between the female teachers and the management are disturbed by the fear barrier which has led to ruined acquaintances and work relations. Further, "the decision process is affected as female teachers have become too scared to voice their ideas because of their fear of being chastised" (Botes, 2014:76). Some of the female teachers felt that they will change the situation if they are part of the school management. They indicated that they will use their qualifications to demonstrate their skills and fight for the rights of the female teachers.

Woman school management and male teachers of Siyabusa High School display lack of commitment to feminism. hooks (2000:132) defines feminism as a "movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression". Furthermore, the study by Arnot and Naveed (2014:105) looks at feminism in education as "a political reform movement which was grounded in the politics of the teaching profession as a partly expression of female teachers' own frustration with their education and with their employment". Many female teachers in my study expressed their own frustration, "I tried to talk to them [female management] so that they accommodate our views, but the answer I got was that their jobs are at stake and we [females] should understand and protect them", "I was victimised for telling them [SMT and SGB] to be fair and treat men and women equally". The social practices at Siyabusa High School assign higher value to masculine identity which is regarded as a natural way in which the organisation operates. The practices that favour men at this school broadens the separation in the cultural philosophies of male and female, masculine and feminine.

At Siyabusa High School, there is lack of emancipatory practice by the female management. According to Singh (2005:14) to emancipate means ‘to restore from bondage to freedom; to free from bondage, restriction, or restraint of any kind; to liberate from subjection, controlling power, or influence’. Additionally, Singh (2013) points out that cultural bureaucratic management teachings propose that the task of management is fundamentally one of control, that is, control of resources such as time, objects and people by generally serving and supporting them. The female teachers at this school are not enjoying such freedom, liberty and support from their female managers. ‘There is nothing we can do, we just go with the flow’, ‘When are we going to be developed and be fully liberated?’ A collegial leader can be categorised as an emancipator who intensively creates an atmosphere which motivates teachers as decision-makers and leaders to partake in the growth and change process in governing their school. Emancipation of personnel in a collegial working environment denotes granting equal opportunities and leadership privileges to teachers who demonstrate power through proficiency similar to those placed in positions of hierarchical authority (Singh, Manser and Dali, 2013). The actions and decisions of the principal and HODs at this school is opposite to that of emancipated women. Their actions served to underline that the female teachers must accept their inferior position in society because it is part of their culture. The female teachers are denied the right to strive for liberation within their own cultures. They are further prevented from trying to shape and change the culture of male supremacy and domination. Instead of the female management liberating women, their actions and non-actions are serving to oppress the female teachers and themselves.

The female managers at Siyabusa High School practice compliance management rather than androgynous management. Other studies have revealed, for example, Botha (2012) that compliance management affects social identity and is extremely significant as ‘it defines who people are’. (Lisette and Kraus, 2000) argue that the persistent vicious discontent tolerated in compliance management demoralises one’s thoughts, worth, or self-esteem. Botes (2014:74) mentions that compliance management comprises the patterns of control such as “actions of restriction; demanding; manipulating; dominating them in different ways.” This leads to the erosion of one’s ability to make sound decisions. Continuous manipulation will result in a deficiency of self-confidence and a lack of self- identity. The female teachers see this happening to the female management, ‘I think they have lost it’, ‘I don’t think they know what

they are doing'; and while they echoed sentiments of discontent and anger they also feel sorry for their 'sisters'.

Female principals ought to apply collegial management, be firm and strong enough and consequently teachers would not take advantage of them (Makhaye, 2012). If female managers are strong and stand their ground, there is a possibility that they could muster support from other female teachers and together dent gender discrimination.

#### **4.4 Female Teachers' Experiences with Learners**

Learners at Siyabusa High School are strongly influenced by their cultural background. The learners come to school with particular cultural backgrounds that impact on their perceptions of teachers, other learners and their actions. For example, a male teacher is taken as a father and the head [inhloko] and therefore is given more respect, while female teachers are regarded as inferior and are given lesser respect. As a result, female teachers face severe challenges in managing learner discipline.

##### **4.4.1 Learner Discipline**

The following testimonies from female educators highlight their struggles with learner discipline:

Phelo:

Learners, both male and female, relate differently to male and female teachers. The males have more authority, not necessarily in this school, generally through my experience as a teacher. The learners give more respect to the male teachers rather than the female teachers. It's this thing that they are taught at home that the females are not equal to males; which is not so according to my own opinion. I also think that this thing from their family backgrounds, that the father is worshiped by everyone in the household; and the boys are given that special attention above girls in the family as future family leaders. So, the learners listen to the male teachers and do as they are told but with us females, they buck us, answer back and in many cases, don't like us to discipline them. Discipline takes a lot of time. This stresses me. It cuts into our teaching. If I don't complete the syllabus, then there is trouble for me.

Elsie:

Male teachers have more authority with learners. From my observation, I've seen that with the male teacher, you know, the learners are more respectful than it is with the females. One older boy once said to me, I cannot always take instructions from a woman. "I am the man, so I have to say how I like things to be done". We spend more time on discipline than the male teachers and lesser time teaching yet we are judged the same when test results are released. Sometimes I like to leave this job.

