



**University of
Zululand**

**FEMALE PRINCIPALS' SKILLS OF MANAGING CONFLICT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS
DOMINATED BY FEMALE TEACHERS IN THE GINGINDLOVU CIRCUIT**

BY

JOYCE FIKILE MTHETHWA

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SUPERVISOR: PROF. A.P. KUTAME

CO-SUPERVISOR: DR. A.B. BUTHELEZI

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DECLARATION

I, Joyce Fikile Mthethwa, hereby declare that this dissertation “Female principals’ skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers in the Gingindlovu circuit” is my own work, both in conception and execution, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed byon theday of2019.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my late sister, Thembi Shange, for her support and encouragement during her critical condition; she would have been very proud of me to see me completing my study.

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Firstly, I would like to thank God Almighty for His divine guidance, and for giving me courage, strength and direction during the course of this study.

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ABSTRACT

Although the number of women managers in education is increasing, women continue to experience problems that prevent them from realising their full potential particularly as conflict managers. When female teachers are promoted to principalship positions, there are no programmes to equip them with relevant management skills required to lead and manage the schools effectively. This has resulted in some female principals showing lack of confidence in resolving conflict in schools, particularly where the staff is dominated by female teachers. Female principals tend to rely on their male colleagues should there be a case where they have to implement disciplinary measures. The aim of this study was to explore female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers in the Gingindlovu Circuit. This study used a qualitative approach, collecting data through face-to-face interviews. Purposive sampling procedure was used to select participants for this study. The study established that female principals have skills of managing conflict despite their gender roles that have been taken as determinants that females may not do well as managers. Some gender roles, which include nurturing and accommodating, have been identified as key to female principals in assisting them when resolving conflict at the work place where the staff is dominated by female teachers. However, they still need to learn more about skills of managing conflict in schools. The study recommends that female principals be workshopped on how to manage conflict in a school situation soon after they have been appointed. A comparative study between female and male principals regarding management skills they have for resolving conflicts is recommended.

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Universally, women experience a number of challenges while in leadership positions in different public sectors. Our society still finds it difficult to embrace the fact that females also have ability while in leadership positions similar to their male counterparts. Women experience an enormous gender bias when their performance is assessed as leaders in higher administrative positions. Research within professional groups shows that women have to significantly work harder to be perceived as equally competent leaders as men (Lyness & Heilman, 2006).

During the apartheid era in South Africa, Africans were deprived of the most socio-economic opportunities and women in particular, were not given equal leadership opportunities as men. Since the new system of government came into power, discriminatory laws were eliminated. The Bill of Rights stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996, Section 9 (1) -(5) that discrimination against people on grounds of race, religion, sex and others was wrong and should therefore not be practiced. Therefore, gender equity at the workplace is enforced by a legislation called the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act 55 of 1998); as a result, women started occupying bigger positions in different sectors, including schools, without being discriminated. Women also form part of leadership in schools today where they are also appointed as principals.

Although the number of women managers in education is increasing, women continue to experience challenges that prevent them from realising their full potential as managers (Department of Education, 2007). When female teachers are promoted to management positions, there are no fast track programmes, for example, in the Ilembe District to equip them with relevant management skills required to lead and manage

schools, bearing in mind their past leadership history of seclusion. In the Gingindlovu circuit, one of the biggest circuits in Ilembe District, there are 25 primary schools. The principals in twelve (12) of these schools are females. The majority of staff members in all these schools are female teachers. In three of these schools, there are no male teachers. Female principals seem to still experience recognition challenges where their leadership abilities are still regarded as inferior and therefore not competent to resolve conflicts. Some of them seem to show lack of confidence when resolving conflicts in their schools.

Others are observed as being emotional at times when handling conflicts at schools which, in turn, render their leadership skills and abilities questionable. They tend to share teachers' problems with colleagues and end up seeking advice from them on issues related to school conflict management. While women continue to be appointed as principals, the perceptions of teachers, probably influenced by gender stereotypes, is that women may not be competent conflict managers in the schools they are leading.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Observation from schools in the Gingindlovu Circuit is that female principals seem to experience challenges when resolving conflicts. Despite dominance by female teachers in the staff component, female principals often seek advice from male teachers in resolving conflict; they tend to rely on male teachers as their source of power for conflict resolutions and maintenance of discipline in these schools. Some fail to resolve minor conflicts and seek assistance from their male colleagues to implement disciplinary measures. This is not well received by female teachers who think they are being sidelined. Female principals' skills to manage conflict therefore come to question. Their ability to resolve conflicts is questioned particularly in schools where the staff is dominated by female staff members. Sometimes they escalate minor cases to circuit managers without making any effort to attend to them. Literature on school management is quiet on how female principals should manage conflict in schools where the staff is dominated by female teachers. There is paucity of literature on conflict

management skills of female principals. The conflict resolution skills female principals have in primary schools dominated by female teachers in the Gingindlovu Circuit have not been documented and therefore little, if any, is known.

1.3 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study focused on public primary schools within the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education (KZN DBE). The KZN DBE comprises twelve (12) districts, and ILembe is one of them. The ILembe district consists of fourteen (14) management circuits. I chose Gingindlovu circuit because of the context in which the study is located. The Gingindlovu circuit consists of fifty (50) public primary schools situated in deep rural, semi-urban and urban areas. My study focussed on schools that are in deep rural area Gingindlovu circuit.

1.4 AIM OF THIS STUDY

The aim of this study was to explore female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers in the Gingindlovu circuit.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study was guided by the following study objectives:

- To explore the experiences of primary school teachers regarding female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers;
- To investigate conflict management skills female principals possess in primary schools dominated by female teachers.
- To explore the extent to which female principals get support from teachers in managing conflict.

- To establish teachers' perceptions regarding female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the experiences of primary school teachers regarding female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers?
- Which conflict management skills do female principals possess in primary schools dominated by female teachers?
- To what extent do teachers support female principals in managing conflict?
- What are teachers' perceptions regarding female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers?

1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

The following concepts are operationally defined:

1.7.1 Conflict

Conflict is viewed as affiliation might end up undermining each other as far as union policies are concerned. According to Uchendu, Anijaobi-Idem and Odigwe (2013), conflict is a recurring episode in all human interactions, be it in the family, institution or organization. Conflict can arise in a school environment between the principal and the teacher concerning work load. Irene and Ongachi (2011) argue that conflict is a part of the daily activities of an organization because of the diverse ideas and approaches of employees. Conflict might erupt between the department of education and teachers concerning the issue of salary increase. When teachers abandon classes and go on

strike action, the department option of dodging of salaries, undoubtedly may lead to conflict. In this study, 'conflict' refers to resistance resulting from actual or perceived differences or incompatibilities within a school environment when the beliefs or actions of one or more members of the staff are either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more members of another group.

1.7.2 Teacher

A teacher is someone whose job is to teach in a school or college (Cambridge University Press, 2018). A teacher is someone who teaches as his job, especially in a school. A teacher is any person appointed to exclusively perform extra-curricular duties, teaches, educates or trains other persons or provides professional educational services, including professional therapy and education psychological services at school (substituted by s 6(a) of Act no. 48 of 1999). In this study, a teacher is someone trained to teach people in a school or someone who is an expert in education.

1.7.3 Principal

A principal is a chief or a head, the head or director of a school. A principal is a person with controlling authority or is in a leading position (Webster, 2015). The principal is the most important or senior person in an organization, the head of school, college, or other educational institution (English Oxford Living dictionary, 2017). In this study, a principal is an educator appointed or acting as the head of a school. "Principal" means an educator appointed or acting as the head of a school (DoE, 1996), and is as used in this study.

1.8 INTENDED CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

This study contributes to the body of knowledge regarding the experiences of primary school teachers regarding female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary

schools dominated by female teachers following issues which have been scarcely documented. There is a perception that women cannot manage and therefore have limited conflict management skills. This, in particular, those in schools where the staff is dominated by female principals. Teachers' perceptions regarding female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers have been key to establishing the skills female principals have as they battle to manage conflicts.

1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research design and methodology followed in this study is briefly discussed in this section. First, the research design is discussed followed by the research paradigm and thereafter, the research methodology.

1.9.1 Research design

Research design refers to the overall strategy that you choose to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby ensuring meaningful discussion of the research problem. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data (Creswell, 2014a). Research designs are types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design. Others have called them strategies of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The research design was guided by the paradigm, methodology, approach and methods. Research paradigms are defined based on literature review from some authors including Kivunja and Kuyini (2017). There are three main paradigms that form the basis of research in the social sciences, the positivist, pragmatist and interpretivist which is also called the constructivist paradigm. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), A paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimate or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the "world," the individual's place in it and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts, as, for example,

cosmologies and theologies do. Gringeri, Barusch, and Cambron (2013) argue that since paradigms influence the research method, instruments used and interpretations, it is, therefore, essential to state the research paradigm. The study is located within the interpretive paradigm. Qualitative research is interpretivist, and this study employed a qualitative approach. Face to face interviews were used to collect data.

1.9.2 Research methodology

Research methodology involves the forms of data collection, analysis and the interpretation that the researchers propose for their studies (Creswell, 2014b). Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2011) pointed out that qualitative researchers study people in their natural setting to identify how their experiences and behaviour are shaped by the social, economic, cultural and physical contexts in which they live. A qualitative research approach was adopted in this study by collecting data through semi-structured face-to-face interviews.

1.9.3 Population of this study

Population refers to a group of people that a researcher is interested in researching and analysing (Vonk, 2017). The population of this study consisted of teachers and principals from schools in the Gingindlovu circuit in the Ilembe District.

1.9.4 Sampling

A sample, according to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005) is a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which the researcher is interested. McMillan, & Schumacher (2014) further explain that in purposeful sampling, the researcher selects particular elements from the population informed about the topic of interest. McMillan, & Schumacher (2014) further contend that in purposeful sampling, the researcher identifies “information-rich” participants as they are possibly knowledgeable about the

phenomenon the researcher is investigating. This study used purposive sampling procedure to select participants for this study. These are discussed in full in Chapter 3.

1.9.5 Data collection instrument

The study is qualitative in nature and used interviews to collect data. Interviews are good data collection tools for finding out what a person thinks and knows (Bertram & Christiansen, 2016). The interview schedules (Annexures 1 and 2) consisting of semi-structured questions developed guided by the objectives of the study, were used during face-to-face interviews. The advantages of using a semi-structured interview is that it allows the interviewer to be prepared and appear competent during the interview (Van Teijlingen, 2014). According to Van Teijlingen (2014), semi-structured interviews provide reliable, comparable qualitative data. The structure of the interview schedule is discussed in full in Chapter 3.

1.9.6 Data collection procedure

Permission was requested from all the gate keepers: The Department of Basic Education (DBE) at Provincial level (Annexures 4 and 5), the district manager (Annexures 6), the circuit manager (Annexures 7) and the principals and teachers (Annexure 8) to conduct interviews. Participants were assured of their rights to participate or withdraw at any time when feeling uncomfortable. The appointments with the interviewees were set. In qualitative research, it is common to record interviews with a tape or digital recorder and transcribe these to a written document (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). Data recorder and an interview schedule were used during interviews after permission was granted. Field notes were taken during the interview session. I personally conducted the interviews.

1.9.7 Data analysis

Data was transcribed *verbatim* (unedited) at the end of each interview session. Data collected were analysed using Atlas.ti 8. Differences, similarities, relations and interactions within the themes were identified. As argued by Bryman (2004), this method ensured that the collected data is broken down into manageable sections analysed thoroughly and objectively

1.10 ETHICAL AND SAFETY ISSUES

All ethical considerations of the University of Zululand were strictly adhered to in this study. I also adhered to all ethical consideration when collecting data as described in detail in Chapter three.

Participants were informed, before giving their consent, (Annexure 9) that their rights, dignity and confidentiality would be respected during the course of the study. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and they may quit should they wish to do so.

The information obtained from the study was treated as strictly confidential, meaning that under no circumstances was it used for any reason other than its academic purpose. The respondents were given latitude not to answer certain questions that they felt uncomfortable with (Creswell, 2014c). No one could be forced to answer questions they were not comfortable with.

Transparency was of great importance in collecting data, and participants were made aware of why they were recorded and who would listen to the data recorder. The researcher, therefore, requested permission from participants to record the sessions. Participants were informed, before giving their consent, that their rights, dignity and confidentiality would be respected during the course of the study.

1.11 CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter one

The chapter comprises the motivation of the entire study, the statement of the problem, aims of the study, definition of the operational concept and methodology of this study.

Chapter two

Chapter two provides conceptual and theoretical framework for the study, based on selected and relevant literature.

Chapter three

This chapter details the research design and methodology of the study.

Chapter four

Chapter four comprises a detailed analysis and interpretation of data.

Chapter five

This chapter gives a synthesis of findings conclusions and recommendations.

1.12 CONCLUSION

Chapter one gives us a background of the study, the aims and objectives of this study are also given in this chapter. The research design and methodology which includes population, sampling procedure, the instrument, data collection procedure and data analysis are also briefly described. The chapter concludes by giving the structure of the study. Chapter 2 presents the literature reviewed for this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter one, gave the introduction to this study. This chapter presents the review of literature on the female principals' conflict management skills in primary schools dominated by female teachers. The theoretical framework used as a lens for this study is presented followed by the operationalisation of the concepts conflict and conflicts management and the review of literature on female principals' conflict management skills in primary schools dominated by female teachers. The literature of the history of females as leaders is presented depicting the manner in which females' conflict management skills have to an extent shaped by the history of how females were perceived as leaders. The review of literature was guided by the following research objectives:

- To explore the experiences of primary school teachers regarding female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers;
- To investigate conflict management skills female principals possess in primary schools dominated by female teachers.
- To explore the extent to which female principals get support from teachers in managing conflict.
- To establish teachers' perceptions regarding female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers.

The theoretical framework is presented first and thereafter operationalisation of the concepts conflict and conflict management. The literature reviewed on the female principals' skills of managing conflicts in schools included the background of women as

leaders, their leadership styles and conflict management strategies they use in their leadership roles.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was underpinned by the Eagly's (a social psychologist who has spent a large portion of her career studying the differences between men and women) social role theory of gender differences (Eagly, 1997). The social role theory of gender differences explains that the inherent physical differences between men and women lead to a division of labour in society (Eagly, 1997; Wood, & Eagly, 2012). Eagly's theory cites these innate differences as causative factors in the development of gender roles for men and women. Gender roles are behaviours that are common for one's gender. They may be societal and cultural differences between some behaviours expected from men and women.

Historically, it was expected that women would serve as primary caregivers for their children, while men served as breadwinners for the family. Eagly's theory states that these expectations arose out of the natural differences between male and females. These social and cultural expectations for men and women are also called gender stereotypes. Social and cultural expectations, or gender stereotypes, contribute to the notion that there are male-specific careers and female-specific careers. They also contribute to the notion that males can resolve issues or conflict better when compared to women. Thus, considerable traditional courts (where this study will be conducted) in rural communities consist of males who resolve community conflicts. Women were, therefore, viewed as poor conflict managers.

This theory addresses why women are so under-represented in the most elite leadership positions. It also directs the underestimation of women's efficacy as leaders. Traditionally, men occupied higher-level positions, and were therefore expected to have agentic traits, such as being assertive, dominant, competitive, and achievement oriented. In contrast, women are expected to show communal traits, such as being

helpful, kind, sympathetic, understanding, and compassionate (Diekman & Eagly, 2008). Social role theory argues that cultural and social norm creates distinction between male and female roles (Wood, & Eagly, 2012).

Drawing from social role theory (Eagly & Steffen, 1986), the gender bias view holds that differences in role occupancy in society, family, and occupations generate role expectations for each gender. Social role theory also considers imbalanced career resources and power from social networks, role models, and mentoring/sponsorships (Michailidis, Morphitou, & Theophylatou, 2012). Following this social role theory, women have to cope with hindered access to social networks (Casciaro & Lobo, 2005). Even when they occupy leadership positions, their role is undervalued and tenancy benefits are reduced (Brands & Kilduff, 2013). Some studies established that women also benefit less from supervisor and co-worker support (Geller & Hobfoll, 1994).

Gender stereotypes are pervasive and are easily and automatically activated in social situations (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Brands & Kilduff, 2013). Each individual entering the team social context brings with them pre-existing expectations concerning gender roles. However, individuals differ in the extent to which they routinely stereotype women (Shamir & Howell, 1999). Thus, teams are likely to differ in the prejudice they exhibit, because of the composition of the members making up the team, social networking would therefore be subject to gender stereotyping. Women who are seen to be in violation of gender role prescriptions elicit hostility and antipathy from those around them (Glick & Fiske, 1997). Where individuals tend to perceive women as “stepping out of turn” in their occupation of male type roles, they are likely to hold negative opinions about women team members (Heilman, 2004). Individuals may filter their perceptions of the behaviour of women through the lens of hostile gender stereotypes (Heilman, 2001), leading to disparagement of women’s ideas and interpersonal discord. Research suggests that others’ expectations can cause individuals to behave in ways that confirm stereotypes (Allen & Hecht, 2004; Brands, & Kilduff, 2013). Stereotypes not only affect attributions but also affect targets’ behaviours.

Other studies show that accurate social network perceptions correlate with organizational influence (Krackhardt, 1990) and effective action (Janicik & Larrick, 2005) at the individual level. This study was guided by this social role theory that suggests that managers need to be aware of the disruptive influence of gender stereotypes on network perceptions for team performance. The framework was used to determine research questions and gave direction to interviews and discussions to focus this study.

2.3 THE CONCEPT CONFLICT

The concept conflict is operationalised and discussed as is used in this study.

2.3.1. Definition

The word 'conflict' originates from a Latin word *confligere* which means to strike together or fought (Barash & Webel, 2017). There exists no common definition as to what conflict is, as many different definitions have been and continue to be proposed depending on people's perspectives. As it can also be understood from these differences, conflict is not a concept that can be simply explained and analysed (Yildirim, Akan & Yalçin, (2015; 2016).

Many researchers from multiple disciplines like psychology, behavioural sciences, sociology, communication. The earliest definitions show the negative perspective associated with conflict. Conflicts were defined as antagonistic struggles (Coser, 1956), breakdown in the standard mechanisms of decision-making (March & Simon, 1958), breaches in normally expected behaviour (Beals & Siegel, 1966), threat to cooperation, a gradual escalation to a state of disorder (Pondy, 1967), etc. Since early 1970s, some researchers have expressed a neutral view of conflict; Schmidt and Kochan (1972) defined conflict as an overt behaviour arising out of a process in which one unit seeks the advancement of its own interests in its relationship with the others; Roloff (1987) defines conflict situations as situations when members engage in activities that are incompatible with those of colleagues within their network, members of other

collectivises, or unaffiliated individuals who utilize the services or products of the organization. Conflict is an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities, an internal discord that results from differences in ideas, values, or feelings between two or more people (Rahim, 1983; Marquis & Huston, 1996). What critical is the aspect of differing needs, goals or interests and the perceived or real interference from one party to the other.

Conflict is not easy to handle especially by female principals. Conflict management requires various skills and there are desperate conflict management styles that could be used by managers (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Griffin, 2012). Conflict is a process based on which an individual or an entity actually attempts to hinder others to achieve their goals. The result would be the failure of another individual to achieve its or his goals. The arguments for a “female advantage” in leadership generally stem from the belief that women are more likely than men to adopt collaborative and empowering leadership styles, while men are disadvantaged because their leadership styles include more command-and-control behaviours and the assertion of power (Paustian-Underdahl, Walker & Woehr, 2014). These suggest that women would have better leadership skills as compared to their male counterparts.

Conflict is a purposeful struggle between actors who use social power to defeat or remove opponents and to gain status, power, resources, and other scarce values. While researchers on social conflict have offered different definitions of conflict, there are however different definitions of conflicts in education. Nahavandi (2015) considers conflict as a negative and dysfunctional force that makes people feel uncomfortable and make them less productive. Conflict is a phenomenon that is present in our everyday interaction (Rahim, 1992; Rubin, 1994; Shey & Bruno, 2014). It only exists as a result of human interaction on daily basis simply because of their differences in goals, needs, ideas, and interests. Conflict is everywhere, and it is inevitable. It arises from many sources. In addition to being the antecedent for negotiation, conflict may also arise during negotiation (Msila, 2012; Msila, 2014). Conflict is when needs of one party are

not met within an organization, such as for example, when teachers have demands from the department of basic education which they are not happy with.

2.3.2. Conflicts in the workplace

Conflicts in the workplace occur when the needs of individuals in the organization are not met (Nwosu & Makinde, 2014). Conflicts may deepen unless they are resolved. At school's conflicts may be experienced in many issues in and out of class teaching activities and practices (Karip, 2005). Considerable studies indicate that the potential for conflict is greater when there is a differentiation in goals or a high level of misunderstanding (Tjosvold & Hui, 2001; Tjosvold & Su Fang, 2004). Conflicts among educators within schools do have a negative effect on school performance which may interfere with the normal daily routine resulting in poor performance of learners. This may negatively affect the job performances of the personnel and may decrease the quality of education and training at schools. However, conflicts, which may be destructive phenomena to be avoided, are elsewhere positive forces and necessary for organizations who responds differently each conflict and to continue their existences (Robbins & Judge, 2012; Göksoy, 2016).

