

## Obstacles and Opportunities in Women School Leadership: A Literature Study

Vuyisile Msila

*PO Box 392, University of South Africa, College of Education, UNISA 0003,  
South Africa  
E-mail: msilavt@unisa.ac.za*

**KEYWORDS** Women Leadership. Glass Ceiling. Gender Stereotypes. Leadership Styles

**ABSTRACT** This article examines what literature says about women leadership in schools. A number of researchers opine that the teaching profession has many women in its fold. However, there are few women leaders in educational institutions. In South Africa there has been a conscious effort to address the past imbalances by (among others), ensuring that women are employed in positions of educational leadership and management. This article looks at literature that discusses the various aspects of gender and school leadership. Although the researcher focuses on South Africa, arguments here are of a universal nature. The claims show that generally, the *women in leadership* theme, is becoming topical in many countries. There are many women who are beginning to overcome the social stereotypes that underscore that women cannot succeed in leading organisations. Many well-run schools in South Africa today have women at the helm. Exploring theories like Simone de Beauvoir's, the article also examines aspects such as the *glass-ceiling* effect as well as various leadership styles. It concludes by showing that leadership differences between men and women are very minimal despite the society's stereotypes and often misguided pronouncements.

### INTRODUCTION

Generally, the quantity of women employees has been increasing in many countries around the world although their numbers in management positions remain disproportionately low (Adler 1993). Coleman (2005: 3) concurs when she pronounces, "internationally, the teaching profession tends to be numerically dominated by women, but in most countries, women do not occupy a commensurate proportion of senior leadership and management roles". There are several reasons for this and among these is that for many decades people have associated leadership traits to maleness. Over the years studies have been showing that the society in general, expected effective leaders to be male. Powell and Graves (2003) cite Schein who hypothesized that because a huge number of managers have been males, the managerial job would be regarded as requiring attributes thought to be more characteristic of men than women. Furthermore, to support her thesis, she discovered that both male and female middle managers believed that a successful middle manager possessed traits of men than women. Whilst many will argue that the status of women in workplace is gradually changing, it is doing so at a sluggish pace: sometimes even women have internalised that they are not ready for leadership and management jobs.

In a recent study, Msila (2010) asked 70 male teachers and 70 female teachers whether they

would take up school principalship if they were offered. Fifty- three male teachers felt they would while only 29 females out of the 70 maintained that they would. This might have nothing to do with the women's ability to lead, but more to do with the way society views them. Arguably, the societal gender experiences have made women to internalise that they are not made for leadership; that leadership belongs to a man's world. Maybe some have seen how the male world has "plotted" the demise of a few women leaders. Therefore, while there is a gradual change today, women leaders are still far from achieving equality in the workplace (Stead and Elliott 2009). This conceptual paper utilises a review of literature as it explores the complexities of women in school leadership. The literature reviewed sheds light on aspects such as De Beauvoir's theory, the glass ceiling effect, leadership styles and other barriers to women leadership. This topic is universal although the author frequently refers to the South African situation. As a starting point, the focus below is on what research says about women and school leadership in South Africa.

### FEMALE SCHOOL LEADERS: A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION

Current research in South Africa still reflects that there are many women in teaching although the adage that declares, "Women teach and men

manage”, still seems to apply in schools (Williams 2011). Furthermore, Williams points out that even though women have been increasingly appointed since the 1990s, the practice of women is still under-represented in leadership positions. The latter is a point highlighted above. Moorosi (2007) also concurs when she contends that in the schooling system women form only 30% of school principals although they constitute the majority (more than 70%) of the teaching population. Moorosi further argues that the reality of women principals’ experiences suggests that women fight a constant battle against social and organisational discrimination. Grant (2005) for example, has found that women in some communities in South Africa have little or no credibility as leaders. Grant posits that women leaders do not always get the necessary support from the communities and usually have to prove their capability as leaders under trying conditions in the patriarchal society. There is much literature which shows that much mistrust in women leadership is caused by a number of factors and these include tradition and culture (Lumby 2003; Lumby et al. 2010; Mestry and Schmidt 2012). Lumby (2003) also contends that communities do not trust women to be appointed as school managers because school management is an important job which demands the seriousness they think only men could provide.