The female teachers reveal that they struggle to assert authority and to garner respect from their learners as compared to their male counterparts. Maintaining discipline is seen by the female teachers to be a major problem and source of stress. They further mentioned that these challenges make it difficult for them to cope with the situation and this lowers their morale, passion and dedication in teaching.

Other studies of home and school cultural practices reveal similar findings for example, Morojele (2013) affirms that culturally what it connotes to be a boy or a girl is likely to undervalue girls and femininity in ways that strengthen gender disparities. Further, Morojele (2013) explains that in order to shape and accentuate discriminatory gender associations, the fascination of forms of masculinities over femininities is indoctrinated in children's mentalities as a cultural groundwork.

It is a known fact that many principals and teachers (male and female) are finding it more problematic to maintain discipline in schooling environments in the wake of the new education legislation that regulates discipline and punishment in schools, however this study reveals strong evidence that the challenges of maintaining discipline is more pronounced among the female teachers than their male counterparts due to gendered cultural beliefs and practices of the local community, which is shared by the learners.

#### **4.4.2 Effects of Learner Cultural Beliefs**

All of the female teachers that were interviewed reported that cultural beliefs and attitudes of the community affected their teaching and the manner in which they performed their duties.

Zanele:

After my husband died, I had to wear a mourning cloth as my tradition expects me to do so. Personally, I don't approve of it but as Zulu women we have no option. I offered

one learner some lunch as I sometimes normally do, but that day she refused to take it. She mentioned that I am supposed to offer food only to family members since I was still covered with isinyama namashwa [bad luck]. She expected me to give her something only after I have taken off my mourning cloth and have been cleansed [ukugezwa].

Joy also confirmed the above about the mourning cloth by stating that:

Kids will always be kids. They sometimes say things not being aware that they are offending you. When I was still wearing the mourning cloth, as the principal of the school, I used to address learners in the assembly as part of my job. One boy once said to me: 'Ma'am, according to my religion a woman is not supposed to stand for men, let alone with that mourning attire you are wearing'. I was shocked and embarrassed at the same time. I just ran short of words to reprimand him. Anyway, I ignored him by taking a pause and continued with my speech. I was not sure about using the cloth but I know what would happen if I didn't. I would have been scorned by the community.

Women are subjected to mourning practices, worldwide. Bereavement, burial rituals, mourning and cleansing practices have been documented by inter alia Msimang (1991), Nyembezi and Nxumalo (1995) and Magwaza (2006). The focus of this study is not on mourning rites of women, therefore I do not debate the positive and negative value of widowhood rites. It is important to note however that the mentality of the community of women being subservient and of lesser importance carries through to the schooling environment by the learners. Due to cultural beliefs and practices the female teachers in this study have restrictions that affect their daily lives. The learners interpret the using of the mourning cloth as someone who has bad luck and brand these female teachers as less important and do not respect them. This heightens their struggle to maintain discipline among the learners. In this instance the African widowhood rites of using a mourning cloth serves to strengthen the hegemonic and imperial patriarchal system. At least for the learners in this study, the use of the mourning cloth does not resonate respect and decorum.

It is evident from the teachers' comments above that traditions, customs and family backgrounds play a huge role in their relationships with learners. Although the female teachers are not comfortable with the practice of using the mourning cloth, they feel obliged and are afraid of the consequences if they do not comply. They are therefore prepared to accept the



abuse and lack of respect from the learners. The male teachers however are not subjected to these challenges. South Africa as a country has many gender equality laws and policies, but the evidence in this study reveals how life on paper is extremely different from the reality that women face.

#### **4.5 Sexual Agency of Female Teachers**

In most instances the female teachers at Siyabusa High School were dominated by their male counterparts and struggled to muster respect from teachers and learners alike. However, the element of choice was not totally constrained as at times the female teachers exercised their agency in getting the male teachers to do certain tasks that they found particularly difficult to do or did not like doing.

Some female teachers had this to say in their interviews:

Happy:

I am a single woman since my husband passed on more than five years ago. I am still beautiful and attractive. I sometimes use my attractiveness to get male teachers to do few favours for me, like disciplining learners on my behalf. Not that I am into them, but just to soften them a bit, so that I can get some help and support.

Angie:

We all know that Lindo [a male teacher] likes the ladies. He is a big strong guy and does not mind helping us at times. When I wanted to re-arrange my class furniture I knew how to approach him. I put on my red dress that day – the one he commented that I looked good in. He was happy to help me.

While the evidence of this study has pointed more to the resistance of sex roles stereotypes from female teachers in terms of male domination and privilege we see from the above that there is a certain degree of accommodation. Both Happy and Angie are aware of their sexual agency and utilise this for their benefit.

Agency comprises the formation of choices both internal and external to the individual (Creswell, 2014). At times, Happy and Angie choose to use their sexuality to manipulate the men into performing certain tasks that they find unsavoury. This however can be risky in that

while they exercise a certain agency in the contexts above they can get caught in the powerful matrix of the patriarchal dividend in another context, thus constraining their agency.