2.3.3. Consequences of conflicts in schools

The regular occurrence of conflicts in the school units disrupts a large part of school activities and certainly does not promote educators' constructive contribution to the improvement of the school process (Briggs & Wohlstetter, 2003; Balay, 2006; Paraskevopoulos, 2008; Somech, 2008; Tekos & Iordanidis, 2011). It would be almost impossible to find a school that is free of any conflict, which. Once identified need to be resolved (Saitis et al., 1996; Henkin, Cistone, & Dee, 2000; Achinstein, 2002; Balay, 2006; Fassoulis, 2006; Somech, 2008; Tekos & Iordanidis, 2011). School principals need to manage any conflict that arises for promotion of teaching and learning. They

would therefore be required to have conflict management skills which would contribute to the promotion of quality of teaching and learning.

School conflicts can take either a cooperative or coercive path depending on how it is framed by the conflict parties (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000). Deutsch and Coleman state further that when a school characterizes conflict as a problem solvable through joint effort, cooperative approaches such as negotiation are adopted. However, when conflict is seen as a win-lose struggle, coercive processes, may be the initial strategy of choice. School conflict have both interpersonal and organizational attributes (Saiti, 2014). When the conflicts are attributed to interpersonal relations, lack of capable school leadership as the most common cause.

The regular occurrence of conflicts in the school has a negative effect on the promotion of teaching and learning (Balay, 2006). There are factors that influence some contributory factors that may influence the occurrence and the type of conflicts which include the size of a school. However, conflicts are inevitable regardless of the size of the school. Conflicts are a general phenomenon of school life with the school principal trying to solve (Balay, 2006; Tekos & Iordanidis, 2011; Saiti, 2014). Conflicts can take place between administrators-teachers, teachers-teachers, teachers-students or parents-parents or among the students.

2.4 THE CONCEPT CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Conflict management strategy is behaviour towards the intensification, reduction and resolution of conflict. Moran (2001) sees conflict management as a philosophy and a set of skills that create an ability among teachers, that assist individuals and groups in better understanding and dealing with conflict as it arises in all aspects of their lives. Conflict management is the process of removing cognitive barriers to agreement. Conflict management is therefore, the process of removing cognitive barriers to agreement (Kibui, 2013). It is the label for the variety of ways by which people handle

grievances. Depending on the situation, conflict management techniques often focus on changing structure, changing process or both.

The origins of human conflict are as complex as the solutions needed to solve have been explored for centuries, but answers remain elusive (Coleman & Deutsch, 2006). The roots of a conflict act are multiple, intricate, and intertwined and vary according to the individuals and circumstances. Furthermore, the strategies for conflict resolution may also vary according to the different philosophical bases of those involved (Hanson, 1991).

Conflict management, as Anderson, Hellriegel and Slocum (1977) state, consists of the interventions designed to reduce conflict, or in some instances, to increase insufficient conflicts. It is a process whereby managers design plans, and implement policies and procedures to ensure that conflict situations are resolved effectively. Conflict management broadens understanding of the problem, increases the resolutions and tend to work towards consensus and to seek a genuine commitment to decision making, and because there is a broader, stronger element of disagreement and discord within the conflict process, a considerable amount of mental and psychological energy is generated.

Careful listening in response to complaints holds the promise of restoring trust and of learning how to prevent or resolve similar situations. Genuine listening, like all the skills we propose, is more than a surface feature of conversation. When conflict emerges in the school female principals as managers, are expected to constructively and creatively attend to it before it blows up to be an unhealthy conflict

It is necessary for educational managers to learn different methods of managing conflict (Riasi & Asadzadeh, 2015). Mismanaged conflict can brew a space where staff is demotivated and the learners demoralized. Conflict management involves acquiring skills related to conflict resolution which include conflict communication skills (Coleman & Deutsch, 2006). Conflict management therefore understands that even though there

seems to be no successful strategy for resolving conflicts, the core part is to learn how to manage it before it escalates to something non-productive. Therefore, it is essential for school principals to learn and develop skills to deal and manage conflict before it blows up to be something that will hamper the process of teaching and learning.

School principals are expected to constructively and creatively attend to any conflict before it blows up to be an unhealthy conflict. Conflict is often characterised as a negative and destructive issue, but there is strong evidence that indicate conflict could have positive outcomes for the organizations if it is managed correctly (Tjosvold, 2006; Riasi & Asadzadeh, 2015). One of the most important aspects of conflict management that female principals should consider is the understanding of how negative effects of conflict could be minimized and how its positive effects could be maximised.

Principals require skills in managing conflict (Msila, 2011a). The conditions that allow conflict to start are never identical, if so, then the nature of many conflicts will never be the same. It would then be logical to assume that the manner in which conflict is handled is not the same. Many managers develop team to achieve the schools vision and goals (Msila, 2011a). Msila (2011b) further believes that the effective school principals would create a conducive atmosphere where conflict is managed to the benefit of the school. The principal has to create a conducive environment for promotion of teaching and learning (Tahir, Musah, Panatik, Ali, & Said, 2018) as it might cause some stress to those they work with, this, one assumes, particularly in primary schools, is not easy to manage.

There is evidence that men are better than women in leadership positions. Some studies suggest that there are gender differences in perceptions of leadership effectiveness (Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, & Woehr, 2014). Such gender differences would suggest that there are differences regarding conflict management skills between male and female leaders.

For schools to function normally, conflicts must be resolved (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Rahim, 2001). School principals must be able to understand the roots of any conflict and be able to manage such conflict effectively and in a timely manner. Different conflict management skills would therefore play a critical role in addressing social deviance at school and frequently aiding in improving academic performance (Bourne, Clarke-Christian & Sharpe-Pryce, 2015).

Conflict is associated with commitment and cognitive conflict (De Lima, 2001). The choice of conflict management strategy would therefore depend on several aspects including commitment, the sense of security and trust and the stimulation of constructive and intellectual relationships among school members (Henkin et al., 2000). Problems occur in managing conflicts in any situations, therefore women principals have to adopt diverse strategies to manage conflict in the schools they are managing. Conflict management skills that can be learned and acquired are the primary factors influencing leadership efficacy (O'Brien, 2017).

School principals require skills in managing conflicts (Msila, 2011b) in their schools. There are various skills of resolving conflicts which are relevant in a school situation. The conditions that allow conflict to start are never identical, if so, then the nature of many conflicts will never be the same (Msila, 2011b). It would then be logical to assume that the manner in which conflict is handled is not the same. Therefore, different skills should be acquired by principals in order for them to manage conflicts in schools. Female principals are expected to possess the conflict management skills as female principals in order to maintain order in schools they are leading. The majority of skills needed in lower level supervisor roles involve cognitive skills including effective communication, active learning, and critical thinking (Mumford, Campion, & Morgenson, 2007).

Managers should be able to adapt their conflict management behaviour to a given situation. Wellington (2011) identifies conflict management as the practice of handling conflict efficiently. In some cases, it may be best to confront conflict, and in other

cases, it may be better to avoid conflict or accommodate. Conflict management research focus is centred primarily on the conflict situation and the person – situation interaction). Conflict behaviour is determined by both situational and dispositional influences. Rahim (2001) thinks that the effect of conflict can be of great deal of injury or a great deal of good, depending on the management style of an organization.

2.5 BACKGROUND OF WOMEN LEADERSHIP

This section presents the literature review on the history regarding women leadership.

2.5.1 Global historical background of women leadership

Globally, women in leadership positions experience challenges. Women account for only six percent of seats on corporate boards in the ten largest economies in Asia and eight percent of members of executive committees, compared to 15% and 14% in the United States of America respectively (Sahay, & Cihak, 2018). While women hold eight percent of corporate board seats in China, and seven percent in Singapore, the number drops to five percent in India. As women evidently constitute a minority in leadership positions, the factors that impact their emergence as leaders—success factors as well as barriers—are important to understand (Moorosi, 2019). This implies that there still exist some barriers which have a negative impact on females as leaders.

However, females are holding fewer leadership positions than males. One explanation for women's underrepresentation in elite leadership positions points to the undervaluation of women's effectiveness as leaders (Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, & Woehr, 2014). Despite the clear fact that a career in teaching remains a feminized profession with almost 80% of the teaching staffs being female, school administration continues to be dominated by males specifically at the elementary and superintendence levels, making this disparity one of education's most challenging issues (Dana & Bourisaw 2006)

Historically women have been perceived as incompetent to qualify for leadership positions, they had to go an extra mile to prove themselves that they possess the same qualities as their men counterparts to qualify for any leadership role including principal ship. It is therefore not surprising that women are under-represented in higher and middle management to positions in education (Mathipa & Tsoka, 2006). Women have also been traditionally cast as unreliable knowers (Longino, 2010) and women's work continues to be associated with inferiority and supplementary. Higher management positions refer to positions such as superintended and principals, whereas the middle management positions are positions like deputy principals and head of departments (HODs). Although the number of women leaders in business organizations has more than doubled over the last 30 years, women are still underrepresented in managerial positions worldwide (Catalyst, 2012).

Women have been regarded as lacking the potential knowledge as far as management issues are concerned. It is assumed that when they are faced with conflicts situation as principals it is likely that conflict becomes destructive because of their lack of conflict management skills. When women do eventually move into leadership positions, particularly in male dominated areas, they tend to be judged more harshly than their male counterparts (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Groysberg, 2013). Women do experience strong gender bias when evaluated for promotions based on both their level of performance as well as their potential impact. These challenges have a negative impact on perceptions and stereotypes regarding women as leaders. (Groysberg, 2013).

Women should take personal responsibility and significantly work harder to be perceived as equally competent as men (Lyness & Heilman, 2006; Groysberg, 2013). They have to exhibit conflict resolution skills, for example, in their leadership to be perceived as better school managers. Such practises may contribute towards female principals not receiving the same respect as their male counterparts from their colleagues since they are also regarded as not good enough for the leadership positions.

Women resolve conflicts better than their male counterparts in a job leadership position. Men rate themselves as significantly more effective as women rate themselves (Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, & Woehr, 2014). Studies confirm that men are more effective leaders than women (e.g. Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992), though there are reports that there may be a female gender advantage in modern organizations that requires a “feminine” type of leadership (Williams, 2012). These studies suggest that males are more effective in leadership as compared to females. This may be related to how females as compared to males are perceived as leaders based on their ability to lead.

There has been the social perception that men are superior and women are inferior (Stufft & Coyne, 2009), particularly in leadership roles. This perception creates a particularly significant hurdle for women in educational leadership positions where their underrepresentation as secondary school principals and in the superintendence provides a dismal social commentary on longstanding gender inequities.

In the United States of America (USA), although nearly 85% of elementary school teachers are women, women hold only slightly more elementary school principal positions than men (58.9%). In high schools, women hold less than one third of principal positions (28.5%). In superintendence positions, the rate is even lower: Women hold about only 24 percent of superintendence jobs. Similarly, in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, the average percentage of female principals in lower secondary education is 44.6% (OECD, 2016). The percentage of female principals increased in recent decades at a very slow pace (Marczynski & Gates, 2013; Hill, Ottem, & DeRoche, 2016). That is, women continue to be underrepresented, under-valued, and underutilized as leaders (Marshall & Wynn, 2012). These studies have, however, not shown why women are not valued seriously.

2.5.2 The South African Historical background of women leadership

Historically, in South Africa, women were victims of apartheid system in as far as holding of leadership positions is concerned. The country's public schools had 257 633 female teachers and 119 579 male teachers but only 8 210 female principals and 14 337 males were principals appointed in permanent posts in South Africa, (DBE, 2013). Only 36% of school principals are women, but men continue to dominate school principal positions despite an overwhelming number of women in the education sector. Gender inequality persisted in the education sector. Women are reluctant to take on leadership roles in education because of the persisting challenges in the work situation. Motshekga's department wanted to create more leadership roles for women to help them sharpen their skills and better understand management roles.

Although women represent more than half of the world population, they do not represent half, of those who are managers (Mazibuko, 2006). The teaching profession in particular is not spared. Female educators constitute 68% of the total teachers' population as compared to 32% of males in public and independent schools in the Basic Department of Education in South Africa (DBE), 2012). While women constitute nearly 70% of the teaching profession in South Africa, they only constitute 30% of school managers (Paulsen, 2009). In the Gauteng Province only 727 of the 2164 employees occupying principal posts were women. Regardless of the fact that women form the majority in the teaching profession but the issue of women occupying leadership positions especially principal ship has always been debatable. In spite of their teaching experience and high qualifications women seem to form a minority in leadership positions. It may therefore be reasonable that even their leadership and conflict management skills perceived as inferior to those who are in the majority. To remedy the situation, the National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (Bush, 2011) was introduced to put gender equality in the middle of transformation through guidelines facilitating equal access to opportunities for men and women (Bush, 2011).

Prior to 1994, gender discrimination was also evident in the South African education sector. Laws were set to favour men over women in all areas of leadership in religion, politics as well in education (Ntim, 2013; Mabokela & Mlambo, 2017). Women's place has always been known to be at home as a result, they were deprived of all the leadership positions. The teaching profession therefore became problematic with regard to gender equality (Naidoo & Perumal, 2014). Women experienced different problems when assuming leadership roles in education sectors because there has been this belief that they are not fit enough for such positions since these positions require people who are physical strong. One would therefore assume that the way women are perceived would be transferred to the way in which they manage conflicts is perceived.

When South Africans were celebrating their freedom in 1994 the new system of government replaced the existing educational system of apartheid government with the integrated educational system. This was to address the issue of women's underrepresentation in South Africa. Discriminatory laws against women leadership were eradicated, then the newly elected government introduced the following documents to empower women to occupy leadership roles: Public Administration Management Act (PAM), Employment educator's Act number 76 of 1998, Skills Development Act and Affirmation Action Act (South African School's Act (SASA), 1996; Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), 1996). SASA abolishes the sex-typing of leadership and the top-down approach to education leadership that operated under apartheid. It allows the various school interest groups the right to be represented in school leadership and governance, and to lead. The structure has adapted to the stipulations of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and SASA, but the thinking is still based on the social and cultural construction of gender roles. Despite males performing significant administrative roles, females who were in school administrative positions, remained outside the informal network of administration while men controlled the decision-making processes.

The South African Schools Act (SASA) is the key legislation introducing a unified system of government, The SASA gave considerable attention to school leadership and

management, recognising their importance in developing a fully functional system, which would improve school and learners' outcomes. As part of a newly developed strategy of improving the education system, the South African Department of Basic Education introduced an Advanced Certificate in Education (School Leadership) from 2007. The DBE is now planning to introduce an enhanced qualification for principals (both female and male principals) an Advanced Diploma in Education (School Leadership and Management; (Bush, & Glover, 2016). Despite of all the differences, however, the context for school leadership is also strongly influenced by legislation and policy, notably the South African Schools Act (1996).

The South African Policy Context is regarded as increasingly significant for school leadership (Bush, 2011). In South Africa, the transition from a racially stratified education system to unified non-racist provision has dramatically changed the policy context for school leaders and managers. The Labour Relations Act (No. 66 of 1995), the Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998, and the principle of Affirmative Action, have been established in order to give effect to the constitutional mandate in South Africa. However, despite these policies, women remain underrepresented in school management positions. Although there have been notable policy efforts to address these imbalances; in practice only a small number of women have currently been appointed to leadership positions in the education sector.

Studies Chisholm (2001) and Diko (2007) established that apartheid policies continued to limit women's opportunities as educational leaders, even in this era when democratic policies should protect and support the advancement of women. Mahlase (1997) concluded that race, culture and ethnicity affect and define females in educational management positions. They indicate that leadership is constructed and reproduced as a masculine trait despite the array of policies formed to mainstream gender and transform educational leadership, however, females aspiring to become education leaders are still side-lined (Ramagoshi, 2005) despite concerns (Pandor, 2004). Moorosi (2010), argues that transformation should include changes in community and negative attitudes to women as managers who still aspire to the ongoing assumptions that

women's place is in the kitchen. These community members still think that women should not be appointed for any management positions including educational management positions.

The teachers rejected female authority in the school as they believed that only males could lead (Ramagoshi, 2005). Ramagoshi further indicates that the culture of associating educational leadership with a male figure persists, and continues to undercut the policy of gender equality. Other studies (Moorosi, 2008; Diko, 2007; Chisholm, 2001; Mahlase, 1997) blame the under-representation of South African women in educational leadership and management on institutional culture. Chabaya, Rembe and Wadesango (2009) assert that gender stereotyping is one of the major causes of under-representation of women in educational leadership. Historically, race, culture and ethnicity, religion and language as well as marital status have been identified as the main affecting and defining experiences of women, especially black women teachers in general, and women managers in particular (Moorosi, 2010; Lumby & Azaola, 2011). Women in South Africa face limiting opportunities as educational leaders at three levels in their journey to principalship (Moorosi, 2010): the anticipation phase, which prepares women for management focusing on women themselves taking the lead in the development of knowledge and skills that are needed for a management position. This implies that women, as alluded to by one of the recent studies (Mayer, Tonelli, Oosthuizen, & Surtee, 2018), focus on their personal development for them to do well in managing conflicts. According to Moorosi (2010), women must acquire qualifications, attend workshops and participate in informal networks to prepare them for management positions. However, the study is silent on the challenges women experienced when they are principals and how as managers they lead and manage conflicts.

The second phase, which is the acquisition phase, focusses on the problems experienced by women when seeking actively seeking appointment in school principalship positions but are hindered or excluded from attaining these positions because of a lack of proper implementation and enforcement of good policies (Moorosi,

2010). Moorosi does not mention anything on how women manage conflict in a school where female teachers dominate the staff once they have become principals.

The third phase, is about the performance phase where the actual management function is performed (Moorosi, 2010). One of the management functions of a principal in a school is to manage conflicts. In this phase, according to Moorosi (2010), the emphasis is placed on the fact that the underrepresentation of women in management positions is a problem even for women who have attained these positions and not on the actual management functions. Thus, as more women have entered into and succeeded in leadership positions, it is likely that people's stereotypes associating leadership with masculinity may dissolve slowly over time (Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, & Woehr, 2014). Chisholm (2001), who shows that South African educational leadership favours males and resists change, discovered that some of women who were promoted became frustrated and ultimately left the education sector.

2.5.3 Gender differences and educational leadership

Gender difference is a stumbling block to women's promotion to management positions resulting in more males holding principal positions than do women (Akao & Strachan, 2011). Moorosi (2008) observed that women occupying leadership positions still lack conflict management skills since they regard themselves as incompetent.

The cultural context of rural schools is slow to adapt and transform providing men with opportunities to dominate (Diko, 2007; Moorosi, 2008; Diko, 2014). On the same vein, Byrd (2009), found that men have more social power, dominance and control, and that this encourages and enables them to become leaders. In an earlier study, Chisholm, (2001) observed a culture where men were taken more seriously than women. Women were promoted to leadership positions and yet the context was not changed to accommodate them and to support them in their new roles (Diko, 2007; Diko, 2014). They had a much stronger sense of recognition and visibility.

Women most surpassed men on individualized consideration, referring to supportive and encouraging treatment of subordinates. More than their male counterparts, women routinely used the transformational leadership skills of participative decision-making, individualized consideration, and interpersonal interaction, especially in communication (Hallinger, Dongyu, & Wang, 2016).

2.5.4 Perspectives of women

The suitability of women as leaders has often been questioned (Mathevula, 2014). According to Mathevula, women have been shaped by their reproductive, domestic and nurturing roles, while men have been concerned with business, science, managerial positions, and politics. There is an old belief that the woman's place is in the family-inside, while men work outside. This places women in a position where they are not regarded as competent leaders.

2.6 DIFFERENT LEADERSHIP STYLES

A leadership style is determined by the leader's approach in the active process (Abu-Hussain, 2014). The school principal's leadership style is one of the crucial factors in team success, due to its effect on satisfaction, commitment, motivation, quality and level of teacher performance, as well as its indirect effect on student achievements (Abu-Hussain, & Essawi, (2014).

Male and female leaders have different ways of leading (Chiliwniak, 1997; Watson, 2008; Esser, Kahrens, Mouzugh, & Eomois, 2018). Chiliwniak (1997) states further that females embrace relationships, and share and process. Men view leadership as leading with authority while women see themselves as leaders that facilitate (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Powell, 2018). Women focus more on instructional leadership (Conner, 1992) exhibiting more of a transformational leadership where they get their followers to transform their self-interest into the interest of the group for the goal of an organisation (Rosener, 1990). Men focus on the job of completing tasks,

achieving goals and the hoarding of information, which demonstrate a more transactional style of leadership (Rosener, 1990; Powell, 2018).