The literature reviewed in this paper seeks to explore the theory behind this prevailing status quo. It is crucial to understand what informs societal beliefs. Policymakers will be able to rectify some of the ills in the society only when they begin to understand the theory behind many practices. Below, the focus is on Simone de Beauvoir’s work who explicates how the society affirms many of the gender stereotypes.

#### **THE WOMAN AS “THE OTHER”: EXPLICATING SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR**

De Beauvoir’s book, *The Second Sex* (2009) traces the women’s position in society as “the other” gender, different from being male. She traces how women are perceived by society as inferior and as having no freedom. According to De Beauvoir, from childhood the society socializes girl children differently from boy children and this has an impact on their future roles. De Beauvoir distinguishes the girl’s upbringing with that of a boy, the latter is told that he is

a little man at the age of three. Little girls envy certain aspects linked to the boys’ qualities and are given dolls as an alter ego and as compensation. The society imposes or socializes girls to femininity in a certain way. The teachers and the society instruct the girl how to be feminine. Therefore, from the formative years, the society imposes the expected values upon the girl child. Soon the girl child realises that men, not women, are the leaders and the dominant beings in the world. De Beauvoir perceives the marriage institution as being oppressive and destructive to women; the woman becomes stuck in such a “perverted institution”. De Beauvoir avers that women need to drudge for their liberation from the various kinds of oppression and their historical insignificance. Furthermore, she has shown that successful women leaders in history have demonstrated that it is not women’s inferiority that has determined their historical insignificance but their historical insignificance that has doomed them to inferiority.

The man is always perceived superior by society irrespective of circumstances. De Beauvoir shows how male dominance has obscured the woman’s strength. She looks at the fallacy of male presence in all aspects of society. Le Doeuff (1980: 285) writes:

*This world has always belonged to men. Even if women are – potentially at least – subjects, they do not contest the enserfing that men have imposed on them. What is the origin of such a situation? In the manner that de Beauvoir treats this problem, it seems as though the oppression of women is a scandal so unthinkable that she cannot manage to assign it to any origin or sufficient cause.*

De Beauvoir asserts that it is culture of male dominance that determines femininity hence her quotation, “One is not born a woman, one becomes a woman.” In her theory she is separating the woman (as a biological entity) from femininity (as a social construction) (De Beauvoir 1972). The society or the exterior situation determines femininity. De Beauvoir wanted women to invent new ethical theories of being. As highlighted above, in De Beauvoir’s time, ethics defined women as being not quite fully human and lacking the human status of the male (Dykeman 2001). Dykeman also adds that women were bound by systems that ignored their reality. The section below focuses on the concept of the *glass ceiling*.

### Women Leaders and the ‘Glass Ceiling’

The discussion above shows how De Beauvoir delineates a society that creates women barriers. Valerio (2009) expounds that certain metaphors have been coined to describe the women barriers as they strive to be leaders. She cites Eagly and Carli’s work where they enumerate three barriers that obstruct women’s advancement; the concrete wall, the glass ceiling and the labyrinth. In this article we shall concentrate on the widely used *glass ceiling*. Valerio (2009:15) explains:

*The concrete wall existed in an era when there were separate and distinct gender roles; men were bread winners and women were homemakers...the concrete wall began to fall in the 1970s and by the mid-1980s women were employed in middle management jobs but faced an invisible barrier that excluded them from the upper levels of management. Women were described as bumping into the “glass ceiling”; the imperceptible impediment that nevertheless restricted access to higher-level jobs and pay...An underlying attitude that contributed to the existence of the glass ceiling was the notion that it was too risky to employ women, because they would quit their jobs to raise a family.*

As a result of these challenges, women had to find themselves travelling through a maze to reach the top of the organisations. The “labyrinth” developed to present hindrances and numerous barriers.