Sometimes the female teachers used their sexuality to be treated better.

Joy asserted that:

In order to survive in this position of headship, with the governing body and other male teachers being my opposition, I have to use my womanhood to get the Ward Inspector to be on my side. I make sure that I put on my makeup, smell good and give ‘that smile’ when he [the inspector] visits the school or I have to go to his office to discuss some serious matters about the management of the school. Consequently, he is supporting and protecting me a lot. For many times things went hostile at school, but with his protection I survived.

The kind of sexual agency expressed by the teachers above is described by Berdahl (2007:59) where he maintains that “women can express their sexuality through their appearance, verbal and nonverbal communications, and behaviours, including, but not limited to, flirting and wearing seductive clothing”. Many studies have found that women who have less control may be driven to make use of their sexuality as an influence strategy.

The consequences of female teacher’s expressions of sexuality can have both positive and negative outcomes in the schooling context. The benefits in Joy’s case was access to networks that protect her in hostile situations while Happy and Angie received work-related favours from the male teachers. However, there could be personal and interpersonal costs as well, for example resisting male sexual advancements can become tricky. Further it can complicate their fight for emancipation of female teachers within the school. Sexual agency is often viewed as a transgression of the constrained gender roles and sexual containment prescribed by heteronormative sociocultural norms and the patriarchal interests they serve (Payne, 2010). By expressing sexual agency, the female teachers may perceive themselves in conflict with sociocultural prescriptions of female sexuality that may render women subordinate to men.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

The main focus of this chapter was to present and analyse the findings from the semi-structured interviews. The analysis also unpacked the gendered division of labour, power play, female teachers’ experiences with learners and agency of women. The analysis revealed that female

teachers experienced challenges in the executing of their duties, due to traditional Zulu culture and gender stereotypes that promote patriarchy and gender inequalities in the school. Gendered distribution of work is evident and the female teachers occupy lower status roles, less authority and power. The female management in the school lacks integrity, emancipatory practice and androgynous management, whereby they let other female teachers down by subscribing to compliance management. The female teachers struggled to assert authority and to garner respect from their learners as compared to their male counterparts due to traditions, customs and family backgrounds that are playing a huge role in their relationships with learners. However, the element of choice was not totally constrained as at times the female teachers exercised their sexual agency to secure favours and support from men. The next chapter focuses on the summary, main conclusions of the study and recommendations for further research.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Summary of the Research Process**

The main aim of this study was to investigate the practices and experiences of black women teachers in one rural school in Umbumbulu. A case study was conducted in one school in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The aim of this study was to elicit women teachers' experiences of the gender relations that exist within a school setting and the mechanisms they used to cope in a male dominant teaching environment. The study aimed to elicit responses to the research questions:

- What are the challenges that black women teachers face in the performance of their duty?
- What are the gender relations that exists at the school?
- What is the extent of sexual division of labour within the institution?
- What roles do the men play in steering gendered relations at the school?
- Do the black women teachers have agency in the gendered dynamics that exist within the institution?

In Chapter one (Introduction), I discussed the context and background of the study and provided a rationale. I emphasised the objectives of the study, its significance and the problem statement. The research questions that were formulated and the methodology that underpinned the research study were also discussed.

In Chapter two (Literature Review), I reviewed relevant literature and research on South African policy against gender discrimination; men and patriarchy; gender discrimination – the cultural appropriation; the role of men in gender relations; gendering in the workplace; gender discrimination in South African education system; gendered division of labour in schooling contexts and agency of women. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks that informed this study were defined.

In Chapter three (Research Methodology) I provided a detailed account of the research methods and design used to generate answers to the research questions. I provided a theoretical

justification for the design and indicated how the methods were applied practically in the process of conducting the research.

In Chapter four (Analysis Chapter) the research findings based on data analysis were presented. A critical integration of findings from the literature review and the empirical research findings were presented. I analysed the interviews conducted with the teachers, which focused on their personal experiences of gender inequality that played out at the school. In this chapter, I described the four major themes that emerged from the data: the gendered division of labour; the power dynamics that existed within the school; female teachers' experiences with learners; and the sexual agency of the female teachers. By and large, it was found that female teachers are finding it difficult to cope with the performance of their duty and experience tremendous challenges in the day-to-day functioning of the teaching and learning process. The female managers who held positions of authority did not enjoy power that accompany these positions.

## **5.2 Main Conclusions of the Study**

Conclusions drawn from this study were addressed in response to the research aims and questions outlined in chapter one. Below I outline the findings of this study.