The autocratic leadership style is also known as authoritarian leadership style (Cherry, 2018). It is a leadership style characterised by individual control over all decisions and little input from group members (Cherry, 2018). This type of style has the advantage of attaining a high level of performance but is accompanied by negative feelings (Abu-Hussain, & Essawi, 2014). A female principal using this leadership style would show management skills by mixing or combining it with another style, since it might not yield positive results if applied alone. Men are known to be more autocratic than women whereas women were more democratic than men (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Powell, 2018; Randsley de Moura, Leicht, Leite, Crisp, & Gocłowska, 2018).

The democratic style is a management style in which members of the group take a more participative role in the decision making process. Democratic leadership style is advantageous in team members' feelings, although their performance levels are lower (Abu-Hussain, & Essawi, (2014). This leadership style might be regarded as more suitable for women principals because of their personalities. Women are better managers and their leadership styles are more suited to modern organizations (Smith, 2009; Williams, 2012). At first we did not have women who were principals due to that they were taken as if they could not lead and manage, they came and the focus was shifted to from them. A female principal using democratic leadership style would have to combine it with another leadership for effective results.

A task-oriented leadership style stresses the importance of achievement and excellent performance in the school environment (Lowe, Kroeck & Sivasubramaniam, 1996). Eagly and Johnson (1990) reviewed studies that compared men and women their findings were men and women did not differ on task-oriented style. The female principal using this style would show management skills by mixing or combining it with another styles, so that at the end there will be proper quality of teaching and learning.

Transactional leadership style is a reward-dependent behaviour which focuses on reward and the use of dependent rewards and incentives to affect motivation (Avolio, Bass & Jung, 1999). Leaders and followers make each other advance to a higher level of morality and motivation (Burns, 2000). The transactional leader uses conditional reinforcement with subordinates, inspires, intellectually stimulates and considers each subordinate. Transformational leadership requires high moral/ethical development (Avolio, Bass & Jung, 1999).

Bass and Avolio (1994) consider transactional leadership to be an important, central element in the preservation of organizations, in filling an agenda and putting things into action. Transformational leadership creates a shared interest that unites leaders and followers (Bass, 1985; Burton, Borland, & Kane, 2019). This is the mission of the transformational leader. More than their male counterparts, women routinely used the transformational leadership skills of participative decision-making, individualized consideration, and interpersonal interaction, especially in communication (Hallinger et al., 2016).

Thus, a specific leadership style would be effective under certain conditions and lose its effectiveness when the conditions change (Abu-Hussain, 2014). Through **transformation leadership style** leaders are able to cope with the new reform changes happening in the educational realm of organisations (Barnett & McCormick, 2004; Burton, Borland, & Kane, 2019). Transformational leadership has led to organisational outcomes such as motivation, commitment and developing new learning for teachers (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999). Leaders that are transformational in leadership style have increased commitment towards achieving the organisational goals (Bass & Avolio, 1997; Amin, Akram, Shahzad, & Amir, 2018).

In this study, both transactional leadership and transformational leadership styles are adopted as they are likely to increase commitment among staff members when leaders are females. Female leaders are likely to develop a shared vision for the institutions they are leading.

2.7 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES

The prime focus of this section is to identify and discuss conflict management styles that can be employed by female principals in order to manage conflict in schools they are leading. Conflict management styles can be defined as internal mechanisms used by certain authorities in conflict management (Adeyemi & Ademilua 2012, Saiti, 2014), to be used by school managers are of great importance. Conflict management style is a joint activity and the degree of its effectiveness determines the type of impact of conflict on school performance.

Conflict in educational institutions have largely been attributed to the lack of management skills (Kibui, Kibera, & Bradshaw, 2014). Female principals have been perceived to be lacking conflict management skills, as a result conflict in their schools become the order of the day (Kibui, Kibera, & Bradshaw, 2014). It is critical for the principals to learn the proper skills needed to manage conflict. The female principal must be able to identify the probability of conflict, thereafter, identify proper skills in managing it before it becomes destructive. Thus, the female principals have to come up with diverse strategies to manage conflict in schools depending on the nature of conflict, and some of these strategies are called conflict management styles (Göksoy, & Argon, 2016). For conflict managers there are predetermined strategies that can be employed by managers to deal with conflict.

Some studies have identified conflict management styles which include compromising, collaborating, avoidance, obliging and domination (Titrek, 2015). Each style has benefits and disadvantages and should be used in different situations. Conflict management strategies used by female principals should seek to reduce and eliminate conflict, before it blows up to be something critical. If conflict is handled appropriately, it may result in reduced number of disciplinary and grievance cases (Karadakil, Goud, & Thomas, 2015). Styles used to resolve conflicts in a positive manner are crucial for organizational success. Conflicts not resolved may cause a breakdown in the relationships among the

personnel, impacting negatively on their performance, motivation and efforts (Rahim, 1992; Zhou, Zhao, Tian, Zhang, & Chen, 2018).

Conflict management styles are affected by personality and other situational variables and vary among peers, supervisors, and intimates. However, Rahim (2001) accepts that effective leadership depends on leadership styles that coincide with the context. For this reason, it is hard to say that a certain conflict management style can be effective in all situations. Carlos, Damaso and Gonzalo (2012) revealed that there are relations between the sentimentality of groups and the conflict management styles they use. The choice of leadership style depends on the type of conflict, the circumstances, the knowledge, the perception of the conflict managing style and the maturity of the parties involved (Saiti, 2014). These conflict management styles are described in the section that follows:

2.7.1 Collaborative style

Collaborative style, also known as mutual problem solving or cooperative, emphasises on high concern for satisfying both individual and others' needs (Rahim, 2001; O'Toole, Bagshaw, Burton, Grünbaum, Lepp, Morrison, & Pillai, 2019). Rahim (2001) writes further that leaders using this style focus on honesty, cooperation, and exchange of information. They focus on a win-win style and on finding a solution that is in both parties' best interest.

Collaborative style is used to find an integrative solution when both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised as well as against people who take advantage of non-competitive people. According to this style, both parties develop the communication necessary to overcome any misunderstanding and to find solution that satisfies all parties involved in the conflict (Blake & Mouton, 1964). Saiti (2014) asserts that individuals using this type of conflict management strategy tend to be both highly assertive and highly empathetic. The strategy involves confrontation and open discussion of the problem for it to generate innovative solutions while promoting justice,

fairness and elements for effective teamwork (Rahim, 2001, Chen & Tjosvold, 2002; Tjosvold, 2008;). Both parties may be satisfied since they are both part of developing the solution to the problem. Leaders with high levels of self-monitoring and efficacy and who strive to find a mutual resolution of a conflict are more likely to adopt a collaborative conflict management style (Jordan & Troth, 2004; Shih & Susanto, 2010). Collaboration style necessitates that contributions from both conflicting parties are required for effective conflict management. After a conflict has been resolved through a collaborative style, people are enabled to see the world in a different and new manner (Melamed & Reyman, 2000). The conflicting parties develop self-trust because of the contributions and agreements they have all made in reaching consensus regarding their misunderstanding. The skill of managing conflict develops in all parties involved since they all work collaboratively in finding a common solution to a problem.

Collaborative style helps the manager to find out the real solution of the problem through the sincere effort and support of the staff members in creating the climate of cooperation and group dynamics (Ghaffar & Khan, 2012). The style may be used to merge the feelings and experiences of different people and to resolve long-standing conflicts (Jehn, 1997). Considerable studies agree that collaborative approaches are some of the most preferred styles used when conflict occurs (Tjosvold, 1998, 2008; Tjosvold & Ding, 2001; Tjosvold & Hui, 2001; Chen & Tjosvold, 2002; Somech, 2008; Shih & Susanto, 2010; Trudel & Reio, 2011).

Adler, Laney and Parker (1993) contend that the collaborative style is natural to most women and it is more suitable to modern management because it is not dictatorial in nature (Okello, 2018). Women prefer peace talks where parties may come in to an agreement without her dictating the solution to the problem. The collaborative style is mostly used by women because they often build coalitions in order to achieve their goals (Adler et al., 1993). With collaborative style the female principal, together with teachers involved, creates a conducive environment for peace talks and shares their ideas that may lead them to a mutual agreement that may arrive at effective conflict management. Saiti (2014) further establishes that women are more likely than men to

adopt collaborative and empowering leadership styles, while men are disadvantaged because their leadership styles that include more command-and-control behaviours and the assertion of power. The role of the school leader is critical. The degree to which they can develop the ability and the appropriate social skills to manage relationships effectively and to implement the organization of communication is critical in managing conflicts (Engle & Nehrt, 2011; Alexopoulos, 2012).

Though the collaborative style was generally considered to be the style with the highest probability for gaining positive results (Rahim, 1983), some studies conducted much later form a ground for the argument that each of the conflict handling styles can be appropriate for particular situations (Rahim, 1992). Studies conducted after that recommended collaborative conflict management strategies above all others (Momanyi, & Juma, 2016). This style typically takes more time, but can deliver long-term gains (Kumar & Varaiya, 2015). This implies that this style is regarded as one of the most effective styles one can use in managing conflicts.

2.7.2 Avoidance style

The avoidance conflict management strategy allows the manager to ignore the situation when it occurs and believes that they may resolve them as time goes by (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Deutsch, 2007) without personal involvement. Avoidance style is a system of conflict management that promotes the postponement of a situation and avoids any discussion of the problem with the parties involved, withdrawing or sidestepping the situations. The leader might undertake to resolve conflict on their own without getting the conflicting parties on board. This style provides managers, including principals, with the opportunity to consult in order to deal with conflict, for example, in schools (Deutsch, 2007). According to Deutsch, this strategy is common with principals who find it difficult to face conflict or are unwilling to reprimand teachers who are guilty (Deutsch, 2007).

However, the leader using the avoidance style to manage conflicts, does not satisfy their needs or the needs of the other person, instead they avoid the issue and stop exploring the solution even though aware of the conflict (Rahim, 2001). Some studies suggest that avoidance style can be useful in cooling off the situation and averting from trivial matter and in securing long term solution to the problems (Gross & Guerrero, 2000; Ghaffar & Khan, 2012). A recent study (Kumar & Varaiya, 2015) suggests that avoidance is useful in a short run because it allows individual time to cool off and regain perspective, but it can be quiet harmful in the long run. Individuals might resent having to suppress their feelings about the conflict, and they might find other dysfunctional ways of dealing with the issues.

Williams (2012) thought that a manager chooses to avoid a conflict with a difficult person because they find it painful or uncomfortable to deal with, thus unintentionally escalating the problem behaviour. School administrators who operate under a system with high levels of bureaucracy are more likely to adopt avoidance in resolving conflicts (Balay, 2006). Recently, Brown, Smith, Wiseman, and Handmer (2019) found that avoidance conflict management strategy could be used when the leader perceives no chance of resolving the conflict, when gathering information supersedes an immediate decision as well as when others can resolve conflict more efficiently. However, avoiding conflict does not only encourage escalation but also communicates disinterest in shared values, beliefs and norms (Dipaola & Hoy, 2001). Avoidance strategy might lead to great destruction within the workplace when unresolved conflict blows up to something that is uncontrollable and ends up hampering the process of teaching and learning.

2.7.3 Compromising style

In compromise style both groups give up something to make a reciprocally satisfactory conflict resolution (Blake & Mouton, 1964). The strategy is acceptable for both groups involved in the conflict. Leaders using this style take the middle ground (Kumar & Varaiya, 2015). Compromise style suggests that the conflicting parties maintain their differences to find a solution that is equally acceptable to both parties (Saiti, 2014).

Kumar and Varaiya (2015) believes that compromise style explores issues to some extent and move to give-and-take position where there are no clear winners and losers. In one of the recent studies (Wallensteen, 2018); using the compromising strategy when resolving conflict, each person wins some major issues and loses other. Everybody ends up with, though not everything, what they wanted. Kumar and Varaiya (2015) indicated that this style focuses on negotiation and diplomacy since it may appear to be ideal and it allows parties to work together. Using this style takes more communication and negotiation skill than it is during the avoidance or accommodation styles (Mostert, 1998; Wiebe, Zhang, & Liu, 2018). Kumar & Varaiya (2015) further contends that people using this style often will focus on what they have given up rather than on what has been gained. This style is used as a backup when collaborative is unsuccessful, as well as when opponents with equal power are committed to mutually exclusive goals (Bunker, 2018).

2.7.4 Domination style

Dominating style can be defined as the use of power and aggressive behaviour to manage conflict, and it is used in emergency situations, in implementing unpopular decision and in failure of all the methods (Ghaffer & Khan, 2012). Gaffer and Khan (2013) indicated that this style tends to prevail in the situation where there is a top-down decision or instruction from the principal, for example on the allocation of class teachers. Dominating style can be a win-lose orientation to win one's position or as forcing behaviour (Kumar & Varaiya, 2015). Whether or not the teacher is happy to take on the class, the principal has the final decision. The effect of using dominating style are often destructive (Ghaffer & Khan, 2012). The dominating style may escalate the conflict to its intensity and maximises the disruptive effects even further (Jehn, Chadwick, & Thatcher, 1997).

2.7.5 Obliging Style

Blake and Mouton (1964), in one of their earliest contributions to conflict management, suggested that the obliging style is an accommodating approach to conflict management. Obliging management style ignores self-interest by satisfying other's concerns (Ghaffar & Khan, 2012). Ghaffar and Khan concludes that the style is used when relations are more important than issues and encouragement is needed to staff. The administrators minimize differences with other parties without regard of their ideas, beliefs and feelings (Lindsey, Nuri-Robins, Terrell, & Lindsey, 2018).

2.8 PRINCIPALS' CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS

This section presents literature reviewed on the principal's conflict management skills.

2.8.1 Conflict management skills female principals possess in primary schools dominated by female teachers

Women who are in leadership positions possess a range of attributes and skills to deal with challenges they face (Smith, 2009). The leadership skills conceptual framework, as developed primarily by Mumford and colleagues (Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly, & Marks, 2000; Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, & Fleishman, 2000; Mumford, Campion, & Morgeson, 2007) posits that leadership is most influenced by skills and abilities that can be learned and developed, more so than the leader's personality or experiences (Misati, & Walumbwa 2018; Northouse, 2018). This implies that those who do not have skills can always learn new skills. female principals who may not have management skills may always learn.

A conflict management strategy is a band to all conflict that may yield the desired results. Despite the value of conflict management styles and strategies in social deviance modifications, not all strategies may attain the same results and be employed to all situations. Teachers in leadership positions should be capacitated with conflict

management skills (Kibui, Kibera, & Bradshaw, 2014). On daily basis leaders need to be skilled and confident in order to maintain peace in the workplace. This implies that in order for female principals to face and to manage conflict situation more effectively, they need to be confident and skilled so as to engage in productive and respectful conversations about conflict and the quality of teaching and learning to be effective instructional leaders (Le Fevre & Robinson, 2015).

In one of the earliest studies on conflict management, Katz (1955) posited that leadership is a set of developable skills, rather than inborn traits related to considerable skills which include the following that can be taught, learned and acquired or developed by female principals in order to deal with conflict in schools: problem solving, listening, communication, consultation, social judgement skill, team development, relational skills, negotiations and mediation. This is still the case as observed in one of the latest studies (Clapham, 2018). The changing context for leadership has been accompanied by changes in the roles of school principals. This is manifested partly through professionalising the principalship (Van der Westhuizen & Van Vuuren, 2007) and partly by an emphasis on developing a shared vision (Ngcobo & Tikly 2010). The principal's role also includes ensuring the best possible resource achievement, allocation and evaluation, and the security of the site and property. Xaba (2012) adds that such processes are required to ensure that teaching and learning are of high quality, whatever the context.

Existing studies (Boulton & Coldron, 1998; Coleman, 2003; Hoff & Mitchell, 2008; Stufft & Coyne, 2009) show that women principals are less likely than men to have formal or informal networks, support and mentors. As they lack information and knowledge about positions and have few structural opportunities to gain the necessary skills and visibility, their career advancement is likely to be affected. Conflict management requires various skills that could be used by managers when they resolve conflicts, and these include problem solving skills, listening, and consultation and communication skills. These are briefly discussed below:

2.8.1.1 Problem solving skills

Problem solving is one of the skills that leaders should have to make their organization stable. Problem solving skills include the ability to define a problem, gather information about it, formulate new understandings about it, and generate a possible solution (Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly, & Marks, 2000). The female principal should use social problem solving skills and listens to other's opinions in order to resolve issues in a matter that benefits them and is acceptable to others (Shey & Bruno, 2014). Mumford and colleagues emphasize that leaders with the properly problem solving developed skills cannot only identify and solve problems but also set short and long term goals, both for themselves and for their organizations (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding et al., 2000). Problem solving strengthens relations and develops confidence in in an organisation (Henkin et al., 2000; Tjosvold & Hui, 2001; Tjosvold & Fang, 2004). Therefore, female principals can resolve conflicts by involving conflicting parties in order to strengthen their relationship.

2.8.1.2 Listening skills

Listening is a skill that can be used when resolving conflicts because it holds the promise of restoring trust and of learning how to prevent or resolve similar situations. Bryk and Schneider (2002) indicate that listening means attending to what is said, taking others' views into account in some way, and thus providing opportunities to exercise influence. These studies suggest that listening is critical when resolving conflicts (Henkin & Holliman, 2009). The listening stage should initiate after confrontation (Wellington, 2011) where one is able to listen to another person's point of view. Where both persons in a conflict are skilled in active listening, the chances of successful conflict management through negotiation are likely.

Listening means attending to what is said, considering views into account in some way, and thus providing opportunities to exercise influence (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). It is

these sense-making processes that hold the key to a deeper understanding of the complaint and its emotional content. In order for the female principal to deal with conflict efficiently, she needs to possess the skill of listening (Henkin & Holliman, 2009). Active listening is attending carefully to all aspects of what a student or a teacher says and attempting to understand or empathize as much as one can. Active listening consists of continually asking questions in order to test your understanding. It also requires giving encouragement to the teacher by letting them tell their story, and paraphrasing what the teachers says so you can form an unbiased conclusion

2.8.1.3 Consultation skills

Consultation is one of the skills female principals can make use of in dealing with conflicts in a school. Consultation helps reveal where true goal incompatibility exists and where it does not (Shey & Bruno, 2014). Shey and Bruno (2014) further indicate that consultation exposes the inability of two people to live together harmoniously and it assists the principal in determining solutions to the problem thereafter. Consultation is also a promising strategy for conflict prevention and it might simply involve creating a more consultative decision process. Shey and Bruno (2014) believe that increasing consultation among potential conflict groups need not involve major distribution of power, though it could lead there over time. Preventing conflict through consultation requires effective communication (Shey & Bruno (2014).

2.8.1.4 Balanced sociation

Balanced sociation is a conscious effort by a school principal to make both conflicting parties and conflict prominent in formal education (Shey & Bruno, 2014). The assumption is that a continuing tension between the two is important for stable and productive social relations (Shey & Bruno, 2014). From balanced sociation the following skill could develop in the female principal skills at opposing constructively and the skill of cooperation conflict management. Mediators and arbitrators as conflict management

professionals would learn how to balance sociation and use conflict in their work (Shey & Bruno, 2014).

2.8.1.5 Effective Communication skill

Conflict result mainly from lack of communication followed by personal, political-ideological and organizational factors (Androulakis & Stamatis, 2009; Shey & Bruno, 2014; Göksoy, 2016). Effective communication helps in the prevention of conflicts (Shey & Bruno, 2014). Thus communication skills could transcend the boundaries of any differences in a school and result in successful school leadership (Saiti, 2014). Bartos and Wehr (2002) indicate that communicators send and receive messages, there is enormous opportunity for slippage in the sequence of what is meant, said, heard, or understood. Conflicts can emerge as a result of the absence of effective communications.

The poor communication skills have a negative impact on the working environment (Tourish & Robson, 2003; Tourish & Hargie, 2004; Saiti, 2014). When conflict emerges in the school, female principals as managers are expected to constructively and creatively attend to it before it blows up to be an unhealthy conflict. Unmanaged conflict has a negative impact on the school environment, they can create a dysfunctional school (Snodgrass & Blunt, 2009).

Based on the social roles, women are typically described to have good communication skills, nurturing, assertive, and independent, they follow the type of leadership that focuses on the satisfaction, motivation, and are concerned about the general well-being of the team members (Shey & Bruno, 2014).

2.8.1.6 Reframing the Conflict

The framing process is the necessary process through which cooperation can be achieved in schools for example the process of negotiation (Bartos & Wehr, 2002).

Negotiation: Negotiation occurs when conflicting parties agree to meet face-to-face to discover common interests and to identify ways to reach a solution (Fisher & Ury, 1981). Its goal is to identify the true interests of negotiators, and to build an agreement that meets those interests (Fisher & Ury, 1981). Trust is a key value for enabling a school leader to innovate without the fear of destructive conflict (Adler & Borys, 1996; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Trust is able to eliminate various emotional and communication obstacles. Trust can be further strengthened when a negotiator's verbal and nonverbal communications coincide (Adler & Borys, 1996; Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Organizational trust within the school environment contributes to educators' motivation and willingness to participate in school activities (Adler & Borys, 1996).