The glass ceiling refers to the unseen yet unbreakable barriers that keep women from rising to upper positions within the organisation. Cotter et al. (2001) contend that there must be four distinct characteristics to conclude that the glass ceiling exists:

- (i) A gender or racial difference that is not explained by other job-relevant characteristics of the employee;
- (ii) A gender or racial difference that is greater at higher levels than it is at lower levels of the organisation;
- (iii) A gender or racial inequality in the chances of inequality in the chances of advancement into higher levels and
- (iv) A gender or racial inequality that increases over the course of a career.

All these represent invisible barriers; women can see the topmost positions but would not reach them. The contention here is that women

struggle to move up the organisation and assume the powerful or influential positions. Later in this paper the researcher will argue as to why women at certain times of their careers cannot move up the career (Williams 1992; Hesse-Biber and Carter 2005; Harvey 2009).

The glass ceiling is an experience of women in all countries around the world. There have been a number of related concepts that are similar to the *glass ceiling* concept. One such is the *glass elevator* or glass escalator which explains that even in female-dominated fields such as nursing, there is a swift promotion of men over women especially into management. This fulfils the gender stereotypes that men should be superior to females. However, others argue that more women are occupying management positions although they might argue that this is still only a “drop in the ocean”. The glass ceiling affects women in education in a number of ways.

### HOW THE GLASS CEILING AFFECTS WOMEN IN EDUCATION

There are many critics who motion for positive discrimination; a policy that would affirm women in positions of power. Kanjere (2010) traces women’s oppression from apartheid years in South Africa. She argues that women experienced double oppression as they were oppressed by the apartheid policies and by their communities. It was then difficult for women to be school principals. There was discrimination and prejudice with respect to women ability to lead and to manage (Kanjere 2010). Carrim (2006) concurs when she points out that management positions in schools and the educational bureaucracy were in the hands of men, especially Afrikaner men. Moreover, women occupied fewer than 10% of school management positions. Long after apartheid though, South Africa has more female primary school principals than female secondary school principals. Furthermore, generally men still occupy high positions in the education system. The glass ceiling has also not changed much in other African countries. Lumby et al. (2010) aver that despite the compelling reasons for the equal representation of women in leadership the progress is very slow. The experience of leadership for the few women who assume leadership positions is full of challenges. Lumby et al. (2010:5-6) assert:

Once appointed, it has been widely reported that men and women experience leadership in different ways. Studies have shown that, whilst gender is not an issue for men, women leaders are still perceived and perceive themselves as challenging the norm (Coleman 2002, 2005). Grogan and Shakesheft (2008), whose research is based in the US, claim that women do not lack confidence in their abilities and they aspire to most administrative positions, but institutional racism and sexism persist and discourage women's move into leadership.

Gender stereotypes have been protracted in many cultures around the world thus strengthening the idea of a glass ceiling. Many stereotypes have persisted in many organisations over the years. Powell and Graves (2003) argue that subsequent research studies have found little change since the 1970s despite the notable change in the roles of men and women. Furthermore, these authors point out that across cultures the male stereotype was perceived as stronger and more active than the female stereotype. Moreover, the male stereotype was characterised by high needs for dominance, autonomy, aggression and achievement, whereas the female stereotype was characterized by high needs for deference, nurturance and affiliation (Powell and Graves 2003).

Valerio (2009) argues that it is critical for managers to understand gender stereotypes because if they just accept these, this would be like having blinders on; these limit the vision and do not permit the wearer to see the wider picture of the world. Furthermore, as argued above, stereotypes are destructive to both males and females and are responsible for the erection of the glass ceiling. Unfortunately for management, people in organisations were socialized in a society that recognises these stereotypes and they tend to believe in them as fact. The society has pictures of what men and women should look like. Valerio (2009: 81) maintains:

*Not only does socialization encourage males and females to adopt these gender-appropriate behaviours, but also to hold them as personal ideals for themselves. For example, when women managers subscribe to the idea that they should be "nice" most of the time, it may deter them from speaking up to ask for resources they need or from providing reprimands from others. Similarly, male managers are often more uncomfortable with providing negative feedback to women*

*than they are to men, whom they perceive tougher and more hardened to receiving criticism.*

All these stereotypes reflect the way in which women experience barriers in the workplace and the glass ceiling metaphor has become very appropriate. Some might find the origins of the barriers from the balancing of work and home for women. However, various experts would argue that women need to embrace certain models of leadership to succeed in leading today's organisations.