### **5.2.1 Findings**

- **Caregivers.** Many teachers at Siyabusa High School subscribe to the cultural stereotype of women as caregivers and men as protectors and disciplinarians. In many instances female teachers are viewed as possessing mothering skills and as such are confined to classroom duties while most of the male teachers perform duties that involve being outside of the classroom. This stems from the cultural practice of women being caregivers in their own homes. It is believed that females have greater compassionate qualities which allow them to relate better to learners than their male colleagues. Male teachers performed duties that involved being outside the classroom like administration and sports, mainly away from the learners as they normally do with their children at home. Many female teachers have begun to believe that they are more equipped to spend most of their time in the classroom as they believe that it is their primary responsibility. They also believe that men are not good with children and in most cases, men are ignorant of the social issues that learners face. However, there were voices of resistance that challenged the stereotypical belief that women do not have the capacity to function in roles of

disciplinarian and sports coaches. These voices are encouraging in that it serves to discharge the pervasive view that women can and should perform only caregiving duties especially in rural school settings.

- **Paper pushers.** The female teachers in this study do most of the paperwork and record keeping, as male teachers claim that they are not good at it. Male teachers mostly regard filling of departmental forms, recording of marks, lesson planning and compiling of timetables as ‘women’s work’. The male teachers claimed that they are not paper pushers. The SMT which are all females, also subscribe to the same mentality that paper work is for females and that men are not adept at it and delegate tasks that involve paperwork to female teachers. The male teachers at this school enjoy a privilege status as they are not given tedious and repetitive work, which are the domain of female teachers.
- **Gendered Positioning.** In this study gender positioning among the teachers was very evident. The female teachers in this research school were given lower status tasks than the male teachers. The tasks that were seen as imperative for the functioning of the school were performed by males. The male teachers performed duties that were associated with power and status like sports conveners, site stewards and SGB members, while the female teachers performed duties like catering, cleaning, and counselling. The higher value work was allocated to men and the lower status tasks allocated to women. Hence, gender roles at Siyabusa High School remain traditional in the sense that women continue to do basic tasks even though they participate in the day to day functioning of the school with strong intensity, while the men held positions that were regarded as more accomplished.
- **Gendered Power Play.** The men in this study were not holding positions of authority, however they were intensely vigilant of the actions and decisions of the female management. The principal in most instances acted in ways that she believed would meet with the approval of the male staff. This led to her compromising her position of authority and control which left her mostly vulnerable in her position. The SGB and community were not pleased with women being the decision-makers, to the extent that they insisted that decisions were made with male teachers’ consultation and consent.

Male teachers used traditional Zulu cultural beliefs as a means to encourage patriarchy and male gender dominance in all school activities. This led to tension among the staff, where female teachers felt betrayed and they accused the female management of lacking integrity and letting them down by renouncing their power to the male teachers.

- **Learners' Attitude to Female Teachers.** The learners at Siyabusa High School also fed into the patriarchal dividend of male teachers. The learners, both male and female, afforded more respect to the male teachers and the mentality of the community of women being subservient and of lesser importance was carried through to the schooling environment by the learners. Traditions, customs and family backgrounds played a huge role in the female teachers' relationships with learners, for example the mourning practices where females used a mourning cloth, which was considered as a subordinating practice by the community. These beliefs posed serious challenges to the female teachers in commanding respect and maintaining discipline.

- **The Sexual Agency of the Female Teachers.**

The female teachers at Siyabusa High School are mostly at the receiving end of patriarchal power but there is evidence to suggest that they are not totally defenseless when it came to their relations with their male counterparts in certain contexts. Some females tended to use their femininity to elicit favours to complete certain tasks that they either find difficult to do or choose to ask male teachers to handle, for example disciplining difficult learners. This shows that they do possess a certain amount of agency that they utilised to their benefit. By enacting sexual agency in this manner, the female teachers simultaneously accommodate and resist the patriarchal dividend that men enjoy at the school.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher proposes the following recommendations:

- The Department of Basic Education should inculcate strategies in order to generate consciousness of and ensure that the Gender Equity Act, the Constitution of South Africa (1996), the Employment of Educators Act, the Employment Equity Act, are adhered to, to ensure justice and equality in human resource management.

- The school should organise advocacy campaigns in the form of seminars and workshops on gender related issues within the school. All stakeholders should be encouraged to attend (community, parents, SGB, teachers and learners) with the aim of encouraging healthy communication, tolerance and trust between them. A workshop for the SGB members is recommended in order to create an understanding of their governance roles at school according to SASA.
- Cultural practices should be reviewed to ensure that it does not disadvantage women in the work place. It should be practiced in line with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and other Acts that support equality among the people of South Africa, regardless of gender, race, colour or credence. Learners need to understand the differences between the home practices, cultural beliefs and school practices.
- In order to curb gender inequality, the school should establish partnerships with all the stakeholders who have shown interest in education, including youth organisations and churches. People around the school, NGO's, community forums, women's organisations, social welfare and the Department of Health should be approached with the aim of developing the aforementioned people on gender related discrimination.
- The school should adopt participatory management. Teachers, learners, parents and community structures may partake in decision-making either as individuals or as a group contingent on their skills as acknowledged by the principal. Participatory management allows for the optimal use of human resources and displays trust in the capabilities of the teachers. It also offers the principal the opportunity to stimulate new perceptions from colleagues and to test their moods on certain topics.
- The school should implement teamwork. Teamwork will develop sound team spirit and let people discover themselves and other people in the team. Development of teams offer people an understanding of who is good in certain activities and the roles which can be played by different people. Subsequently, sound interpersonal relationships will be promoted.