2.8.1.7 Team development

Many managers develop a team, they believe that it is much easier to attain the schools vision and goals when teachers work as teams (Msila, 2011a) established that the effective school principals would set an atmosphere where conflict is managed to the benefit of an organisation where principals have been found to cause some stress to those they work with (Tahir et al., 2018). The principal has to create an atmosphere that is conducive particularly in primary schools for quality teaching and learning.

2.8.1.8 Relational skills

Relational skills are required to build the trust needed to improve teaching and learning, whether that work involves engaging parents in new ways, integrating new instructional roles and responsibilities, challenging teacher culture, or addressing particular problems in teacher performance (Le Fevre, & Robinson, 2015). The challenge for leaders is how to address the conflict in ways that minimize the relational harm in doing so (Bridges, 1992). Increased emotional intelligence in a school leader leads to a higher level of relationship management skills (Engle & Nehrt, 2011).

Effective conflict management ensures the smooth functioning of the organization, including the school. If conflict is managed appropriately and efficiently, it will add important value to an organization as it acts as a catalyst for change. Therefore, female principals should possess different conflict management skills in order to deal with conflict in schools without it yielding to negative results.

2.8.1.9. Negotiations and mediation

Negotiation is a type of conflict management characterised by an exchange of proposals in an attempt to reach a satisfactory settlement (Putnam, 2001). Negotiating is defined as methodically deliberating selections and deciding on one if it is possible. Negotiations present a form of conflict management that is more consciously controlled (Anderson, 2003). Even though negotiation demands time and energy, it often demands less time or effort than persisting to cope with the problem (Putnam, 2001) Negotiations present a form of conflict management skill that is more consciously controlled. The overall process of negotiation is marked by greater ambiguity because of the stakeholders' lack of control over the outcome (Anderson 2003). However, Deutsch (1991) indicates that cultural factors affect negotiations and may have a negative impact on conflict resolution.

2.9. TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF FEMALE PRINCIPALS' SKILLS OF MANAGING CONFLICTS

Some teacher's perceptions of female principals' skills of managing conflict were identified during analysis. These are discussed in the sections that follow:

2.9.1 Leadership qualities in women in the leadership roles

Women have been perceived as more effective leaders than men (McIntosh, Rona, McQuaid & Munro, 2015). In some schools where principals are women, they take the

initiatives to teach and serve in different committees. The women principals tend to upgrade their qualification as compared to men. Gender stereotypes are also reproduced within the workplace (McIntosh, McQuaid & Munro, 2015). Women may be more effective at demonstrating benevolent behaviours as leaders, while men may be more effective at demonstrating authoritarian behaviours (Chen, Eberly, Chiang, Farh, & Cheng, 2014).

Women are often stereotyped as being more apologetic and women with such qualities often do well in conflict management (Groysberg, 2013). According to Groysberg, being apologetic can be interpreted as owning up to what they have done which is the greatest sign of showing accountability and responsibility which is lacking in most people in leadership positions. Women are perceived as emotional when performing a male role where they remain feminine (Eagly, Eagly, & Carli, 2007). Women principals are perceived mostly by female teachers to be too emotional and to be lacking assertiveness when managing conflicts in schools. In immediate responses women react by feelings. When a person is just starting to feel an emotion, or when their emotion response to the situation, another person or an environment (Hoffman, Kessler, Eppel, Rukavina, & Traue, 2010).

A collaborative leader invests time to build a relationship, handle conflicts, in a constructive manner, and share control. Some studies show that women use collaborative style of managing conflicts (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt & van Engen, 2003; Shey & Bruno, 2014) which is regarded as democratic than their male counterparts (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). In collaborative and empowering leadership style, women are required to produce effective and efficient results across organizational boundaries. Female leaders are team players and seem to believe in engagement of other team players and not being autocratic. Women consult before making a decision to gain a sense of community (Groysberg, 2013).

2.9.2 Barriers to female leadership

Women's limited access to school leadership in South Africa has been an important concern in the field of educational management and leadership (Chan, Ngai & Choi, 2016). There are internal and external barriers that hinder women towards doing well as leaders on issues related to conflict management (Chan, Ngai & Choi, 2016). Chan et al. (2016) further identified barriers which impede the career development of female leaders in educational leadership which include gender discrimination, gender stereotype, double bind, low confidence and self-esteem, too many tasks at home, lack of aspiration, gender cultural and social values, low women's participation in leadership positions, and the gendered division of labour. These are discussed in the sub-sections that follow.

(a) Gender discrimination

Women experienced different problems when assuming leadership roles in education sectors because there has been this belief that they are not fit enough for such positions since these positions require people who are physical strong (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Prior to 1994, gender discrimination was evident in the South African education sector. The teaching profession became problematic with regard to gender equality (Naidoo & Perumal, 2014). One would therefore assume that the way women are perceived would be transferred to the way in which they manage conflicts is perceived. Brown and Ralph (1996) state that males in administrative positions do not want to share their responsibilities with women. Despite having a South African Constitution that entrenches equal rights, discriminatory practices, structural inequalities, cultural factors, prejudices and traditional patriarchal society are still alive and well in South Africa (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2010).

(b) Gender stereotypes

Gender stereotypes, which are factors regarded as mostly obstructive for women's advancement to leadership positions (Heilman, 2012), are generalizations about the

attributes of men and women that are shared in a society (Heilman, 2012). Heilman indicates further that gender stereotypes, notably those associated with motherhood and perceptions in relation to employment, negatively impact on the personalities of women which have effect on their conflict management skills. Some stereotypes of women, lead to negative performance expectations and to women's performance being devalued (Murakami, & Törnsten, 2017). People's stereotypes which associate leadership with masculinity are disappearing (Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, & Woehr, 2014). They no longer have an effect on women's leadership skills.

(c) Lack of confidence and self esteem

Women are regarded as having poor self-image than to men in management positions (Mathipa & Tsoka 2006). Those female principals whose self-esteem is low may find it difficult to manage conflict in the schools where female staff dominate the staff component. Women were said to lack confidence, self-esteem, role models, aspiration and career planning (Hoyle, 1969). This has led to fewer women advancing to higher leadership positions. Women's low confidence and self-esteem regarding their leadership capabilities has led to few women advancing to leadership positions.

(d) Too many tasks at home

In traditional societies, the role that women play has influenced women in our century. Traditionally, the role of women in the home and the ability to combine work and family duties has been the most important barrier to women's advancement (Brown & Ralph, 1996; Thein, Austen, Currie, & Lewin, 2010). These barriers may have a negative impact on women's cognitive skills, which may affect their conflict management skills.

(e) Lack of aspiration

Lack of aspiration, affects the way women's role in society is perceived and their abilities to perform in school management position (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2010). This means

that women leaders face a compromise between being liked and perceived competence, therefore they may be perceived as not being competent to manage conflict. This however, is an assumption that may be interpreted as women lacking conflict management skill.

(f) Low women's participation in leadership positions

Several obstacles have been identified that affect women negatively in management positions. Literature shows that these include the choices they make as well as the existence of gender bias in leadership opportunities (Mathevula, 2014). However, Kiamba (2008) and Chabaya, Rembe and Wadesango (2009) think that women themselves are often unwilling to compete for top management positions. This may translate into how they lead once they are promoted to such positions. Another study conducted by Omukaga, Panyako and Wanjiku (2007) on the readiness and willingness of female educators in rural areas of the West Province of Kenya to assume leadership positions in schools revealed that female teachers in primary schools were unwilling to assume leadership responsibilities. However, it is not clear why they are unwilling, which could be attributed to the manner in which they may lead the schools once promoted.

(g) The gendered division of labour

The gendered division of labour was identified as a barrier to women's leadership identity (Bagilhole & White, 2011). Leadership was hierarchicalised with women allowed entry into less prestigious which did not give them chance to explore their leadership skills. This can be the result of possible cognitive errors and bias in assessing merit and leadership suitability (Bardoel, Drago, Cooper, & Colbeck, 2011), and it can also be because women are not strategically positioned on pathways to leadership. There is a significant relationship between the gender stereotype of a woman manager and her career aspiration (Okafor, Fagbemi & Hassan's (2011). Women managers possess the attributes for top management though individual factors (gender-imposed) and

organizational factors within their context of operation affect their conflict management skills.

Chinese women teachers and leaders usually identify traditional Chinese culture patriarchy as a determining and persistent barrier to their career progress (Zhang, 2010). Women teachers' promotion chances are fewer as some schools preferred promoting males for their perceived ability to discipline students and their better job. This could also suggest that even their management skills are regarded as inferior as compared to those of males, thereby disqualifying women from leadership positions (Van den Brink, Benschop, & Jansen, 2010).

2.10. EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS REGARDING FEMALE PRINCIPALS' SKILLS OF MANAGING CONFLICTS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS DOMINATED BY FEMALE TEACHERS.

The experiences of teachers regarding female principals' skills of managing conflicts in primary schools dominated by female teachers identified during analysis of data are presented and discussed in the sub-sections that follow:

2.10.1 School conflicts and female principals

The constitution of the republic of SA (South Africa) states that human dignity and equality cannot be attained in an atmosphere and contexts where conflict is endemic (Msila, 2011b). Women principals are therefore expected to be able to creatively address conflicts in their schools. The leader is influenced by their philosophy on how they react to conflicts influencing them to perceive it differently (Corvette, 2007). For the effective management of conflict and for conflict to yield better result the female school principals have to consider the manner in which they perceive conflict as an element of change.

2.10.2. Women's skills of managing conflict as it is perceived by female teachers

Female teachers perceive females in leadership positions as being highly competent (Rudman, 1998). However, a study by Nichols (2014) found that male principals were rated as more effective leaders overall when compared to their female principal counterparts. Nichols concludes that males continue to dominate leadership roles that include the school principalship. Although women consider that they possess commitment and flexibility in employment, they criticise other women. A study by Paustian-Underdahl, Walker and Woehr (2014) established that there are gender differences regarding conflict management skills between male and female leaders. Men and women are not perceived differently in leadership effectiveness though some ratings regard women as significantly more effective than men.

2.11. FACTORS AFFECTING SUPPORT TO WOMEN IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

Women's place is said to be in the kitchen and also to take care of the family, they have been isolated from both private and public sectors not to mention occupying leadership positions. In some cultural beliefs, family responsibilities remained the preoccupation of women (Naidoo & Perumal, 2014; Mathevula, 2014). In schools, women principals lack support from the staff they are leading and they also receive criticism from their colleagues especially from the female colleagues.

Lack of mentorship and formal preparation in the form of professional development programs appear to have been major constraints for female leaders as they attained leadership positions (Mazibuko, 2006, Mathipa & Tsoka 2006; Zulu, 2009). There are no support programmes that the government has designed to support and mentor newly promoted principals. Eagly and Karau (2002) suggest that women are likely to encounter more disapproval than men due to perceived gender role violation when they are in leadership positions.

2.12 CONCLUSION

No one can manage conflicts in the same way. Conflict management styles vary according to situations. Effective conflict management ensures the smooth functioning of the organization, including the school. If conflict is managed appropriately and efficiently it may add value to an organization as it acts as a catalyst for change. Therefore, female principals should possess different conflict management skills in order to deal with conflict in schools without it yielding to negative results.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the theoretical framework and literature around the female principal's skills of managing conflict in the primary schools dominated by female teachers were explored. This chapter discusses the research design and methodology followed in this study when data was collected. This chapter elucidates on the different stages followed when conducting this study. The chapter presents full details of how data was collected, transcribed and analysed using a computer loaded with Atlas.ti programme for qualitative data collection.

3.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to explore female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers in the Gingindlovu circuit. The study was guided by the following research objectives:

- To explore the experiences of primary school teachers regarding female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers;
- To investigate conflict management skills female principals possess in primary schools dominated by female teachers.
- To explore the extent to which female principals get support from teachers in managing conflict.
- To establish teachers' perceptions regarding female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers.

3.3 NATURE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on exploring the female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers. The secondary objective of this study was to investigate the conflict management skills that primary schools' female principals have while managing their schools. These are schools situated in the area, which is mostly rural. The principals of these schools are mostly females and female teachers dominate the staff components as indicated in Chapter 1. Reports from some schools in the area suggested that female principals were experiencing challenges in resolving conflict in their schools. There were reports of never-ending conflict in schools, which negatively affected the quality of teaching and learning. Learner performance was reported to have dropped in schools led by female principals as compared to those where principals are males. This resulted in some suggestions that female principals do not have the necessary skills of managing conflict.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design refers to the overall strategy that you choose to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby ensuring you will effectively address the research problem. It is essential that as a researcher you identify the research design that will address your research problem. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data (Creswell, 2014c). Research designs are types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design. Others call them strategies of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The design of this study followed a constructivist paradigm using a qualitative methodology and a phenomenological approach. A qualitative approach was used when data was collected. A qualitative approach is a concept that includes several research designs (e.g., case study, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, and phenomenology) characterized by specific design assumptions, sampling procedures,

data collection, and data analysis protocols (Nolen & Talbert, 2011; Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Examples of qualitative data included interview transcripts and field observations notes (Collingridge & Gantt, 2008). The primary aim of qualitative research was to gain a better understanding of the conflict management skills that primary schools' female principals have while managing their schools where female teachers, dominate the staff component. I chose the qualitative approach for this study because collecting data on participants' experiences would enable us to get lived experiences of participants as described by Neuman (2003): to gain an understanding of social life and to discover how people construct meaning in natural settings. The value of this approach to empirical research is that it provided a richer, deeper understanding of the experiences that teachers place on actions, events, and relationships.

3.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology involve forms of data collection procedures, analysis, and the interpretation that the researchers propose for their studies (Creswell, 2014c). This study collected data through semi-structured face-to-face interviews. The advantage of using semi-structured interview was that it allowed me to be prepared and to appear competent during the interview as described by Van Teijlingen (2014). According to Van Teijlingen (2014) semi-structured interview provide reliable and comparable qualitative data. Interviewees tell what they think without having to choose from options given. The discussion of the methodology followed when conducting this study is presented in the sections that follow. This includes the descriptions of the population, sampling procedure, data collection and analysis procedures and ethical issues.

3.5.1 Population of this study

Population of the study is a group of people that a researcher is interested in researching and analysing (Vonk, 2017). The population of this study consisted of teachers and principals from schools in the Gingindlovu circuit. Gingindlovu circuit consists of twenty-five primary schools. Female principals lead twelve of these schools.

The majority of staff members in these schools are females as shown in Chapter 1. The schools are situated in a rural area where the population is predominantly isiZulu speaking people.

3.5.2 Sampling procedure

Purposive sampling procedure, as postulated by McMillan and Schumacher (2014) was used to select participants for this study. MacMillan and Schumacher (2014) explain that in purposeful sampling, the researcher selects particular elements from the population that are informative about the topic of interest. I identified participants who are knowledgeable about the phenomenon I was investigating.

The study focused on the leadership skills of female principals in primary schools dominated by female teachers. More specifically, the study aimed at exploring conflict management skills female principals possess while managing their schools where the majority of staff members are females.

The participants were sampled purposively from public primary schools in the Gingindlovu circuit in schools led by female principals. Ten participants were sampled who were thought to have represented all the profile levels of teachers in those schools. The sampled participants consisted of four female principals, four male teachers and two female teachers. Female principals were sampled because it was believed they would shed light about their experiences of working in schools where female teachers are dominating and how, as female principals in such schools, manage conflict. Male teachers were selected for their experience of working with female principals. They would indicate how principals working in those schools dominated by female teachers manage conflict. They have knowledge of the context of the area where culture seemed to still influence the life style of the people in the area. I sampled female teachers to understand their experiences of working with female principals where the majority of teachers are females. The majority (70%) of participants were selected from rural schools while 30% were selected from urban area of Gingindlovu. Gingindlovu is mostly

rural, and I therefore wanted to gain an understanding of female principals' conflict management skills from a primary school in a rural context where female teachers are dominating.

3.5.3 Interview schedule

I used face-to-face interviews as means of collecting data from the participants. Interviews are good data collection tools for finding out what a person thinks and knows (Bertram & Christiansen, 2016). Semi-structured questions in the interview schedule for teachers (Annexure 1) and for principals (Annexure 2) guided the interview in addressing the research questions and the objectives of the study.

An interview schedule is a questionnaire written to guide interviews and provides the researcher with a set of pre-determined questions that might be used as an appropriate instrument to engage the participant and designate the narrative terrain (De Vos et al., 2005). It is a traditional type of unstructured interview, open-ended, in-depth interview used to understand the complex behaviour of people; this is done without imposing any prior categorisation that might limit the field of inquiry (Punch, 2005).

In this study, I designed an interview schedule with twenty-two (22) pre-determined questions to engage the participants and designate the narrative terrain as noted by Holstein and Gubrium (1995). The questions were based on four objectives of the study. The unstructured interview schedule was used to establish teachers' and principals' perceptions on the female principal's skills of managing conflict in a school where the majority of staff members are females. The unstructured interview schedule enabled me to probe when responses lacked sufficient detail, depth or clarity.

The interview schedules were pre-tested with two (2) participants from two primary schools in the Gingindlovu circuit. The participants from these two schools were not part of the sampled participants. The reason for conducting this pre-test was to detect issues that could affect the collection of credible data before the interviews for this study. One

of the teachers in the pre-test indicated that the questions were complicated and too long. These sentences were corrected and simplified. The participant further indicated that some of the questions were suitable for principals, as those teachers in Post level one may not have capacity to answer them. Those questions were removed from the initial 22 questions in the interview schedule of teachers and included in that of the principals. The interview schedule for PL1 educators consisted of nine (9) guiding questions while that of the principals consisted of 15 guiding questions.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Permission was requested from all the gatekeepers: The University Ethical Clearance Committee (Annexure 3); The Department of Basic Education (DBE) (ANNEXURE 4), the district manager, the circuit manager; the principal and the participants to conduct the study.

All ethical considerations of the University of Zululand were strictly adhered to in this study. I obtained the ethical clearance certificate from the University's Ethics Committee. This allowed me to go collect data. Participants were informed, before giving their consent, that their rights, dignity and confidentiality would be respected during the course of the study. They were informed that the data collected would be treated strictly confidential. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and they may quit should they wish to do so. Participants were also given latitude not to answer certain questions that they would feel uncomfortable with.

During the interview I started by introducing myself informing the participants that the intention of my visit was to collect data for my study, and assuring them that the data collected would be confidential and that the data was only for my study purposes. I assured the participants that they participate in their own free will and that they may withdraw at any time when they feel uncomfortable. All participants had to respond to a set of fifteen questions that were prepared as a guide; probing was done while interviewing each participant.

Transparency was of great importance in collecting data. I also asked for permission to record our conversation for the reason that I may not be able to write down everything we say in the interview. The appointment with the interviewees was set. I thereafter visited each participant at his or her convenient place and time. Some of the interviews were conducted in the schools where the participants teach. Others were free to be interviewed from their homes.

In qualitative research, it is common to record interviews with a tape or digital recorder and transcribe these into a written document (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). A data recorder and an interview schedule were used during interviews after permission was granted by each participant. Field notes were taken during the interview sessions. I personally conducted the interviews. Each interview lasted for about 45 minutes. All the interviews were conducted in English even though participants were free to speak in isiZulu. All participants were comfortable. The copy of the sessions would be made available to the participants on request.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The key to doing a good analysis is to stay close to the data, to interpret it from a position of empathic understanding. Data was transcribed verbatim at the end of each interview session (Blanche, Painter & Durrheim, 2006). The interviews were transcribed verbatim, typed into word and then imported into Atlas.ti 8, a qualitative data analysis software tool. These were coded during thematic analysis using *in vivo* coding of the Atlas.ti. Codes emerged during several readings of the responses, and labels were assigned based upon the text and revised accordingly as new data were analysed. Codes were then grouped into categories and concept links were drawn to identify relationships across all categories and sub-categories; assisted to identify themes. Phrases were assigned codes that best captured the meaning of the participants' expressions. The rigour of the analysis process was ensured through ongoing discussion with the supervisor, who agreed upon categories and emergent themes.

3.8 VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

The following measures to ensure validity, reliability and trustworthiness are discussed as follows:

3.8.1. Validity

Validity is critical to research as it concerns itself with whether the correct procedures have been applied to find answers to a research questions (Kumar, 2019). In this study, validity was addressed through being honest during interview, the depth of questions, and scope of the interview during data collection.

3.8.2. Reliability

The concept reliability refers to the accuracy and consistency of information obtained in a study. It is directly related to the validity of the measure. The concept is most often associated with the methods used to measure variables (Polit & Beck, 2012). According to Babbie (2014), reliability is concerned with the consistency of a measurement method. To ensure the reliability of the data collection tool and to enhance the accuracy of measurement, standardised and structured data collection, using the same questions in the interview schedule with some variations during probing was used when collecting data from teachers and principals who took part in the interview. The interview schedule was pre-tested with two participants who did not participate in the main study.

3.8.3. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is established when the findings, as thoroughly as possible reflect the significances as described by the participants (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006).

Trustworthiness is not something that just naturally occurs, but instead is the result of 'rigorous scholarship' that includes the use of definite procedures (Lietz et al., 2006). It is critical that data collected must be trustworthy. In this study, trustworthiness and credibility of the interview data was increased through implementing member-checking and peer review.

Trustworthiness was maintained by using Lincoln and Guba's (1988) four criteria model that includes credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The four criteria were ensured as follows: for credibility, there was prolonged engagement and persistent observation of the participants. Transferability (the findings were not transferred to other settings but a dense description of the results was done so that it would be possible for another person to make a comparison if there was a need. A nominated sample was fully described to allow adequate comparison with other samples. For dependability, experts were used to validate the methodology, step-wise replication of research methodology and code recode procedure of the data analysis was done. For conformability, tape recordings and notes were kept safely to enable conduction of an adequate trail and to determine if the conclusions, interpretations and recommendations can be traced to their sources.

3.9. CONCLUSION

Chapter 2 gave the review of literature on the challenges women principals are facing in their leadership roles in schools as well as their conflict management styles. The research design and methodology of this study was presented and discussed. Chapter 4 presents the results and discussion of this study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 presented the research design and methodology of this study. This chapter presents and discusses the results of the empirical investigation conducted to establish conflict management skills female principals possess in primary schools dominated by female teachers. First, the demographic profile is presented and discussed, thereafter, the main trends and patterns in the data. The data is then analysed in the context of the research operation and literature review.

The data analysis afforded me an opportunity to identify underlying themes and sub-themes in order to respond to the main question of this research which was to establish conflict management skills female principals possess in primary schools dominated by female teachers. The themes will be discussed following a set of protocol. Firstly, I will provide the meaning of the theme identified.:

- What are the experiences of primary school teachers regarding female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers?
- Which conflict management skills do female principals possess in primary schools dominated by female teachers?
- To what extent do teachers support female principals in managing conflict?
- What are teachers' perceptions regarding female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers?

4.2. DEMOGRAPHIC RESULTS

The demographic characteristics of the participants who were interviewed regarding the conflict management skills female principals possess in primary schools dominated by female teachers are addressed in this section. The variables, which includes gender, age and academic qualifications are presented and discussed. Each variable is discussed separately, with the aim of giving a clear explanation of the profiles of the participants.

4.2.1 Gender

Table 4.1: Gender distribution of the participants.

Gender	Frequency (N)	Percentage
Female	6	60
Male	4	40
Total	10	100

There were 60% females who took part in the interview. It was hoped that the high proportion of females who participated in the study would give the feminist perception regarding skills female principals possess. Women's effectiveness as leaders (Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, & Woehr, 2014) may be under-evaluated; when only self-ratings are examined, men rate themselves as significantly more effective as women rate themselves.

4.2.2 . The age of participants

Table 4.2 shows age distribution of the participants who were interviewed.

Age categories	Females	Males	Percentage
21- 30 years	1	-	10
31-40 years	-	2	20
41-50 years	3	2	50
51 years and older	2	-	20
Total	6	4	100

Results reflect that half the participants (50%) fell within the 41 to 50 years while 20% of participants were in the 31 to 40 years' category. Another 20% comprised of the eldest teachers who took part in the interview. The results suggest that the majority of those who took part in the study had substantial experience in teaching which may influence their perceptions to the teaching environment that is conducive to promotion of teaching and learning.

When experienced teachers experience significant stress in their profession, it is interesting to see how newcomers in the profession manage conflict when faced with problems in the schools they are leading. A study by Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2007) indicates that there is a relationship between age and experience of conflict, which may create stress in teaching, particularly at management level.

4.2.3 Academic qualifications

Table 4.3 presents distribution of academic qualifications of teachers who took part in the interview. As reflected in Table 4.3, half of the participants (50%) held qualifications at honours degree, while 25% had first degree and the other 25% a master's degree. The qualification the teachers have may have an effect on the conflict management and influence the school ethos.

Table 4.3 Academic qualifications

Academic qualifications	Frequency	Percent
First degree	1	25%
B.Ed. or Honours Degree	2	50%
Master's Degree	1	25%
Doctoral Degree	-	-
Total	4	100%

4.2.4. Highest professional qualifications

The study shows that the majority of teachers who are participants possess the minimum qualification, which is the Primary Teachers' Diploma. These results indicate that the majority of teachers were qualified to teach in the primary schools.

4.2.5. Teaching experience

All the participants had 16 years and more of teaching experience. This suggests that they had considerable experience regarding principals' conflict management skills as they may have worked with them for a number of years.

4.3. EXPERIENCES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS REGARDING FEMALE PRINCIPALS' SKILLS OF MANAGING CONFLICT

I wanted to establish the experiences of teachers regarding female principals' skills of managing conflicts in a school dominated by female teachers. Teachers' experiences were quite varied. Several sub-themes were identified under this main theme. These are discussed in the sections that follow:

4.3.1 Conflict management skills development

When there is conflict in the institution, it is an opportunity for the female principal and her staff, though dominated by female teachers, to develop on conflict management skills. They both learn how to resolve conflict. For these teachers, it is more of team building than just conflict management in the school. Participants suggest that female principals are keen on team building that merely resolving conflict in these schools where there are fewer male teachers. Shey and Bruno (2014) indicate that a conflict is not always negative; it can be an instrument of change in the institution where both

parties can use it as an opportunity for development when constructively managed. The following remarks from some of the participants interviewed confirms this:

P 8: “they are females...so they need that...those ...those skills...to learn various strategies because they are females, but, if you are a person you need more space for learning more things in the position you are...you ...are leading.”

P 3: “it still like it still like an area of development for them as well to say learn the skill to resolve conflict. There is that kind of opportunity for them as well to learn and grow in it, versus just to say they are able...and they are good at versus females.”

P 7: “...those who are in management, in each and every day they are growing, ehh...ehhh..as soon as they ehhh...they involve other in their management not to lead alone, that’s what made them strong in management.”

P 6: “Team building is what I have seen in our female principal. Team building is what they have ...they have enhanced. Teachers are...are educated and re-enforced...and shown how team building...like team building excursion held in our school. It went pretty well because we were taught of team building but we were also taught about knowing each other personally where we...where we know where we come from, and our personal backgrounds. There was that bond that was created, so for me strategizing all these different things made a huge difference in the harmony of the school, and made a huge difference in...in the conflict situations, I think it... levels of conflict are brought down.”

Female principals regard respect for each other while in conflict as key to conflict resolution. Participants tend to think that male principals are respected more as compared to female principals who are in schools where there are more female teachers than males. However, female principals also deserve to be respected. One of the participants remarked in the following manner:

P 7: "...my opinion is that eh-h-h...the women...eh-h-h...eh-h-h...principals or the women leadership, they need to be given more time, and...ee...I think they need to be respected as males, because they are human beings."

4.3.2. Using avoidance strategies to manage conflicts

One of the teachers strongly felt that one of the skills female principals have is the use of avoidance in case a situation arises that needs to be resolved. This male teacher thinks that when female principals seem to avoid conflict, they are actually giving themselves time to think about the conflict so that they are able to resolve it in a better way. The participant acknowledges that it may not be a better way of resolving conflict. This is expressed in this way:

P 8: "...female principals can use the avoidance method because it can help...her to have a thought about the conflict. Two, that can help the two sides can get a time to be calm, because, maybe...next time there will be no need even to go on with them to resolve that conflict because all the sides are calm now...before you resolve conflict, you have got to decide whether it is a personal or organisational matter. If it is an organisational matter, eh-h-h then avoidance-based procedure will not, may not be the...the...proper resolution for this conflict."

P11: "But if it is something personal, sometimes avoidance-based procedure is the best. It contributes towards team-building, eh-h-h...literally, it resolves itself, (OK...OK) that kind of thing...and...I think it draws attention away from the conflict. When you try to resolve it, you are drawing attention to the conflict. Then you create bitterness amongst the...and they carry a vendetta towards each other. So sometimes, it is better just to leave it alone, and... let fate take its course."

P11: "we get teachers who would rather avoid the conflict and then it becomes bottled up inside. Moreover, it can...it can actually destroy relationships. In

addition, cause people to become, to alienate themselves. You get other people get it out of the chest. Rather talk about it. Indicate the other...trash it out so to speak, and...in that way resolve...so...so...it takes...it takes all kinds of people to build a team.”

P11: “those use avoidance-based skills would...would enhance team-building, and sometimes speaking it out...so I think depends on the type of conflict that you...are...attempting to resolve, whether is one that requires you to avoid the issue or the one that requires you to communicate and to trash it out.”

Some participants think that one of the reasons why female principals are unable to resolve conflict is that they lack confidence. This could be the reason why they end up avoiding or get assistance even from teacher unions. The following remarks by some of the participants confirms this:

P 3: “I’ll say they don’t really have therefore the skills, you know...to resolve conflict. Jaaa... I think it is mainly because it’s a lack of confidence in their ability to resolve conflict ... you know...I believe ...it’s just more the reason why they will get to the point where they are ok to avoid it.”

P 9: “...the schools which are also headed by the males there are some conflict. Sometimes they fail to resolve them; they find assistance of the unions...”

Literature indicates that in using avoidance style in conflict management, the manager ignores the situation when it occurs and believes that they will resolve them at a later stage (Deutsch, 2007). The manager deals with a situation at a later stage. However, avoidance as a conflict management style promotes the postponement of a situation and avoids any discussion of the problem with the parties involved (Momanyi, & Juma, 2016). Blake and Mouton (1964) concur with Deutsch (2007) that the avoiding style is used when the situation can be ignored and is assumed that conflict may be resolved without personal involvement.

4.3.3 Stereotypes about females as conflict managers

Participants indicate that members of the society perceive men to be the only leaders. In the context of this study, people still believe strongly on these gender stereotypes. These results are in agreement with literature stating that social and cultural expectations or gender stereotypes, contribute to the notion that there are male-specific careers and female-specific careers (Henry, 2018).

P 6: “Men were ... male were, because of gender equalities, and this pedestal that they...that they are in power they know what is best it is a joint effort it needs more than one person to...to...to...to...work on conflict situations...to...to...to think on to...to think on innovative ideas, to think of resolutions.”

P 8: “principals...men are...are more than females, why? It’s just that people they still have in mind that you are a leader because you are a man. But...on my side, my opinion, women can be a good leader, good principals of schools.”

P 9: “...circuits managers in early 90s ...2000 they will simply appoint a male figure to the principalship position....(Yes)...Jaaa...they thought it was a thought that males can do better than females.”

Some participants think that males still resist change because of some existing stereotypes that females cannot manage conflict when in leadership positions. Even on issues of professionalism, they still believe that female principals cannot lead them. This is evident in the following remark by one of the participants in this study:

P10: “we as men ...we think...in our own tradition that a female should is...her duty is there at the kitchen now the very same if now a female principal she is going to lead us and tell us and instruct us, tell us about professionalism...it...we think ...I don’t know how to but, but we have that resisting within our mind.”

However, some still believe that male principals are the only ones who can maintain professionalism in the schools because of their ability to manage the schools where female teachers dominate the staff.

P10: “female principals don’t have professionalism...they do have professionalism, but ...we as people...within our school tend to respect that school if we have a male principal, because he will want the school to be in order.”

Some female teachers indicate that gender stereotypes are no longer existing, males and females are given equal opportunities to succeed in leadership. Females may no longer blame the system if they are unable to manage conflict. The following remark attest to this:

P11: “...the playing fields have been levelled now. It is no longer in the past where we were not given the opportunity. Now the playing fields are levelled. And we are...the women are given the opportunities.”

Female teachers think that gender stereotypes are no longer existing, males and females are given equal opportunities to succeed in leadership. Females may no longer blame the system if they are unable to manage conflicts.

4.4. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS OF FEMALE PRINCIPALS’ IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS DOMINATED BY FEMALE TEACHERS

The themes that emerged will be discussed in detail and will be reinforced with examples from the interview transcripts quoted verbatim. The theme will be given meaning and significance using literature control to clarify, support and extend theories obtained in an inquiry.

The participants were asked to share what they think of about the ability of female principals in resolving conflict in schools where female teachers dominate the staff. The results are presented in this section.

4.4.1. Ability of female principals to manage conflicts

Participants indicated that female principals who are able to manage their schools have good conflict management skills. One participant felt that female principals enhance the skills they have by developing themselves academically. Consistent with Belle (2018) the principal may undergo training in effective school discipline to enable themselves to create a safe and saner teaching and learning environment for learners. As Nasreen and Odiambo (2018) put it, school principals must prioritize their own professional development as a highly important element in providing them with the insights necessary to perform their complex roles.

Teachers are delegated so that the school functions normally even when the principal is not present. Female principals were found to be good organisers who have the ability to plan, hence, where there are good leaders, the schools are categorised as functional. These findings are consistent with those of Nasreen and Odhiambo (2018) who established that where there are good leaders who can handle conflict, positive teaching and learning takes place. For some teachers, conflict management and leadership skills tend to complement each other: good leaders tend to have good conflict management skills. Good curriculum managers are therefore good conflict managers. Teachers therefore perceive female principals as having the skills of managing curriculum, which relates conflict management. Some of the teachers who took part in the interview remarked in the following manner when asked if female principals have conflict management skills in the schools where the majority of teachers are females:

P 5: “she is able to lead the school. Teaching and learning is taking place. Ehhh...textbooks are requisite. Stationary is also requisite. Then, school is

...school hours are being observed and respected as it is supposed to be. Teaching and learning is taking place as it is supposed to be. When there are deadlines that are to be met, they are also able to meet those deadlines we submit to the circuit office.”

P 7: “managerial skills that are being used by the males and....ehhh...I think even their management if they have got a lot of females they have to involve some few males so that they can get that support.”

Female principals who have conflict management skills are humble. They build harmonious relationships with their staff members, which creates a positive school environment where there could be less conflict. Such leaders find it easy to resolve conflict by showing respect even in the face of a conflict. They do what is required on time to avoid conflict. Some of teachers interviewed put this in the following way:

P 7: “...they show a respect by submitting the work that is needed...obeying even the due dates that has been stipulated by that time.”

P11: “I think it is the manager’s responsibility to maintain peace, to peaceful relationships to build relationships with the staff....and...ehhh...when you lean towards building healthy relationships...then yes...you will get maximum support...”

Female principals in schools dominated by female teachers were reported to have the ability to lead, were also found to have the ability to resolve conflict whenever they arise in their schools. Female principals have skills of managing conflict so that positive teaching and learning may take place. One of the female principals believed that female principals have skills to resolve conflict in their schools in the same manner that male principal can as was previously believed that men have better skills. The following remarks from one female principal interviewed confirm that female principals have skills of managing conflict:

P 9:“...women have the ability to resolve conflict in their schools where they are leading or where they are managing. Jaa...they do have the ability. If the male principal can resolve conflict in his own school, myself in my school I can. Because I do have the skills.”

Some participants indicate that female principals’ abilities to resolve conflict are linked to how they strategize and plan when they have to resolve conflict. No matter how bad the situation is, they are able to come up with a solution. Some of the teachers interviewed remarked in the following way:

P 6: “They are able to turn a bad...a bad situation into a good situation by strategizing and constructively planning out how they are supposed to...how they are supposed to work out situation. So for me, yes...women...have the ability, even more than that they have the ability they are strong, they are independent.”

P10: “...when the two teachers were fighting...they were in a fight...my principal she resolved the matter...and after that the two parties they did shake their hands and they started to become friends and they talked one another so they solved that matter that is why I say it was effective and the reason why I am saying so this is that the two people after that time they talked and then they came to a conclusion. I think female principals have better skills on resolving the conflict, female principals they do have better skills.”

Some participants think that female principals’ abilities to resolve conflicts are linked to how they strategize and plan when they have to resolve conflicts. No matter how bad the situation is, they are able to come up with a solution.

4.4.2 Conflict management skills of female principals

Female principals possess analysis skills that enable them to deal with the real conflict thereby making it easier for them to resolve it. They tend to spend more time on the

issue as they gather more facts. However, some based on the information they have at hand they do not hesitate to take decisions. They are patient, allowing themselves time to digest the conflict before making any judgements. The following remarks attest to this:

P 3: “They will analyse the issue, waste time...you know...take longer, but others...you know...they can just go straight to the issue because they will consult different people quicker and then get into addressing the matter quicker and fast. So, personality I think has a role that it plays.”

P 6: “the leader cannot resolve issues by herself unless she is an autocratic leader, you understand, so they can’t...the can’t resolve problems themselves. They need other educators to help them to resolve issues they can’t be...they can’t make decisions by themselves, to call upon two parties or more and to find strategies to moving forward.”

P 9: “So whatever strategies that you do, make sure you hear the side of the story from one person at a time, give yourself time. Record everything, write points down, then you can hear from the second person or from that educator because you are talking at the school situation. Listen to the educator then have time to analyse what educator A has said what educator B has said, then you call them together. You sit down with them; listen to them whether they are going to repeat the same thing, what they have said while you were two of you.”

One of strategies used by female principals and seem to be successful is that they give individuals opportunity to express themselves when in a conflict situation. They have the ability to give the issue on hand the time and thoughts it deserves. This allows those involved to brainstorm solutions and even reflect on conflict. Crossfield and Bourne (2018) established that the management and resolution of conflict in educational settings requires strategies that promote the amicable handling of disputes

cooperatively, constructively and successfully in addition to traditional disciplinary procedures. Some remarks confirm this:

P11: “she has been determined...to resolve the conflict that have arisen, and...she is also...ehhh...been very understanding...eehhmm...and yes I think...ehhh...emotions do play a role because if it affects you emotionally, then you will try to resolve it as soon as possible.”

P 9: “But if ever you give an individual an opportunity to express himself or herself, it is too easy to resolve the conflict. I like negotiations. Because they give an individual an opportunity to say something. A person knows when he is doing something wrong, he knows when he is doing something right. And he is able to correct himself.”

There are different situations that arise during conflict, which requires different strategies to be resolved. Female principals are aware that conflicts are not the same, and therefore strategize to resolve them effectively. One female principal remarked in the following manner:

P 3: “because there are different types of conflict that you gonna come across with...is not the same conflict that you had maybe yesterday...it is a different situation. The differential antecedents of self-efficacy beliefs of novice and experienced teachers. You find yourself tomorrow...you know...with the different learner or a teacher...another teacher....”

The following sub-themes which emerged during data analysis are presented in this sub-section:

4.4.2.1. Nurturing personality

One of the unique characteristics found to be dominant with female principals when managing conflict is that they have a nurturing personality. Some teachers think that though they have that motherly nature, they can resolve conflict and even give advice.

P 3: “they do have that nurturing spirit in them...you know...they have the love they have the warmth within them.”

P11: “mothers in their homes and having the nurturing skills, the skills to resolve conflict in their ...within their own homes and to make the homes peaceful environments, comfortable and conducive to healthy family relationships. I think those skills are...are critical...in ehhh...when it comes to management as well, that yes, as women, we have those skills. Yes, we will be able to use them to promote the best interest of our schools, and to resolve conflict at schools.”

P 3: “women, for example, they are mothers...most of them are mothers...you know ...so they do have this nurturing spirit in them...you know...they do have this ability to accommodate others into decision making, ...you know...because they are...they have the nurturing spirit of raising children...”

P12: “They can nurture other people; they always give advice... so I think they can be able to resolve conflict.”

P 7: “I think that skills of being having those managerial skills of handling the home are the ones that they use, sometimes they apply even at schools.”

P 6: “I see that women have ... that nurture ...of nurturing. So it gets...it gets a feel on the employees itself. That this person cares about our opinions a person cares about our failures and strength and they pull all that together and they can make it work, they can make the environment’s work.”

4.4.2.2. Professionalism

Some participants think that though the masculine influence affects female principals in resolving conflict, professionalism is critically taken into consideration. The following remarks show that professionalism is key to resolving conflict:

P 7: "...some of them that are in leadership as they are able to manage their homes they be able to even manage school. Even at work, because they are professionals, they use their professionalism in order to control the schools."

Some participants think that female principals have good conflict management skills. The use of different strategies that include communication is seen as a skill used by female principals that results in success. Several participants believe that the use of several strategies by female principals is a skill that can be used effectively in conflict management as shown in the remarks that follow:

P 6: "The skills have definitely worked for her because she has encouraged team work, she has encouraged communication skills, and she has also...ehhhmm...she has also encouraged coaching leadership, coaching leadership."

P 3: "I strongly believe they also need to learn the skill, because also the process they go about resolving conflict, you can just see that they don't have the skill but what I have seen and what I like about them."

4.4.2.3. Support from staff members

The perception of some participants is that female principals do not always resolve conflict alone, an indication that the conflict management skills they have need support. Female principals commonly use these skills. Getting support from other staff members suggests leadership sharing, so these leaders exhibit democratic skills. Some of the participants in the study remarked when asked whether female principals get support from female teachers when resolving conflict:

P11: “you can’t really get ehh...just anybody involved in conflict resolution. There are committees...as I said committees that are set up, like the educator welfare committee for example, and ehh...they would render support...”