#### **5.4 Recommendations for Further Research**

While much has been written on gender discrimination in South Africa, I am of the opinion that further research is required. The following suggestions are made for further research:

1. Shifting traditional cultural practices of male dominance to change the negative consequences and effects on the lives of women.
2. The management of gender-related conflict on the school site.
3. Empowering black female teachers in rural schools to overcome traditional male dominance.

#### **5.5 Limitations**

The scope of the research was confined to one rural secondary school in Umbumbulu in KwaZulu-Natal where gender bias is given little attention.

Due to the inability to effectively cover all the schools in this area in one single study, only a selected sample of teachers was used for this study. As a result, the small sample size of teachers from one school may not have implication for wider generalisation of the findings from the study especially in different school settings and communities.

#### **5.6 Conclusion**

This final chapter has provided an overview of the research process and the main conclusions drawn from the study. The limitations were discussed, as were the implications of this study, recommendations for interventions, and suggestions for further research.

The objectives of this study were to obtain the perspectives and experiences of black women teachers practicing in a rural secondary school; to examine the gender relations and the division of labour that exist at the school; and to explore the agency that black women teachers may have in the gendered dynamics that exist within the institution. This study employed a qualitative research design to achieve an understanding of this phenomenon. The findings of the study have answered the research questions posed in chapter one. These confirm the conclusions reached by diverse researchers that were discussed in the literature review. The study confirmed that there is gendered positioning among the teachers, where female teachers were accorded lower status tasks than their male counterparts. The female management had to yield their power and authority to male teachers, since they are consulted for approval in all decisions to be made.

This study suggests that some cultural practices built unhelpful boundaries between men and women. They place women in an inferior position to men, and thereby limit their functions as teachers in the schooling arena. These cultural practices further shaped the dominant view of masculinity that existed within the school.

In order for organisational fairness and gender equity to prevail within the school, a bold and rigorous deconstruction of patriarchal hegemonic processes needs to take place.

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## 7. ANNEXURES

### ANNEXURE A: PARTICIPANTS' LETTER OF INFORMATION



#### LETTER OF INFORMATION

**Title of the Research Study:** Experiences and Practices of Black women teachers: A case study of a Rural Secondary School in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

**Principal Investigator/s/researcher:** Nikiwe Zuma, B.Ed. Honours

**Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s:** Dr. Vijay Hamlall, qualifications)

**Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:** This study explores the experiences and practices of black women teachers in a rural school in Umbumbulu. The study focuses particularly on the gender relations that exist within the school setting and the mechanisms that black women teachers use to cope in a male dominant teaching environment. It is important to understand that both men and women construct gender. Men play an active role in shaping women's identity and controlling behaviour. For this reason, the study also gives a voice to male teachers. While the focus of this study is not on men and masculinity it is important to understand how they negotiate their identity since they are active players in the construction of female identities.

**Outline of the Procedures:** The participants will include male and female teachers, and those who have been at the school for less than three years will be excluded. The participants will answer interview questions from the researcher. Interviews will be done privately in an unused office or classroom that the participant is comfortable with. The interview will last for 40 to 50 minutes. The participants' involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

**Risks or Discomforts to the Participant:** Not risk involved in conducting the research.

**Benefits:** The findings of the study will be published locally and internationally. The study will create awareness of the present gender relations at school. It will serve to enhance gender relations creating a more harmonious working environment.

**Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study:** The candidate has a choice to participate / not to participate or withdraw at any stage without any penalties.

**Remuneration:** No remuneration will be received by participants.

**Costs of the Study:** The participants will not cover any costs for the study. The researcher will travel to meet the participant at the agreed comfortable venue.

**Confidentiality:** The participants' confidentiality is guaranteed as their inputs will not be attributed to them in person, but only as a population member opinion. Participants will be given codes. Data will be stored in a secure storage and be destroyed after three years.

**Research-related Injury:** Not applicable.

**Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:**

(Supervisor and details) Please contact the researcher (072 531 4594), my supervisor (083 419 0441) or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or [dvctip@dut.ac.za](mailto:dvctip@dut.ac.za).

**General:**

Potential participants must be assured that participation is voluntary and the approximate number of participants to be included should be disclosed. A copy of the information letter should be issued to participants. The information letter and consent form must be translated and provided in the primary spoken language of the research population e.g. isiZulu.