P 5: “sometimes, she is not the one who is going to sit down to let the teacher she uses some other teachers and other members, in trying to resolve the conflict.”

P 7: “ got the skills of resolving the problems, because whenever problems are there she used to formulate the panel whereby we used to involve...ehhh...the UNION members...the leadership that are in, like at school we have the NATU, the SADTU, and we got the SMT.”

P 9: “...taking instructions, by implementing whatever they are supposed to do, by availing themselves, by showing discipline in classes they control. Therefore, they are showing the support in whatever they are doing, whatever they are doing. Meetings the parents they are there to support you.”

4.4.2.4 Need to learn from others

Some participants think that female principals do not have competent conflict management skills, and therefore need to learn for them to be able to resolve all conflict in their schools in every situation. There are different issues that need to be resolved and these need considerable skills. Successful principal requires a set of skills that must be learned and practiced in order to deal with conflict in schools efficiently. Some participants in the study confirmed this as shown in the following remarks:

P 3: “...and you cannot deal with different issues using the same kind of method or using the same strategy. So, for the fact that there are different types of challenges that we get to deal with, types of conflict, therefore, I strongly believe

that we definitely need to learn different types of ...ehhh...ehhh...conflict management strategies, so it helps us to resolve different conflict better.”

P 9: “I don’t think ...in my opinion, is that if I am a male, if the female...if the male principal can resolve conflict in his own school, myself in my school I can. Because I do have the skills...So you have to apply different strategies to resolve individual conflict as they come up.”

P 3: “there is a development area for them. They can develop; they can learn it as well...just like males as well.”

A successful female principal requires a set of skills that must be learned and practiced in order to deal with conflict in schools efficiently. Female principals have been found to have such skills which they can use in resolving conflicts.

4.4.3 The use of communication and listening as strategies of conflict management

Communication is regarded as one of the skills female principals have that they use when managing conflict.

Female principals in schools dominated by female teachers have communication skills that enable them to resolve conflict. Whenever female principals have conflict to resolve, they usually communicate this with their staff members. Communications strengthens trust between those involved in a conflict (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Conflict is better understood when the leader and the staff communicate as they resolve conflict. Remarks from interviews confirm indicate that communication skills are critical for female principals to resolve conflict:

P 6: “They have communications skills they are relations oriented, and they are nurturing people. So...this has...if you have all these aspects and more and

especially knowledge on how to...to manage conflict. You work...you work on conflict better; you know exactly how to deal with conflict.”

P 3: “they do communicate a lot because we’ll form different committees ...you know...in terms of when there is an issue or there is a conflict that we need to address... people consult we communicate but not as other big issues where we all get together around the table and form a committee and actually look at how to address the issue.”

P 3: “...you negotiate of course to reach a mutual agreement and ammm...in this case I think it gives a matter or the issue an opportunity for it to be unpacked, you put it on the table, you unpack it. Then you understand the issue better as you discuss it in detail. That is where it gives you that understanding of the issue because you are negotiating you are trying to reach an agreement...”

P 5: “we do communicate. She does communicate with the teachers. Sometimes we sit down, and school governing body members who are representing teachers here, they are also involved in trying to resolve the conflict.

Conflict management involves acquiring skills related to conflict resolution, conflict communication skills, and establishing a structure of managing of conflict in any environment (Coleman & Deutsch, 2006; Mumford, Campion & Mortenson, 2007). Constructive conflict management requires considerable social skills (Fisher, 2005), such skills as effective communication, problem solving and negotiating with a focus on interests.

And also teachers in classes, maybe a teacher concerned is also involved in trying to resolve the conflict. There is communication also taking place. I can say that 80%.”

Some think that because of good communication skills, female principals have better conflict management skills as compared to male principals. One of the participants in the interview confirms this:

P 6: “they got better skills...because they got good communication skills...they also got listening communication skills, it works hand in hand with...with...with communication. We need to listen; we need to absorb so that you can take out. So...you need to take in before you take out. We need to...to...to look at the whole conflict situation and be able to analyse it critically before coming with an informed decision. So, I feel that yes, women are better leaders.”

P10: “communication, you must first as a leader, you must first as leader, have the communication skill...how to communicate with people. How to talk to people. Whether it was a conflict amongst two people...you must be able to listen.”

Female principals regard communication as critical in resolving conflict. Communication needs to be two ways to make it easier for those in conflict to resolve them.

P 6: “communication is...is in fact the most important thing in resolving conflict if there is no communication then I feel like there is... there is no solution that has been met, there is no solution that that is gonna be there is gonna be there is gonna be case that this is a solution that we came up with ehh...communication is not only one sided eh... communication is....is all round eh...”

Some of the participants stressed the importance of communication by female principals in school management and leadership. Two of the participants had been schoolteachers for close to two decades, stated that what makes it is easier for female school principal to resolve conflict is their communication skills. They use different communication strategies that have proved successful, as conflict have been resolved. Being patient during conflict resolution has worked for female principals, a strategy that seem unique

since conflict often arouse aggressive emotions. Communication does not stop during conflict resolution, but continues, as the resolution still has to be communicated to avoid further conflict. Some participants interviewed pointed out:

P 6: “they are putting their ideas and so if it is communicated it becomes easy for us to...to...resolve and reach like a resolution to what it needs to be done...”

P 7: “then as a woman, we use to call that person and sit down with her, or with him, and ask some questions.... think communication is what is the most important at school. In everything, before taking the decision you have to communicate it, you can communicate it by writing to the communicants. Whatever decision taking place at school; whatever activities that will take place at school, have to be communicated.”

One female principal who has been a school principal for more than a decade stated that female principals were better communicators and better listeners than men were. She states that these skills have helped her as school principal when resolving conflict:

P 8: “Women are communicating very well than men. They have more words to say, if there is any conflict. With my understanding, ii...it works from me as a principal to mostly give an ear, once there is a conflict, as I live under mostly conflict in my school, what is helping me is to listen. So there would be enough communication.”

P 9: “Communications can be effective if it’s from top to bottom. If there are one on one discussions, to give somebody...to say what she wants to say, come up with the solutions, brainstorm the ideas, it...it assists in that fashion.”

P10: “when you are a leader, you must not just listen and hear one side, two sides you must hear. Moreover, within the two sides, in between you must act as a peacemaker, so that as a peacemaker, you are not going to hear side A and

then you hardly hear side B. Because it might happen that you hear side A and side B is the one who was wrong or he is the one who was right...you must first have the good communication skills and listening skills the same time so that you be able to solve that problem or that conflict within the two parties”

Female principals have been found to have good communication and listening skills which put them on an advantage as they manage conflicts. They are always willing to communicate and solve conflicts with all involved.

4.4.4 Use of compromise in conflict management by female principals

Compromise is one of the conflict management strategies female principals use when they resolve conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers. By using the technique of compromise, conflict negotiators can achieve a "win-win" solution, where all parties involved can attain a measure of satisfaction. The following remark by one of the female principals who took part in the interview confirms this:

P 8: “...to compromise...on my thinking...I think this eh hh... both parties eh hh...maybe you can resolve the problem by saying...eh hh... a person X...is going to do maybe...she says ok. I won't do this, and the other one says eh hh...maybe I will do this. Therefore, it means that they compromise, both. Negotiation goes to the compromising, because we negotiate that somebody will do, will do this and the other one will not do this... So, when you compromise, you negotiate, and then you come to the resolution that somebody is accepting that.”

P 9: “...there are situations where you find yourself to be lenient, to compromise, and sacrifice in order to avoid conflict in order to work in a conducive environment every day because at work, it's where we stay. We try to pacify them, so that nobody gets hurt in the process and everybody ends up happy in resolving the conflict.”

Conflicting parties compromise and give up some desired outcomes to reach the mutual solution of the problem (Rahim, 2001) in order to create a positive environment for promotion of teaching and learning. In compromise, both conflicting parties work their way out of the problem through negotiations, giving up some of their rights and arriving at the common solution of the problem. Female principals are willing to lose and to win some for them to promote teaching and learning. In line with Saiti (2014), compromise suggests that the opposing parties maintain their differences while they are obliged to find a solution that is equally acceptable to both parties. One of the participants stressed that they compromise to avoid conflict and to create a positive environment for teaching and learning. The following remark confirms this:

The results therefore show that female principals have the skills of resolving conflict

4.4.5 Use of collaborative skills in managing conflict

The female principal use collaborative style in resolving conflict in the school where the staff is dominated female teachers because they think that when all are involved, they are able to resolve conflict. Collaborative style, also known as mutual problem solving or cooperative, emphasises on high concern for satisfying both individual and others' needs (Rahim, 2001). Rahim writes further that leaders using this style focus on honesty, cooperation, and exchange of information. They focus on a win-win style and on finding a solution that is in both parties' best interest. Both parties identify and develop a strategy on resolving their own conflict, a key factor for cultivating a constructive conflict management strategy and enhancing better school performance (Everard, Morris & Wilson, 2004; Sati, 2014). Two teachers remarked in the following manner:

P 5: "Ok I think that my principal, style that she is using is collaborative simply because we are all involved in trying to find the solution and also looking at the cause of the conflict and what type of the conflict is, and also trying to find the resolution ways and how to deal about that conflict management. You are able to

come together as a staff, or as a team and resolve that conflict, and be able to carry on with our duties as we are supposed.”

P10: “it worked for her.... because the ...the very same conflict that was taking place in our school, it was resolved and the two parties they got together and discussed their matters, because in the collaborative...in the collaborative style, he involved all the SMT members together with the people who were in that conflict... so...it thoroughly worked.”

For female principals, exchange of information which includes even the members of the SMT when resolving conflict, results in a situation where both parties involved in the conflict are satisfied with the manner in which the conflict has been resolved. People become satisfied with resolutions when they have been involved in finding a solution. Female principals regard collaboration in managing conflict as a strategy that encourages teamwork since all stakeholders are involved in managing the conflict. Collaboration helps to improve relationships amongst the staff and to handle conflict in a positive way. Some remarks during interview attest to this:

P 6: “Our principal used collaborative style. She invested time to put relationships and handled the situation constructively. The collaborative style they do, that is mainly the style that they use, has many aspects on to it of resolving conflict. One strategy of resolving conflict, so...yes they do. Because it encourages teamwork of between two parties. Two teachers, two colleagues are encouraged to work together.”

P12: “...all involved parties are given chance to explain themselves about the problem. Then, they end up coming with one solution.”

Collaborative is a useful strategy for female principals of resolving conflict in a staff component where there are more female teachers than males.

4.4.6 Female principal level of ability in resolving conflict

Participants think that although female principals have conflict management skills, they may not resolve all conflict. However, where they may not handle conflict, colleagues are always there to support them. Though one may have skills, there is always need for support. Support from staff comes even in schools where female staff members dominate; female staff members assist the female principal in managing conflict whenever it arises. Six of the ten participants interviewed indicated that female principals have conflict management skills but still needed support from their staff members as shown in the remarks that follow:

P 5: “She is just handling the conflict accordingly. Although maybe sometimes I cannot say that she is 100 percent there are those hiccups and so but we are there to support her. ...she doesn’t leave the conflict just hanging up. If there is something that needs to be solved she just tries to attend to that and to attend to that...”

P 8: “...if you are female, you can handle conflict mostly of the ...80% of the conflict you can handle.”

P 9: “And there were a few male educators. We do have conflict, in our daily lives, we do have conflict, but we are able to resolve those issues because we know that we cannot side with any educator.”

P.1: “...they must realise that they must remain unbiased, and listen to both sides of the story, there is the right side, the wrong side, and they need to...there is the right side and the wrong side...and the correct side.”

P10: “when you come to the schools that are being managed by female teachers, it is very straight school and even learners there...they are organised.”

Support from staff comes even in schools where female staff members dominate, female staff members assist the female principal in managing conflicts whenever they arise.

4.5. FEMALE PRINCIPALS' SUPPORT FROM TEACHERS IN MANAGING CONFLICT

The participants in the study reflected a number of aspects in conflict management strategies. One of the effective ways utilised by many female principals is to develop teams as many of them believe that it is much easier to attain the school's vision and goals when teachers support each other. In this study, nine of the ten participants suggest that female principal need support in managing conflict for schools to function effectively. Some participants stated that in schools led by female principals in which female teachers dominate the staff, teachers try to work in teams to support the principal.

4.5.1. Female reliance during conflict management

Possible lack of conflict management skills may be attributed to female past leadership history of seclusion. Female principals in schools dominated by female teachers tend to rely on their male colleagues should there be a case where they have to manage conflict and probably implement disciplinary measures. However, some participants think that those who cannot manage conflict lack confidence, and hence, heavy reliance on assistance by male teachers in resolving conflict. The following statements from participants confirms this:

P 3: "they are very much reliant on the male teachers to resolve issues... have a tendency to rely more on males to resolve issues. I believe that I going to rely on a man to help me...resolve a certain issue, so...ehhh...avoiding conflict. I think it is mainly because it's a lack of confidence in their ability to resolve conflict, you

know...I believe ...it's just more the reason why they will get to the point where they are ok to avoid it.”

Those who cannot manage conflicts lack confidence, and hence, heavy reliance on assistance by male teachers in resolving conflicts.

4.5.2. Consultation in managing conflict

When female principals resolve conflict, they do not always agree with conflicting parties. Female principals usually consult other staff members when they find it difficult to resolve a conflict. This assists them in resolving conflict effectively as they are able to make informed decisions after consultations. Resolutions made after consultations are usually accepted - those involved own the decisions. Principals take decisions that are informed by options during consultations. One of the female principals interviewed strongly felt that consultation is a skill that help them succeed in resolving conflict in their schools despite the dominance by female teachers. They believe that a second opinion is critical for them to resolve a conflict. They resolve more conflict through consultation. They consult among their teachers to strengthen their decisions. The following remarks by one of the interviewees confirm this:

P 3: “I am a strong believer that... it will come a time where we agree to disagree, you know...because we need to compromise and reach a certain conclusion about a certain matter, but it does not mean that we agree, you know...to the matter. I think to consult is very important because it helps you to get the second opinion.”

P 3: “So second opinion always helps...you know...to validate the way you are thinking, or else to help you think differently ...when it comes to a matter and how you want to address it...I said because it is good to get a second opinion, you know because it helps you to validate...you know, your...your...your approach

that you want to take. And also it helps you to assess whether you are going the right direction, and helps you to reflect.”

P 3: “I consult quite a lot with teachers, you know because we work as a team because I believe in team work, so I will consult on certain matters, but on certain things, I don’t consult as well, it depends, you know as what type of a matter I need to consult on.”

P 3: “...I’m...hitting the wall, then I realise that maybe I may need a second opinion. So I consult with my deputy, and sometimes even other principals, you know...outside my school, you know to understand how they deal with such matters. Even with the teachers I would do that.”

P 3: “I was gonna say...is how I’m gonna resolve it, when I consulted with someone and give me a different perspective to a matter because that’s what you gain, a different perspective, and it helps you actually to address the matter better.”

The female principal stated further that she preferred forming committees guided by the type conflict she has to resolve as indicated in the following remark during interview:

P 3: “we form committees depending on how big the matter is, you select a committee which is made up of different teachers, and senior management teams, you brainstorm the possible solutions with the teachers, ...you know...and then you start to address parties involved in conflict in separate matters.”

Female principals find it critical to resolve conflict by involving teachers as those involved end up owning the decision in which they formed part. They think that because teachers are always together, they understand each other, and can therefore even solve the conflict much easier as they understand each other.

P 3: “the nice thing about involving the teachers is because they are closer to the problem ...you know...most of the cases because they are on the ground.”

P 5: “you are able to come together as a staff, or as a team and resolve that conflict, and be able to carry on with our duties as we are supposed.”

In cases where female principals find it difficult to resolve conflict, in particular where they do not understand, they would park the conflict and get assistance from the team members. Working as a team is regarded as demanding, as it would need that they respect each other.

P 5: “...to help even sometimes those people who are just having a conflict guiding them on how to solve that conflict as well, and also to park the grey areas that we need to resolve together as a team, up until we resolve the conflict. We are able to work as a team, able to work as colleagues; we respect each other after that and looking forward to work as a team.”

P 5: “They are able to come and sit down with her, explaining some issues, and maybe sometimes some...the grey areas they are not satisfied with. And also try to find some resolutions together with her.”

Delegation of responsibilities is one of the skills used by female principals in resolving conflict. For female principals, delegation assists in resolving conflict differently that they are used to, they learn from the successes of the resolutions.

For female principals to lead effectively, they delegate and entrust all responsibilities to team members. This strategy helps in resolving conflict effectively as she works with the team members she trusts who own decisions taken while working as a team. These results are consistent with findings from a study by Msila (2012; 2014). In the study, the participants highlighted the importance of teams in their schools. Teachers take active

part in conflict resolution builds the teachers confidence, they feel the also, can resolve conflict.

P 5: "...she can be able to delegate; she can be able to try to find out the source of the cause of the conflict as well as the type of conflict it is. Also sitting down looking some different ways of resolving conflict. Also involving other people in the conflict resolve...evolvment. When she has gone she knows exactly that the school is still functioning, simply because there are people who ...there is the team that she can trust, that she is working with as a result that school is not...and...maybe she can be able to trust each of us, able to delegate."

When resolving conflict, female principals are aware that there are teachers who are supportive while others are not. For some, this situation creates a challenge. They allude this to issues of gender equality. Getting into a conflict resolution awareness of these possibilities assists one to be creative.

P 6: "Some educators are very supportive. Some educators are not supportive. So it's a two street actually...you find some other... other...other females that encourage other encourage other females because of the challenges that we face in the working environment such as gender equality."

P 7: "we solve the problem together, so that...but we listen to him, and try by all means to find the way out so that we can assist him or her but our principal is the one that leads us, as a leader, as a female principal..."

P 6: "you find other teachers, actually female teachers, pinning down other women in authority because they have an idea that they wanna be in power...it's team work; it's not like pushing one person to do all the work; it is a team effort and for me resolving conflict is to understand other peoples' differences and putting your...their differences on the table."

Some female principals consult those who have experience and those who are in higher positions and even different committees when they resolve conflict. Participants think that female principals seem to use that skill of consultation quite effectively.

P 8: “here is no person who is a jack of all trade. So sometimes you can get some good advice...from...experienced people, because it’s not a first, you are the first timer to that conflict. There are people who have experienced more than this, maybe...ehhhh...many than you have encountered in your environment. So, consultation can work for the principal, or the female principal.”

P 8: “sometimes you consult your superiors that will give you a chance to be...ehhh...protected when it comes to the policies of the department, that you have been consulted...you have consulted your superior for such a problem where in future, that conflict maybe it cannot be resolved in a proper way. Maybe if you need some other committees, it depends to the problem or to the conflict, which is in place at that time. Ehhh...ehhhmmm...you can go as far as the SGB if ever it depends on the conflict.”

P 9: “Consult different stakeholders within the school. There is SMT within the school, educators, members of the governing body, union raps, jaa...those people...you may go as far as consulting all of those stakeholders if the matter is not yet resolved.”

P11: “...no stakeholder in the school is an island. Therefore, you cannot work without consulting with the other stakeholders. So it is absolutely critical...aahhhmmm... (Long pause...and some noise at the back) ...Ay yes...a...you...you...you ... I have consulted...yes you...in any conflict resolution you have to consult with all the team players.”

One of the female principals interviewed remarked that consulting other staff members when resolving conflict was good for her as she thought it was an effective way of

creating harmony among staff members. She thinks that the strategy created fairness amongst staff members who would then work together as team.

P11: “it is very important to consult so that you get the views of everybody involved, and ehh...ehhh,,,ehhhmmm...you are not biased in any way. To create fairness, unbiasedness, and all this will contribute towards...ehh...resolving the conflict.”

However, some participants think that female teachers may not always support their female principals in resolving conflict. This is consistent with literature: Lack of supportive networks as being the main barriers to female educators’ promotion in school management positions; the gender-based differences exist on other factors such as lack of support from male colleagues, gender stereotyping, female educators’ uncertainty about their own abilities to manage (Mathevula, 2014). This is supported by a remark from one of the participants:

P 3: “What I have noticed...you know...female staff are not generally supportive... they usually prefer to have a male principal, you know...they connect better to the opposite sex, that’s what I have noticed with them.”

However, some participants think that female teachers may not always support their female principals in resolving conflicts. This is consistent with literature: Lack of supportive networks as being the main barriers to female educators’ promotion in school management positions; the gender based differences exist on other factors such as lack of support from male colleagues, gender stereotyping, female educators’ uncertainty about their own abilities to manage (Mathevula, 2014).

4.6. TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING FEMALE PRINCIPALS' SKILLS OF MANAGING CONFLICT

4.6.1 Perception regarding males and females' skills in conflict management

Some participants perceive male principals as better conflict managers when compared to female principals. Many participants regard males as heads of families from biblical times, which gives them an edge over females on conflict management. For these participants, female principals would therefore not have the skills of handling conflict as men do. One of the participants said:

P 3: "Males are better than females, I would say in a way...males are better, you know...in terms of when I were to compare in terms of...ehhh...conflict...I would say in a way...males are better, you know...in terms of when I were to compare in terms of...ehhh...conflict ... management. I still think they are better because they hold the position of like...ehh...a head."

However, there are teachers who think that the conflict management skills males and female principals have are similar since they are human with the same professional status. Both female and male principals got training as teachers and may therefore have skills that are determined by other factors including personality rather than gender. They think that female principals having considerable conflict management skills. They therefore have conflict management skills just as male principals also have conflict management skills.

P 5: "I cannot say that I think they have better skills...no...I don't want to do...to say they are just the same like any other one, you see, but it depends on the individual. I can say so. That's what I think..."

P 5: "...they are human beings, first of all, and number two they are professionals, and number three they are also educators as we are also

educators. So there is no difference between male and female educator, maybe sometimes a female person cannot be able to lead a school towards the right direction.”

There are participants who regard male principals as autocratic leaders as compared with female principals and therefore unable to work in some situations. They regard female principals as having the ability to work with teams, which is what makes them skilful in managing conflict. One of the interviewees responded in the following manner when asked if she considered male principals as having better conflict management skills as compared to females:

P 6: “I don’t feel like they invite...they invite...they invite other educators to see...to strategize, to see how they can work out...they can move forward from the conflict situation. For me I feel that most male...and this is my opinion...that most male are autocratic leaders. They...they can’t work in team building situation...most male educators don’t make informed decisions. They make...they make decisions by themselves because they feel because they are... they are in power; they have the...the authority to do so...”

On the contrary, some participants perceive female principals as having better conflict management skills; they are seen as strategizers who seek other people’s opinions.

P 6: “...female leader strategizes, finds opinions, wants to learn...wants to learn more about her peers, and nurtures that environment whereas of a male figure, more especially wants to be an authority, not peer oriented, wants to make decisions by themselves.”

However, some participants think that even though female principals are able to resolve conflict, they still have to learn through training. There could be principals who are regarded as natural leaders, but they fail sometimes, and therefore need to undergo training.

P 5: “you are also...learn how to lead, undergo some training, including those natural leaders maybe you undergo some maybe and it is like that...there are also school principals who are also failures and something so you also learn how to lead.”

Conflict management as Anderson, Hellriegel and Slocum (1977) state, consists of the interventions designed to reduce conflict, or in some instances, to increase insufficient conflict. It is a process whereby managers design plans, and implement policies and procedures to ensure that conflict situations are resolved effectively. Some participants think that female principals rely much on policies. It is important to stick to the facts when resolving conflict. Some participants confirmed this during interview:

P 7: “the female principal will stick to the policies that the school has designed, eh...not to say the thing that she wish to see, but eh...if he...will be controlled by the...by the policies that the school is using.”

P 9: “...what can assist us as managers is that we do have the policies which we implement in our schools. So that what we do, our work we do it uniformly.”

Social and cultural expectations, or gender stereotypes, contribute to the notion that there are male or female-specific careers. They also contribute to the notion that males can resolve issues or conflict better when compared to women. Thus, considerable traditional courts (where this study was conducted) in rural communities consist of males who resolve community conflict. Women were therefore viewed as poor conflict managers.

P11: “maybe men who can handle conflict...eh...can resolve conflict better than some women, and there are some women who can do a pretty job just as men. I think we...eh...resolve conflict a little differently because women tend to be eh...more emotional beings...end...eh...compared to men, so, I

think when we resolve conflict ...we...do it more considering the feelings and emotions of people involved in the conflict.”

P 7: “...males...they not afraid of anything but women sometimes the feel like...eish...maybe that person...just say this maybe that one...that person will be humiliated...will feel small...eish...maybe he will be angry against me. But the males they simply just say the straight talk, and say hey...don’t, do not ever do this.”

There are some perceptions that female principals cannot manage conflict particularly where the majority of staff members are females. Some point out that female principals are under-rated; they can manage conflict irrespective of who is dominant in their staff component. Gender should not be a determining factor for successful conflict management.

P10: “As we sometimes think in other schools we find that a female principal is is totally different from what we are expecting. From what I have experienced regarding my principal at school, she is a very good principal. She knows how to resolve the problem and she is very organised and disciplined leader within our school.”

P11: “I would say gender shouldn’t be really...ehhh...you know...be the pre-requisite for successful conflict management. It should...it’s more experience, it’s skills, and wisdom.”

P12: “because we always think that men are superior to women, then we think that whatever they say is true than women. Because we have that idea that men are superior to us, then if there is always a male teacher, we will be submissive to that male teacher than the female teacher.”

One is able to resolve conflicts irrespective of gender. Female principals have the ability to resolve conflicts in their schools.

4.6.2 Personality of females in resolving conflict

Female principals in primary schools dominated by female teachers compliment their conflict management skills by their personality. Some female principals are caring, others are sympathetic, and are usually influenced by these personality traits as they manage conflict. Women tend to care much about the feelings of the others and end up resolving conflict in a manner that leaves all satisfied. The interesting response from some of the female principals versus the general statement that women are always emotional when dealing with issues of conflict are evidence to this:

P 8 “the females can be able to...freely address the conflict. If they deal with the matter, they remain very calm.”

P 3 “I also believed that they are not aware that they have the ability...I think their problem is...they are actually...actually not aware that they do have the skill...and you know they end up being so sympathetic ... sometimes blow the matter out of proportion, you know...because of their personality.”

P 8: “They have that tendency of choosing people. Women do not choose people. If they love, they love them all. If they hate, they hate them all.”

P 9: “Sometimes we do sympathise, in every situation that we come across in a work place, we do sympathise, we like to hear the source of things, social issues of a person... by demonstrating social roles, availing themselves, sympathising, finding, getting to the roots of the problem, knowing how can you assist as a female.”

Tolerance is one of the personality traits that assists the females as they resolve conflict. They learn to tolerate those who are in conflict. However, results suggest that this is a skill that develops as shown in the following remark:

P 3: “you develop an element of being ...emmm...it’s like tolerance. You learn to tolerate each other, you know...even if you are not in agreement...you cannot actually like everybody, or enjoy any form of conflict or discussions that you have to go through or get involved in, but there is that element of tolerance that I believe is a skill that you can develop...”

Self-confidence was identified as having a role to play when female principals have to resolve conflict. Those female principals who have confidence in what they do and are able to resolve conflict effectively. This suggest that the confidence they have assist them in managing conflict in a school situation.

P 3: “I don’t find them believing in themselves so much that they think they can resolve conflict, so therefore in that case you find them like not being so confident that they can do it.”

P 3: “It is the confidence that they have in the position they find themselves in and believing in themselves, to say they can do so much, you know...especially when it comes to the position of leadership. So, by virtue that they can be able to do that that actually helps them to resolve conflict even better.”

Emotions have been found to have effect on the ability of the female principal when resolving conflict. Females are very emotional when dealing with critical issues such as resolving conflict. Some participants think that when female principals are emotional, they find it difficult to resolve conflict in schools where female teachers dominate the staff component. Their emotions compromise their conflict management skills.

P 3: “Every time there is a conflict...you know...they will like become emotional.....you know...digging to their heels...and actually run around...you know...to try to seek for help.”

P11: “Sometimes getting your emotions involved can...ehhh...can resolve conflict and can make us stand together as a family. Sometimes we need to be a little more assertive depending on the situation and the type of conflict you are trying to resolve.”

With their ability to listen attentively and pay closer attention to detail, they get a better sense of understanding of the issue. This helps them to influence of the issue.

P 8: “women are more...influential when it comes to conflict, because they are good listeners. soo...whereas there is any conflict...in my school...I have more ear to listen. ...a person you are a very calm person; you are a listener...a...you are a good advisor.”

P10: “...they are able to communicate with people, and at the same time, they are able to socialise themselves with people within the school. They talk like and talk. They listen to other people’s views. If ever, even themselves, even when they do have a problem, they allow other people to hear them up.”

P 8: “I try to make them be calm, because to give a person an ear...to listen to a person...make him or her calm. So...I think as a woman, I am more influential in my school when it comes to the part of conflict. women are so calm. The...the women...can...understand the other side of the person...ehhh...if you are leading...you need to be a mother or a father in that institution. So... a woman can make ehhhh...her colleagues equal. They can lead in an equal level.”

Some participants compared female principals conflict management skills with those of men and think that female principals take long to resolve conflict. However, responding too soon with solutions can shut down the teachers' communication and leave you with inaccurate impressions of the source or nature of the problem).

There has also been a belief that African community male are deemed more effective than and dominant than females; this also translates to the teaching fraternity. This perception creates a particularly significant hurdle for women in educational leadership positions where their underrepresentation as primary school principals and in the superintendence provides a dismal social commentary on longstanding gender inequities. While female principals may possess the same skills as men and in other cases even more, the underlying factor is that the cultural background causes this inferiority in female educators, especially with Africans. However, a study by Enyi, Uwakwe, Chigbu, Chukwu, and Agu (2018) found that the principals, irrespective of gender, needed a variety of administrative competencies to be successful in their management.

P 8: "But the men...they usually...have ehh...a cut and dried solution. They don't prolonged the...the...the issue of that time. But the women...they give they usually give an enough time for the other staff the first side and the second side, to...to...to give their problem or their conflict."

Female principals have some strategies that they use in resolving conflict. Participants suggest that these strategies have helped them to resolve conflict where there are more female teachers. While some have use teamwork in resolving conflict, others have motivated their staff members to take responsibility for their actions. Some participants had this say in that regard:

P 5: “she has the ...the good skills to handle conflict ...when I compare the past and the present there are some skills that she is possessing those skills that we are not able to be shown by men principals who were there in the past.”

P 6: “The strategies that she used to resolve the problem were effective. Us taking responsibility for our actions and taking responsibility for the issues that were at hand worked very effectively. Teamwork. It was effective towards the teamwork especially because you work hand in hand with the real, into reaching a common goal...ehhh...working...ehh...team building also enhanced us knowing our differences, sharing ideas, reaching the goal as...as...as colleagues. Some females encourage empowerment and encourage other women that are in position.”

P11: “A woman would be able to resolve conflict maybe even better than men. Because they have the nurturing skills, they have the caring skills as mothers as woman...as I said before they are very emotional beings. So they would try to resolve it to the best of their abilities.”

Female principals seem to resolve conflicts better than males because of the nurturing skills they have which males do not seem to have. They are, therefore regarded as better conflict managers who can reasonably resolve conflicts in their schools.

4.6.3 Female resilience in school leadership positions

Female principals have been found to be resilient in their school leadership roles. They usually have a dual role of not only being a female principal but also a mother at home. Female principals have the ability to nurture the volatile environment in a similar way as they can support their family members in their home environment. Their female role in the home environment has a positive effect on their leadership roles as female principals when they resolve conflict. According to Elliott and Stead (2018). Mothers have skills of resolving conflict in the home, which they translate to the school

environment. Women are able to maintain proper discipline in the home, which they translate to work environment. In the area where this study was undertaken, women are regarded as homemakers, and can therefore multitask once they are appointed as principals. They are open to advice and being supported. Female principals exhibit these critical conflict management skills in their schools as leaders and conflict managers in contrast to a belief that women's leadership was characterised as risk averse (Elliott & Stead, 2018). Their role as mothers in the home environment translates into that of a coach of their children on family life skills that they continue use when they are principals in their schools. Some participants think that conflict management skills female principals have are linked to females' communal skills. Teachers' perceptions regarding these conflict management skills female principals show is that they are unique to the school environment, in contrast to the view that leadership is predominantly a masculinized role occupied by men (Elliott & Stead, 2018). The following remarks from some of the interviewees confirm this:

P 6: "I feel that women are very strong yet they do not know that, because they have been oppressed so much. Women are very strong they are very strong leaders, they have...they obtain very strong characteristics, they know how to deal with situations that they have, and they know how to deal with situations fairly. This is the most important thing to do, eh...as to resolving conflict....as to resolving conflict, I have seen time and again women in authority resolving conflict and, prospering through that, and working throughout conflict situations."

P 3: "I believe they actually ...ehh...have the ability to seek help and advice and support and this helps them resolve conflict better, because they are able."

P10: "...sometimes they are able to solve the conflict...but sometimes they are not especially if we as men ...we are...we sometimes resist to be led by the female principals."

P 7: “as human beings should be communi.... communal related. Jaa...because we...we are in the world where or in the society whereby we are working with the children, the parents, and us as the educators.”

P 6: “to create a very nurturing environment. It is within the woman’s nature to have a very nurturing side...ehhh...as woman...as a mother and as a leader... soo...you feel that you feel that warmth, you feel the security...you feel those managing women’s skills from...a woman that is in leadership, because they do not take on decisions head-on.”

One of the participants thought that the feminine influence has effect on the female principals’ conflict management skills, the homely environment impacts on the how females manage conflict. These results show the resilience of masculinist models of leadership in spite of moves towards greater acceptability of the feminine as recently established by Elliott and Stead (2018). The positioning of women’s leadership as a corrective to perceived unethical practices of men’s leadership can be viewed largely as a rhetorical device symbolic of understandings of leadership rooted in gendered binaries. One of the participants remarked further in strengthening this view:

P 6: “we understand that the working environment is also homely environment, so that’s why I think it stirred up, it stirred up that homely and it nurtured that homely environment for teachers. ...in a school where there is female principal, the female principal wants to...to... wants to treat the working environments more of our home environments than of a working environments.”

Female principal’s roles as mothers in the home environment translate into that of a coach of their children on family life skills which they continue use when they are principals in their schools. Their roles translate them into better conflict managers.

4.7. CONCLUSION

The results revealed that female principals could handle conflict in primary schools where there are more female teachers in the staff component. Their unique female personal characteristics, which include being sympathetic, nurturing, communal, homemakers, are critical in managing conflict. They consult in order to resolve conflict. Collaborative style was found to be one of the useful strategies for female principals of resolving conflict in a school where female teachers are dominating. However, some participants think that in spite of female principals' ability of resolving conflict, some still believe on male principals as having better conflict management skills. Other participants believed that female teachers still need training to qualify to be conflict managers and rely solely on their colleagues for support when resolving conflict.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to explore female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers in the Gingindlovu circuit.

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the experiences of primary school teachers regarding female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers?
- What do you understand by conflict management skills female principals possess in primary schools dominated by female teachers?
- How do teachers in the staff support female principals during conflict management?
- What are teachers' perceptions regarding female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers?

5.2. MAIN FINDINGS

The results of the study reveal several aspects with regard to female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers in the Gingindlovu Circuit. The summary of the main findings of this study are presented guided by the research objectives of this study.

5.2.1. Biographical findings of the study

The summary of the biographical information is presented in this sub-section.

5.2.1.1. Gender

The results revealed that more males than female took part in the study.

5.2.1.2. Age

Results reflect that half of the participants were within the ages of 41 to 50 years while 20% of participants were in the 31 to 40 years' category. Another 20% comprised of the eldest teachers who took part in the interview.

5.2.1.3. Highest academic qualifications

Although 40% of the teachers interviewed had first degrees as their highest qualifications. However, these qualifications were not linked to the principals' conflict management skills.

5.2.1.4. Teaching level of participants

The findings revealed that 60% of the teachers who participated in the study are teachers with diplomas, and 40% of the teachers had degrees. The results indicate that the majority of those participants are teachers are between the ages 41 and 50 and have 16 years and above teaching experience.

5.2.1.5. Highest professional qualifications

The study shows that the majority of teachers who are the participants possess the minimum qualification which is the Primary Teachers' Diploma. These results indicate that the majority of teachers were qualified to teach in the primary schools.

5.2.1.6. Teaching experience

The majority of participants had 16 years and more of teaching experience.

5.3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ON THE FEMALE PRINCIPALS' SKILLS OF MANAGING CONFLICT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS DOMINATED BY FEMALE TEACHERS

The main findings on the female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers are presented in this section. These are presented in the sections that follow:

5.3.1. The experiences of primary school teachers regarding female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers

5.3.1.1 Ability of female principals to manage schools

The findings show that female principals who are able to manage their schools have good conflict management skills to resolve conflict whenever they arise in their schools. Female principals were found to be good organisers who have the ability to plan, and hence where there are good leaders. They build harmonious relationships with their staff members, which creates a positive school environment where there could be less conflict. Female principals' abilities to resolve conflict are linked to how they strategize and plan when they have to resolve conflict. Teachers therefore perceive female principals as having the skills of managing curriculum, which relates conflict management.

However, some participants think that female principals do not have competent conflict management skills, and therefore need to learn for them to be able to resolve all conflict

in their schools in every situation. There are different issues that need to be resolved and these need considerable skills.

5.3.1.2 Female principal level of ability in resolving conflict

The findings reveal that although female principals have conflict management skills, they may not resolve all conflict. There is always need for support. Support from staff comes even in schools where female staff members dominate; female staff members assist the female principal in managing conflict whenever they arise. Getting support from other staff members suggests leadership sharing.

5.3.1.3 Female resilience in school leadership positions

The findings reveal that female principals have been found to be resilient in their school leadership roles. They have the ability to nurture the volatile environment in a similar way as they can support their family members in their home environment. Masculine influence has effect on the female principals' conflict management skills, the homely environment impacts on the how females manage conflict. Their female role in the home environment has a positive effect on their leadership roles as female principals when they resolve conflict. Mothers have skills of resolving conflict in the home, which they translate to the school environment. Women are able to maintain proper discipline in the home, which they translate to work environment.

5.3.1.4 Stereotypes about females as conflict managers

Results show that members of the society perceive men to be the only leaders. In the context of this study, people still believe strongly on these gender stereotypes. Some participants think that males still resist change because of some existing stereotypes that females cannot manage conflict when in leadership positions. However, some

female teachers think that gender stereotypes are no longer existing, males and females are given equal opportunities to succeed in leadership.

5.3.1.5 Personality of females in resolving conflict

Female principals in primary schools dominated by female teachers compliment their conflict management skills by their personality. Some female principals are tolerant, caring and self-confident, others are sympathetic, emotional, and are usually influenced by these personality traits as they manage conflict.

5.3.1.6 Use of communication and listening as strategies of conflict management

Whenever female principals have conflict to resolve, they usually communicate this with their staff members. Communications strengthens trust between those involved in a conflict. Female principals in schools dominated by female teachers have communication skills that enable them to resolve conflict. One female principal who has been a school principal for more than a decade stated that female principals were better communicators and better listeners than men.

5.3.1.7 Types of conflict management skills of female principals

The findings reveal that female principals possess analysis skills that enable them to deal with the real conflict thereby making it easier for them to resolve it. They are patient, allowing themselves time to digest the conflict before making any judgements. One of strategies used by female principals and seem to be successful is that they give individuals opportunity to express themselves when in a conflict situation. The use of different strategies such as communication is seen as a skill used by female principals, which results in success.

Female principals are aware that conflict is not the same, and therefore strategize to resolve them effectively. One of the unique characteristics found to be dominant with female principals when managing conflict is that they have a nurturing personality though professionalism is critically taken into consideration. Some participants compared female principals conflict management skills with those of men and think that female principals take long to resolve conflict. However, some participants think that female principals may possess the same skills as men and in other cases even more, the underlying factor is that the cultural background causes this inferiority in female educators, especially with Africans.

5.3.1.8 Use of compromise in conflict management by female principals

Compromise is one of the conflict management strategies female principals use when they resolve conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers. Conflicting parties compromise and give up some desired outcomes to reach the mutual solution of the problem in order to create a positive environment for promotion of teaching and learning. In compromise, both conflicting parties work their way out of the problem through negotiations, giving up some of their rights and arriving at the common solution of the problem.

5.3.1.9 Use of collaborative skills in managing conflict

Female principals regard collaboration in managing conflict as a strategy that encourages teamwork since all stakeholders are involved in managing the conflict. Both parties identify and develop a strategy on resolving their own conflict, a key factor for cultivating a constructive conflict management strategy. Collaboration helps to improve relationships amongst the staff and to handle conflict in a positive way.

5.4 TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING FEMALE PRINCIPALS' SKILLS OF MANAGING CONFLICT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS DOMINATED BY FEMALE TEACHERS

5.4.1 Perception regarding males and females' skills in conflict management

The findings show that some teachers think that male principals have better conflict management skills when compared to female principals. They regard males as heads of families from biblical times, which gives them an urge over females on conflict management. This suggests that female principals may not have the skills of handling conflict as men do. However, there are teachers who think that the conflict management skills males and female principals have are similar since they are human with the same professional status. There were some participants who regarded male principals as autocratic leaders as compared with female principals and therefore unable to work in some situations. On the contrary, some participants perceive female principals as having better conflict management skills; they are seen as strategisers who seek other people's opinions though they still have to learn. Some think that males can resolve issues or conflict better when compared to women. Perceptions about male and female principals as conflict managers are mixed. There is no overwhelming evidence that suggests either male or female principals as better conflict managers. Gender should not be a determining factor for successful conflict management.