## ANNEXURE B: PARTICIPANTS' CONSENT FORM



### CONSENT

#### Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Nikiwe Zuma, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: \_\_\_\_\_,
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Full Name of Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Time**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature / Right Thumbprint**



I, Nikiwe Zuma herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

_____ <b>Full Name of Researcher</b>	_____ <b>Date</b>	_____ <b>Signature</b>
_____ <b>Full Name of Witness (If applicable)</b>	_____ <b>Date</b>	_____ <b>Signature</b>
_____ <b>Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)</b>	_____ <b>Date</b>	_____ <b>Signature</b>



## **ANNEXURE C: LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL**

W 127 Umlazi Township  
Umlazi  
4066  
27 June 2014

Faculty of Management Sciences  
Department of Public Management & Economics

The Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

### **RE- APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH.**

I am currently registered for a Master's Degree in Technology (MTech) in the faculty of Management Sciences at Durban University of Technology (DUT). My research topic is: Experiences and Practices of Black women teachers: A case study of a Rural Secondary School in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. In order to conclude my research findings, I need your permission to conduct interviews with educators at your institution.

The participants will include male and female educators, and those who have been at the school for less than three years will be excluded. Altogether there will be ten females and five male teachers who will become the participants in this study. The participants will answer interview questions from the researcher. Interviews will be done privately in an unused office or classroom that the participant is comfortable with. The interview will last for 40 to 50 minutes. The participants' involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

This letter also serves to inform you that all information gathered from educators and school managers will be used solely for research purposes and that the anonymity of all participants is guaranteed. I also undertake to adhere to the University's code of conduct regarding informed consent and confidentiality as prescribed when dealing with data obtained from the school solely for research purposes.

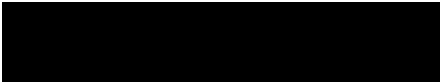
I trust that you will kindly grant me the consent in conducting my research.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours in Education

  
Mrs. Nikiwe Zuma (Researcher)

Cell: 072 531 4594    email address: [nikiwenz@gmail.com](mailto:nikiwenz@gmail.com)

  
Supervisor: Dr. Vijay Hamlall

Cell: 083 419 0441    email address: [vijayhaml@gmail.com](mailto:vijayhaml@gmail.com)

## **ANNEXURE D: LETTER TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

W127 Umlazi Township

Umlazi

4066

29 August 2014

The Researcher Officer  
Research, Strategy, Policy  
Development and ECMIS Directorate  
G 23 Metropolitan Building  
Pietermaritzburg  
3200

Mr. S. Alwar

Dear Sir

### **ACADEMIC RESEARCH: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY IN A SCHOOL.**

I am currently completing a Master's Degree in Technology (MTech) in the faculty of Management Sciences at Durban University of Technology (DUT). My research topic is: Experiences and Practices of Black women teachers: A case study of a Rural Secondary School in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. To conclude my research findings, I request permission to use one secondary school that I have chosen to conduct interviews. The participating school has been randomly selected and permission will also be attained from the principal of the school before commencement of any research takes place.

I will interview five males and ten female educators who have been at this school for at least three years, and therefore have clear and meaningful information regarding the nature and level of gendered power relations within the institution and its effect on black women teachers' performance of their duty. The school and teachers who partake in this study will do this on a voluntary basis. Interviews will not exceed 50 minutes with each participant and will also not interfere with the normal tuition time.


This letter also serves to inform you that all information gathered from educators and school managers will be used solely for research purposes and that the anonymity of all participants is guaranteed. I also undertake to adhere to the University's code of conduct regarding informed consent and confidentiality as prescribed when dealing with data obtained from the school solely for research purposes.

I am currently working at Gcewu High School as a post level 1 educator. For further information regarding this study, feel free to contact my supervisor. The reply could be sent to me by email.


I trust that you will kindly grant me the consent in conducting my research.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours in Education

  
Mrs. Nikiwe Zuma (Researcher)

Cell: 072 531 4594    email address: [nikiwenz@gmail.com](mailto:nikiwenz@gmail.com)

  
Supervisor: Dr. Vijay Hamlall

Cell: 083 419 0441    email address: [vijayhaml@gmail.com](mailto:vijayhaml@gmail.com)

## ANNEXURE E: PERMISSION FROM THE DOE TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



education

Department:  
Education  
**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane

Tel: 033 392 1004

Ref.:2/4/8/332

Mrs N Zuma  
W127  
Umlazi Township  
UMLAZI  
4066

Dear Mrs Zuma

### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"EXPERIENCES AND PRACTICES OF BLACK WOMEN TEACHERS IN A RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOL IN UMBUMBULU"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 February 2015 to 31 December 2015.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Gcewu Secondary School

**Nkosingathi S.P. Sishi, PhD**  
**Head of Department: Education**  
**Date: 05 January 2015**

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa ...dedicated to service and performance  
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004 beyond the call of duty  
EMAIL ADDRESS: [kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za](mailto:kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za) / [Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za](mailto:Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za)  
CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: [WWW.kzneducation.gov.za](http://WWW.kzneducation.gov.za)

## **ANNEXURE F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE ONE: FOR TEACHERS**

### **EXPERIENCES AND PRACTICES OF BLACK WOMEN TEACHERS: A CASE STUDY OF A RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOL IN KWAZULU NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA.**

#### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE ONE**

**For  
Teachers**

**Respondent No\_\_\_\_\_**

**October to November 2015**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

My name is Nikiwe Zuma, an MTech student at the Durban University of Technology. As part of my studies I have to undertake a research project in one school in the rural area of Umbumbulu. My topic is: Experiences and Practices of Black women teachers: A case study of a Rural Secondary School in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The purpose of this study is to explore the views and experiences of black women teachers in a rural secondary school in terms of gender relations.

In order to capture our discussions accurately, I would like to make use of a Dictaphone as a back-up to ensure that your views are correctly interpreted during transcription of data. Do you have a problem with the use of the Dictaphone? You have a right to ask for a transcription to review it before any use is made of it or to totally cancel it. Please be assured that whatever you say or do or show will be treated with complete confidentiality. Do you understand the Research question? Do you have any concerns that you want to raise about the purpose and use of the interview, confidentiality and anonymity or any other concern?

### SECTION A: Biographical characteristics of Respondent

1. Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Which age group do you fall under?  
Below 20 years ☐  
Between 21 and 30 year ☐  
Between 31 and 40 year ☐  
Over 40 years ☐
3. Where do you live?  
(a) Suburb  
(b) Township  
(c) Rural Area
4. How long have you been a teacher?  
.....
5. How long have you been at this school?  
.....
6. Which grade(s) are you currently teaching?  
.....  
**Probe:** Are you happy with this allocation? Is this by choice?
7. What subject(s) are you currently teaching?  
.....  
**Probe:** Are you happy with this allocation? Would you like to teach other subjects?
8. What are your highest qualifications?  
.....

### SECTION B: Experiences and Practices of Black Women Teachers: A case study of a Rural Secondary School in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa.

1. Do you feel important about being a female / male teacher in this school? Why?  
.....
2. Are the role functions different for males and females at this school?  
.....
3. What are some of the duties that you perform at this school apart from your teaching duties?



- .....
- Probe:** What are the specific roles that you think are played by female / male educators at the school? How do you feel about the current situation at school in terms of allocation of duties? Would you like to perform other duties? Why?
4. Do you participate in any sporting activity at the school? Why?
- .....
- Probe:** What other extra curricula activities do you participate in? Do you attend meetings arranged by the Department of Education? How are educators selected to attend these meetings? Are you happy with these arrangements? Why?
5. How are work and social relations among female and male teachers at the school?
- .....
6. What are the challenges that you face as a female / male teacher at the school?
- .....
7. Is your HOD a female or male?
- .....
- Probe:** How do you relate to this person? Are you comfortable having a male/female as your superior? Would you like to be in this position of authority? Why?
8. Do you think things would be different if you have a female / male HOD? How?
- .....
9. Is the principal male or female?
- .....
10. How does he/she relate to the staff? Have you picked up on any gender biases that may exist?
- .....
11. Do you have an office or space where you can do your lesson preparation, marking etc.? Do you share this space with other teachers? Are they male/female?
- .....
- Probe:** Are you comfortable with this arrangement? Why?
12. Tell me about the staffroom setup? Do you normally sit in a demarcated space? What about the other teachers – do they also have a favorite place?
- .....
- Probe:** How do you feel about this?

13. What are some of the social activities that teachers do in their free time at school?  
Do you get involved? Is there any gender discrimination in these activities?

.....

14. From the above questions, do you feel that you now have a better understanding  
of the Research question?

.....

15. Is there anything you would like to share about experiences and practices of being  
a black female / male teacher?

.....

**Thank you very much for your time.**

## **ANNEXURE G: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE ONE: FOR SMT**

### **EXPERIENCES AND PRACTICES OF BLACK WOMEN TEACHERS: A CASE STUDY OF A RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOL IN KWAZULU NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA.**

#### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE ONE For SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**Respondent No**\_\_\_\_\_

**October to November 2015**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

My name is Nikiwe Zuma, an MTech student at the Durban University of Technology. As part of my studies I have to undertake a research project in one school in the rural area of Umbumbulu. My topic is: Experiences and Practices of Black women teachers: A case study of a Rural Secondary School in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The purpose of this study is to explore the views and experiences of black women teachers in a rural secondary school in terms of gender relations.

In order to capture our discussions accurately, I would like to make use of a Dictaphone as a back-up to ensure that your views are correctly interpreted during transcription of data. Do you have a problem with the use of the Dictaphone? You have a right to ask for a transcription to review it before any use is made of it or to totally cancel it. Please be assured that whatever you say or do or show will be treated with complete confidentiality. Do you understand the Research question? Do you have any concerns that you want to raise about the purpose and use of the interview, confidentiality and anonymity or any other concern?

## SECTION A: Biographical characteristics of Respondent

1. Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Which age group do you fall under?  
Below 20 years ☐  
Between 21 and 30 years ☐  
Between 31 and 40 years ☐  
Over 40 years ☐
3. Where do you live?  
(a) Suburb  
(b) Township  
(c) Rural Area
4. How long have you been a teacher?  
.....
5. How long have you been at this school?  
.....
6. How long have you been a(n) HOD / Deputy / Principal?  
.....
7. Which grade(s) are you currently teaching?  
.....  
**Probe:** Are you happy with this allocation? Is this by choice?
8. What subject(s) are you currently teaching?  
.....  
**Probe:** Are you happy with this allocation? Would you like to teach other subjects?
9. What is the enrolment of learners in the school?  
.....
10. Do you have a functional governing body?  
.....
11. What are your highest qualifications?  
.....