5.5 EXPERIENCES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS REGARDING FEMALE PRINCIPALS' SKILLS OF MANAGING CONFLICT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS DOMINATED BY FEMALE TEACHERS

5.5.1 Conflict management skills development

Teachers' experiences were quite varied. Some indicated that female principals have skills of managing conflict in schools where the majority of staff members are females.

They have been in schools led by female principals where these have shown that they know how to resolve conflict. When there is conflict in the institution, it is an opportunity for the female principal and her staff, though dominated by female teachers, to develop on conflict management skills. They both learn how to resolve conflict. For these teachers, it is more of team building than just conflict management in the school.

5.6. FEMALE PRINCIPALS' SUPPORT FROM TEACHERS AND DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIALS IN MANAGING CONFLICT

5.6.1 Female principals' support from teachers and departmental officials in managing conflict

The results reveal that one of the effective ways utilised by many female principals today is to develop teams as many of them believe that it is much easier to attain the school's vision and goals when teachers work as teams. Consulting through getting second opinion helps female principals to resolve conflict. Some female principals prefer forming committees to help them resolve conflict, guided by the type conflict they have to resolve. This helps them to manage conflict in a better way.

There are some advantages for female principals when they resolve conflict by involving teachers. The position teachers find themselves makes it easier for female principals to resolve conflict. They think that because teachers are living together with those teachers who are involved in conflict, they understand them much better, and therefore they can assist even with conflict management since they understand each other better.

In cases where female principals find it difficult to resolve conflict, in particular where they do not understand, they would park the conflict and get assistance from the team members. Working as a team is regarded as demanding, as it would need them to respect each other.

Although female principals are able to resolve conflict, they may not resolve all conflict. There would be some conflict they may not be able to handle. For female principals to resolve conflict successfully, they delegate and entrust all responsibilities to team members. This strategy helps in resolving conflict effectively as she works with the team members she trusts who own decisions taken while working as a team. Delegation of responsibilities is one of the skills used by female principals in resolving conflict. For female principals, delegation assists in resolving conflict differently that they are used to.

When resolving conflict, female principals are aware that there are teachers who are supportive while others are not. For them, this situation creates a challenge. They allude this to issues of gender equality, where some male teachers think that female principals cannot lead.

Female principals consult other staff members when resolving conflict, regarding this as an effective way of creating harmony among staff members. They think that the strategy created fairness amongst staff members who would then work together as team.

5.7 CONCLUSIONS

Females have for long been regarded as house-keepers who may not be able to lead and resolve conflicts. Fewer were even appointed to leadership positions. There was also a perception that where there are female principals, and the staff is dominated by female teachers, they find it difficult to resolve conflicts. These results show that female principals, even in schools where female colleagues are more than the males, they are able to lead. They have been found to have leadership skills and able to manage conflicts in the school situation. Their gender roles seem to influence their conflict management skills thereby enabling them to be effective when handling conflict and promote conducive teaching and learning environment.

5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO THE STUDY

This study recommends that

- the department of Basic Education should organise workshops for newly appointed female principals;
- the department organise follow-up workshops once one has been conducted.
- more female principals should be appointed because of their leadership qualities and conflict management skills which contribute towards school effectiveness
- principals be encouraged to study further in order to improve their academic qualifications focusing on school management thereby enhancing their conflict management skills.

5.9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are schools which are led by female principal where there are more male teachers in the staff component. This study recommends that the challenges facing female principals in male dominated staff be investigated. Further investigation can be done to establish their skills of managing conflicts when the staff component is predominantly male.

There are also schools where the principal is male but the majority of staff members are females. This study recommends a research to be conducted to establish the skills male teachers have where the staff is predominantly female. Further research can also be conducted to establish male principals' skills of managing conflicts in schools where the staff is dominated by female teachers.

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ANNEXURE 1: Interview schedule for PI 1 educators

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PL 1 EDUCATORS

1. Principals have different styles of managing conflicts for example collaborative style, avoidance style, compromise, obliging style and dominating style. Which ones has your principal used in managing conflicts in your school?
2. Support in managing conflicts is critical. As a male/ female teacher what support have you given to your female principal when she was resolving conflict?
3. According to your observations do women principals get support from the female staff members they are leading?
4. Do you think your principal has skills of resolving conflicts?
5. What is your opinion/ do you think about the ability of women in resolving conflicts in your school?
6. We find more male principals as leaders and we tend to think that they are good at conflict management. What is your opinion about this?
7. Do you think female principals have better skills regarding conflict management?
8. Based on the social roles, women are typically described to be more communal, relations-oriented, and nurturing – Do you think this helps women principals to resolve conflicts much better?
9. Communications can be critical in resolving conflicts. How effective is communications amongst teachers and the principal in trying to resolve conflicts?

ANNEXURE 2: Interview schedule for principals

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS

1. What is your opinion/ do you think about the ability of women in resolving conflicts in your school?
2. We find more male principals as leaders and we tend to think that they are good at conflict management.
 - What is your opinion about this?
 - Why do you say so?
3. On a comparative basis between women and men principals who do you think have better conflict management skills?
 - Why do you say so?
4. Do you think it is critical for female principals to learn various strategies of resolving conflicts?
What is the reason for your answer/ why do you think that way?
5. Avoidance-based procedure: Some school managers/ leaders can use avoidance based-procedure to resolve conflicts.
 - How do you think female principals/ leaders can use this to their advantage?
 - What skill will develop if they apply this style?
6. Compromise-based procedure refers to.....Some school managers / leaders can use compromise based procedure to resolve conflicts.
 - How do you think female principals/ leaders can use this to their advantage?
 - What skill will develop if they apply this procedure?

7. Consultation refers to How critical is consultation for school principals when managing conflicts?
 - Why is it important or why not? Have you ever, as a leader in your class, consulted when you had conflict in your class?
 - If you did, why did you do it? If not, why don't you do it? If you have, to what effect?

8. Support in managing conflicts is critical. Do women principals get support from the female staff members they are leading? If they do, how?
 - To what extent is it assisting them as principals? If not, explain.

9. Historically women are known to be homemakers, according to your opinion
 - do you think that female principals have the skills to handle conflicts in schools?
 - Why do you say so?

10. Based on the social roles, women are typically described to be more communal, relations-oriented, and nurturing than men –
 - Do you think this helps women principals to resolve conflicts much better?
 - What makes you think that way?

11. How skilful has the principal been in resolving conflict in your school, in relation to listening to understand the complaint and its emotional content?

12. Communications can be critical in resolving conflicts. How effective is communications amongst teachers and the principal in trying to resolve conflicts?
 - How do other teachers assist in resolving conflicts in schools?

13. How do you think negotiations as part of conflict management strategies assist in resolving conflicts?

14. How do other teachers assist in resolving conflicts in schools?

15. Do you think personality has something to do with management of conflicts in schools?

ANNEXURE 3: Ethical clearance

**UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**
(Reg No: UZREC 171110-030)



RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Website: <http://www.unizulu.ac.za>
Private Bag X1001
KwaDlangezwa 3886
Tel: 035 902 6731
Fax: 035 902 6222
Email: DlaminiA@unizulu.ac.za

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Certificate Number	UZREC 171110-030 PGM 2018/495		
Project Title	FEMALE PRINCIPAL'S SKILLS OF MANAGING CONFLICT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS DOMINATED BY FEMALE TEACHERS IN GINGINDLOVU CIRCUIT		
Principal Researcher/ Investigator	FJ Mthethwa		
Supervisor and Co- supervisor	Prof AP Kutame	Mr MC Dube	
Department	Social Science		
Faculty	Education		
Type of Risk	Med risk: Data collection from people		
Nature of Project	Honours/4 th Year	Master's	Doctoral
		x	Departmental

The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project. The Researcher may therefore commence with data collection as from the date of this Certificate, using the certificate number indicated above.

- Special conditions:
- (1) This certificate is valid for 2 years from the date of issue.
 - (2) Principal researcher must provide an annual report to the UZREC in the prescribed format [due date- 28 May 2019]
 - (3) Principal researcher must submit a report at the end of project in respect of ethical compliance.
 - (4) The UZREC must be informed immediately of any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the meeting.

The UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting research.


Professor Gideon De Wet
Chairperson: University Research Ethics Committee
Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Innovation
28 May 2018



ANNEXTURE 4: Request for permission to collect data



kzn education

Department:
Education
KWAZULU-NATAL

Application for Permission to Conduct Research in KwaZulu Natal Department of Education Institutions

1. Applicants Details

Name Of Applicant(s): Mthethwa Joyce Fikile

Tel No:0739975590

Fax: N/A

Email: 29mthethwa.fikile@gmail.com

Address: P.O. Box 3282, Mandeni 4490

Proposed Research Title FEMALE PRINCIPALS' SKILLS OF MANAGING CONFLICT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS DOMINATED BY FEMALE TEACHERS IN GINGINDLOVU CIRCUIT .

2. Have you applied for permission to conduct this research or any other Research within the KZNDoe institutions?

YES

No

If "yes", please state reference Number: N/A

3. Is the proposed research part of a tertiary qualification?

Yes

No

If "yes"

Name of tertiary institution: UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

Faculty and or School: EDUCATION

Qualification: M-ED (RESEARCH METHODOLOGY) DEGREE

Name of Supervisor: PROF A.P. KUTAME

Supervisors' Signature:



If "no", state purpose of research: _____

Research Background: Universally women experience quiet number of challenges while in leadership positions in different public sectors. Our society does not embrace the fact that females also have potential to be in leadership position as same as their male counterparts. Unfortunately, women experience an enormous gender bias when they are assessed for promotion. Research within professional groups show that women have to significantly work harder to be perceived as equally competent as men (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). Although most teachers are women, the majority of principals employed worldwide are men.

When female educators are promoted to management positions there are no fast track programme to equip them with relevant management skills required to manage the schools.

During the apartheid government Africans were deprived of the most socio-economic opportunities and women were not receiving equal leadership opportunities as men. Since the new system of government came into being discriminatory laws were eliminated. The Bill of rights that is stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996, Section 9 (1)-(5) convicts our country from discrimination against people on the ground of their race, religion, sex and others. Therefore, gender equity at the workplace is enforced by a legislation called the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act 55 of 1998) as a result women are occupying bigger positions in different sectors including the

schools without being discriminated. Therefore, women principals form part of leadership in schools today.

Although women can occupy high position in leadership, they are still faced with challenges which require them to be skilled in school management.

Showing lack of confidence in managing conflict;

women getting advice from men;

showing lack of confidence in implementing disciplinary measures;

Women principals are expected to possess conflict management skills that enable them to manage schools they are leading.

Effective conflict management ensures the smooth functioning of the school. Salleh (2011) believes that if conflict is managed appropriately and efficiently it will add important value to an organization as it acts as a catalyst for change. Robbins and Judge (2012) concur with Salleh (2013) that conflict only generate failure simply because they are not managed well and therefore generate negative results.

Constructive conflict management will result in the following:

- People will come up with good and better ideas to improve their working environment
- It helps to reduce or eradicate misunderstanding within colleagues
- It helps to streamline the roles and responsibilities and ensure that people are more confident about what they need to focus on and also clarifies roles for individuals.
- It helps to enhance your abilities to solve problems which can also be utilised even outside your working environment
- It helps to provide growth upon individuals and assist in execution of tasks at a better

and faster rate.

What is the main research question(s)

- How are female principals' conflict management skills in primary schools dominated by female teachers?

- To what extent do female teachers support female teachers in conflict management.?

What are female teachers' perceptions on management by female principals?

1. Methodology including sampling procedures and the people to be included in the sample:

Research Methodology

Hennink (2011) points out that qualitative researchers' study people in their natural setting to identify how their experiences and their behaviour are shaped by the social, economic, cultural and physical contexts in which they live A qualitative research approach will be adopted in this study to collect data.

Target population

The population of this study will consist of teachers and principals from schools in the Gingindlovu circuit.

Sampling Procedures

This study will use purposive sampling from among different research methods such as stratified, cluster and systematic sampling.

Out of twelve female principal led schools the researcher will purposively select five (5) primary schools within the Gingindlovu circuit as the target population. Fifteen participants will take part in this study consisting of one female principal, one female educator and one male educator from each of the five schools.

2. What contribution will the proposed study make to the education, health, safety, welfare of the learners and to the education system as a whole?

The following will be the contribution to the body of knowledge.

- Female principals' conflict management skills in primary schools dominated by female teachers.
- Teachers issues relating to supporting female principals in conflict management.
- Teachers' perceptions on conflict management by female principals

3. KZN Department of Education Districts from which sample will be drawn (please tick) – Please attach the list of all schools

Sakhesethu		Mangethe			
Ohwebede		Mangete			
Ifalethu		Ilembe	√		
Khululekani					

4. Research data collection instruments: *(Note: a list and only a brief description is required here - the actual instruments must be attached)*

9.4 Method of data collection

Permission will be requested from all the gate keepers: the Department of Basic Education (DBE), the district manager, the circuit manager and the participants to conduct interview.

Assuring the participants of their rights to participate or to withdraw at any time when he/ she feels uncomfortable. The appointment with the interviewee will be set.

The researcher will personally interview one female principal, one Head of department (HOD), one male teacher and one female teacher per school.

The researcher will do the recording and transcribe verbatim.

.In qualitative research it is common to record interviews with a tape or digital recorder and transcribe these in to a written document (Hennink, 2011). The researcher will use audiotape and an interview schedule during interviews, and thereafter transcribe data verbatim. The researcher

has to request for the permission from the participants to record the session. The copy of the session should be made available for the participants on request. Notes will be taken during this session for record purposes.

5. Procedure for obtaining consent of participants and where appropriate parents or guardians:

The researcher will request the participants to sign a consent form, after the researcher explained the procedure to the them, and informed them about their rights firstly it is voluntarily and they have a right to withdraw at any time if the participate feel uncomfortable about the researcher. The principle of beneficence entails that the research study benefits the participants and the community and that the participants will not benefit financially by participating in the study (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

6. Procedure to maintain confidentiality (if applicable):

The researcher will request the participants to sign a consent form, after the researcher explained the procedure to the them, and informed them about their rights firstly it is voluntarily and they have a right to withdraw at any time if the participate feel uncomfortable about the researcher. The principle of beneficence entails that the research study benefits the participants and the community and that the participants will not benefit financially by participating in the study (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Researcher will ask the participants not to write their names.

7. Questions or issues with the potential to be intrusive, upsetting or incriminating to participants (if applicable): _____

8. Additional support available to participants in the event of disturbance resulting from intrusive questions or issues (if applicable): _____

- Research Timelines:** Submission of the proposal :..... 25 January 2018
1. Compilation and submission of research proposal -----.....30 January 2018
 2. Compilation and submission of chapter one-----.....30 March 2018
 3. Compilation and submission of chapter two-----.....30 June 2018
 4. Compilation and submission of chapter three-----.....30 August 2018
 5. Compilation and submission of chapter four-----..... 30 September 2018
 6. Compilation and submission of chapter five-----.....30 October 2018
 7. Submission of dissertation-----.. 30 November 2018
 8. Final submission-----30 December 2018

9. Declaration

I Joyce Fikile Mthethwa declare that the above information is true and correct

J.F. Mthethwa

22/ 01/2018

Signature of Applicant

Date

10. Agreement to provide and to grant the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education the right to publish a summary of the report.

I/We agree to provide the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education with a copy of any report or dissertation written on the basis of information gained through the research activities described in this application.

I/We grant the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education the right to publish an edited summary of this report or dissertation using the print or electronic media.

J.F. Mthethwa

22/01/2018

Signature of Applicant

Date

Return a completed form to:

Sibusiso Alwar

Research Unit

Resource Planning

KwaZulu Natal Department of Education

Hand Delivered:

Office G25; 188 Pietermaritz Street

Pietermaritzburg 3201

Or

Ordinary Mail

Private Bag X9137

Pietermaritzburg

3200

Or

Email

sibusiso.alwar@kzndoe.gov.za or smiso.sikhakhane@kzndoe.gov.za

ANNEXURE 5: Permission to conduct research from province



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1063

Ref.:2/4/8/1722

Ms JF Mthethwa
PO Box 3282
Mandeni
4490

Dear Ms Mthethwa

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"FEMALE PRINCIPALS' SKILLS OF MANAGING CONFLICT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS DOMINATED BY FEMALE TEACHERS IN GIGINDLOVU CIRCUIT"**, 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 29 January 2019 to 01 June 2021.
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 Phindile Duma 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.

ILembe District


Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 29 January 2019

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa

Physical Address: 247 Burger Street • Anton Lembede Building • Pietermaritzburg • 3201

Tel.: +27 33 392 1063 • Fax.: +27 033 392 1203 • Email: Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za • Web: www.kzndoe.gov.za

Facebook: KZNDOE... Twitter: @DBE_KZN... Instagram: kzn_education... Youtube: kzndoe

...Championing Quality Education - Creating and Securing a Brighter Future

ANNEXURE 6: Permission from district of education

P.O. Box 3282

Mandeni

4490

31 August 2017

The District Manager

Ilembe District

Private Bag

Mandeni

4490

Dear sir/Madam

I, Joyce Fikile Mthethwa, persal number: 262579, a part time M,asters student at the University of Zululand, student number 19950111, kindly request a permission to conduct a study in Primary schools in the Gingindlovu circuit under Ilembe district.

Currently I'm employed as a post level two educator at Mangete Primary School. My topic is: **FEMALE PRINCIPALS' SKILLS OF MANAGING CONFLICTS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS DOMINATED BY FEMALE TEACHERS IN THE GINGINDLOVU CIRCUIT.**

Your assistance in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

J.F. Mthethwa (Miss)

ANNEXURE 7: Permission from circuit manager

P.O. Box 3282
Mandeni
4490
31 August 2017

The Circuit Manager
Gingindlovu Circuit
Private Bag
Mandeni
4490

Dear Sir/Madam

I, Joyce Fikile Mthethwa, persal number: 262579 a part time masters student at the University of Zululand, kindly request a permission to conduct a study in Primary schools in the Gingindlovu Circuit under Ilembe District.

Currently I'm employed as a post level two educator at Mangete Primary school. My topic is: **FEMALE PRINCIPALS' SKILLS OF MANAGING CONFLICTS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS DOMINATED BY FEMALE TEACHERS IN THE GINGINDLOVU CIRCUIT.**

Your assistance in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance
J.F. Mthethwa (Miss)

ANNEXURE 8: Permission from school principals

P.O. Box 3282
Mandeni
4490
31 August 2017

The principal

I, Joyce Fikile Mthethwa, Persal number: 262579, a part time Masters student at the University of Zululand, student number 19950111, kindly request you to participate in my study.

I am currently employed at Mangete Primary School as a post level two educator. My research topic is: Female principals' skills of managing conflicts in primary schools dominated by female teachers in the Gingindlovu Circuit.

Your assistance in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

J.F. Mthethwa (Miss)

ANNEXURE 9: Participant informed consent declaration

**INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION
(Participant)**

Project Title: **Female Principals' Skills Of Managing Conflict In Primary Schools Dominated By Female Teachers In Gingindlovu Circuit (Mthethwa Fikile Joyce)** from the Department of **Educational Foundations and Management**, University of Zululand.

The nature and the purpose of the research project, and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is aimed at investigating female principals' skills of managing conflict in primary schools dominated by female teachers.
2. The University of Zululand has given ethical clearance to this research project and I have seen/ may request to see the clearance certificate. By participating in this research project I will be contribution to the body of knowledge on Female principals' conflict management skills in primary schools dominated by female teachers. Teachers' issues relating to supporting female principals in conflict management. Teachers' perceptions on conflict management by female principals.
3. I will participate in the project by answering questions during interview.
4. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.
5. I will not be compensated for participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.
6. There may be risks associated with my participation in the project. I am aware that
 - a. the following risks are associated with my participation: **(None)**
 - b. the following steps have been taken to prevent the risks: **No name will be mentioned during interview.**
 - c. **there is a 0% chance of the risk materializing.**

7. The researcher intends publishing the research results in the form of **journal articles**. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.
8. I will receive feedback in the form of results regarding the results obtained during the study.
9. Any further questions that I might have concerning the research or my participation will be answered by **Fikile Joyce Mthethwa**.
10. By signing this informed consent declaration, I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.
11. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I, have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

.....
Participant's signature

.....
Date

ANNEXURE 10: Editor's certificate

23 Elfin Glen Road, Nahoon Valley Heights, East London, 5200



To whom it may concern:

This document certifies that the dissertation whose title appears below has been preliminary edited for proper English language, grammar, punctuation, spelling and overall style by Rose Masha, a member of the Professional Editors' Group whose qualifications are listed in the footer of this certificate.

Title:

FEMALE PRINCIPALS' SKILLS OF MANAGING CONFLICTS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS DOMINATED BY FEMALE TEACHERS IN THE GINGINDLOVU CIRCUIT

Author:

JOYCE FIKILE MTHETHWA

Date Edited:

21 January 2019

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a diamond-shaped box. The signature appears to be "RM" or similar initials.

Dr. Rose Masha

B. Library & Inf. Sc.; HDE; Hons. ELT; M. Phil. Hyll.; PhD Ed.