**SECTION B: Experiences and Practices of Black Women Teachers: A case study of a Rural Secondary School in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa.**

1. Do you feel important about being a female / male HOD / Deputy /Principal in this school? Why?

.....

2. Are the role functions different for males and females at this school?
3. What are some of the duties that you perform at this school apart from your teaching duties?

.....

**Probe:** What are the specific roles that you think are played by female / male SMT members at the school? How do you feel about the current situation at school in terms of allocation of duties? Would you like to perform other duties? Why?

4. Do you participate in any sporting activity at the school? Why?

.....

**Probe:** What other extra curricula activities do you participate in? Do you attend meetings arranged by the Department of Education? How are educators selected to attend these meetings? Are you happy with these arrangements? Why?

5. How are work and social relations among female and male SMT members at the school?

.....

6. What are the challenges that you face as a female / male SMT member at the school?

.....

7. Is your Deputy / Principal a female or male?

.....

**Probe:** How do you relate to this person? Are you comfortable having a male/female as your superior? Would you like to be in this position of authority? Why?

8. Do you think things would be different if you have a female / male Deputy / Principal? How?

.....

9. How does he/she relate to the staff? Have you picked up on any gender biases that may exist?

.....

10. Do you have an office or space where you can do your lesson preparation, marking etc.? Do you share this space with other teachers? Are they male/female?

.....

**Probe:** Are you comfortable with this arrangement? Why?

11. Tell me about the staffroom setup? Do you normally sit in a demarcated space? What about the other teachers – do they also have a favorite place?

.....

**Probe:** How do you feel about this?

12. What are some of the social activities that teachers do in their free time at school? Do you get involved? Is there any gender discrimination in these activities?

.....

13. From the above questions, do you feel that you now have a better understanding of the Research question?

.....

14. Is there anything you would like to share about experiences and practices of being a black female / male SMT member?

.....

**Thank you very much for your time.**

**ANNEXURE H: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE TWO: FOR TEACHERS AND SMT**

**EXPERIENCES AND PRACTICES OF BLACK WOMEN TEACHERS: A CASE  
STUDY OF A RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOL IN KWAZULU NATAL, SOUTH  
AFRICA.**

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE TWO**

**For**

**Teachers and SMT**

**Respondent No\_\_\_\_\_**

**October to November 2015**

**INTRODUCTION:**

My name is Nikiwe Zuma, an MTech student at the Durban University of Technology. As part of my studies I have to undertake a research project in one school in the rural area of Umbumbulu. My topic is: Experiences and Practices of Black women teachers: A case study of a Rural Secondary School in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

The purpose of this study is to explore the views and experiences of black women teachers in a rural secondary school in terms of gender relations.

In order to capture our discussions accurately, I would like to make use of a Dictaphone as a back-up to ensure that your views are correctly interpreted during transcription of data. Do you have a problem with the use of the Dictaphone? You have a right to ask for a transcription to review it before any use is made of it or to totally cancel it. Please be assured that whatever you say or do or show will be treated with complete confidentiality. Do you understand the Research question? Do you have any concerns that you want to raise about the purpose and use of the interview, confidentiality and anonymity or any other concern?

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. In your opinion, do the males and females working at this school enjoy a good working relationship?  
.....

**Probe:** Tell me a little more about how teachers work/operate at this school?

2. Are there more males or females holding promotion posts at this school? Would you like to occupy a higher position at this school? Why?  
.....

**Probe:** Would you like to be in a position of authority? Why?

3. Please tell me about the cultural expectations at this school?  
.....

**Probe:** In your opinion – in terms of culture/tradition and beliefs – are people treated differently according to gender norms? How do you feel about this?

4. Is there a dress code for teachers at this school? Do you abide by this code? Why?  
.....

5. In your opinion do you think that any teacher receives preferential treatment based on his/her gender? What are some of the privileges that they enjoy? How do you feel about this?  
.....

6. How do learners relate to you as a teacher? Do you get their co-operation? Do you think that learners relate differently to male and female teachers? Who has more authority? Why?  
.....

7. How do parents relate to you as a teacher? Do you get their co-operation? Do you think that parents relate differently to male and female teachers? Who has more authority? Why?  
.....

8. Are certain subjects allocated to teachers according to gender? For example, males are allocated certain subjects and females certain subjects.  
.....

**Probe:** If you as a male/female were asked to teach a subject that is normally deemed a male/female area, how would you feel about this?

9. Who handles serious discipline problems at this school? Do you think that male teachers or female teachers are better disciplinarians? Why?



.....  
10. What makes you happy/unhappy at this school?

.....  
**Probe:** What get you really frustrated at this school?

11. What role can you as a black male/female teacher play in gendered relations at this school?

.....  
12. What would you change at school if you had the opportunity?

.....  
**Thank you very much for your time.**