### IS THERE A MODEL FOR WOMEN LEADERS?

In his study of women school principals, Msila (2010) found out that in a sample of 21 women principals of historically black African schools, 14 stated that they did not see gender as an obstacle to their leadership. They reported that the challenges they experience would be experienced by male leaders given the context of their schools. However, Leimon et al. (2011) book, *Coaching Women to Lead*, explicates the need to empower women to be strong strategic leaders in organisations. Among others, these authors highlight the need to design women-friendly organisations. They also point out that the starting point of creating women-friendly organisations should begin with objectives that focus on the following:

- Recruitment (the gender balance of those recruited and the balance of those in the recruitment panel);
  - Induction and progression (measuring and reporting on the career development of women at various stages);
  - Salary differences;
  - Representation of women in senior roles; and
  - The measurement and reporting of women's leaving rates.
- (Leimon et al. 2011:169)

There is much that South African schools can benefit in such objectives. It is no use having a female principal when the culture that permeates through the entire organisation is exclusively male. There is a need to build schools that are generally women-friendly; an environment that is built with the help of everybody in the organisation, including men. A profound rebuilding of an organisation's culture will not

take place without the support of the majority; bringing men into the conversation on gender diversity is essential (Leimon et al. 2011). Furthermore, they emphasise coaching women to lead because of a number of pertinent reasons. Among these is the idea that women are an under-utilised resource, therefore as organisations compete for emerging leadership talent, women should be coached.

Stead and Elliot (2009) reveal two crucial observations that lead to an understanding of women's leadership as dynamic and relational. These authors also claim that women leaders draw upon multiple sources of experience both past and present in their practice of leadership. Secondly that women draw from different areas in a non-linear way. Relationship to others, relationship to place (where she lives) and relationship to work (developing professional networks) are among the most important spheres of influence in women leadership (Stead and Elliot 2009). Yet, the major challenge that married women have to face for example, is to balance work-family responsibilities.

#### **BALANCING WORK-FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES: CREATIONS OF CULTURE**

Ghosh and Haynes (2008) point out that the root of the problem is in the upbringing of women in a male dominated society; soon women realise that career aspirations are secondary to family. They also state that some women have been able to surpass this domestic barrier either by staying single, having one child or share responsibilities with a spouse. Powell and Graves (2003) point out that to understand the intersection of work and family people need to consider the nature of the employees' family lives. Sitterly and Duke (1988) contend that the woman in a nontraditional job is likely to be asked how she juggles a family and a career, even though men in similar positions can have families and careers without ever addressing this question. Furthermore, Sitterly and Duke declare that two of the major issues facing working women are dual career marriages and child care.

The concept *dual-career marriage* refers to the situation where both husband and wife work at demanding jobs. Families need to find coping skills as to how they combine two careers, a

marriage and rearing children (Sitterly and Duke 1988). It is the magnitude of these coping skills that will determine as to which career-marriage partnership succeeded and which fail. Couples need to carefully discuss their career/marriage decisions. Both partners need to respect the other's job and to this regard Sitterly and Duke (1988: 11) list six guidelines to remember when making career/marriage decisions:

- Communicate as openly as possible without resorting to old arguments when trying to make a decision;
- Compromise rather than issue an ultimatum
- Decide what is really important to you and stick with it;
- Realise you may have to schedule time together or plan activities more when both of you are working;
- Leave work at work and leave home at home; and
- Be as creative at home as you are at work.

These are very crucial for women and men to have a balanced life in and outside work. Before the partners can come to a decision they need to communicate their feelings, they also need to select the best of possible choices. In addition to these for the women professionals who have children they have to ensure that they find proper day care for their children. Usually daycare affects working women immensely and may also affect their careers. Some women might not get any help from the other partner in caring for the children hence they might have to look for good daycare facilities for the children before this can be a crisis that affects their careers. When women know that their children are not cared for well while they are at work, this might pose barriers to their professional gains.

Although the above model talks about women who have spouses not all women managers are married. Powell and Graves (2003) contend that the family structures of women and men differ and that women are more likely to be single parents than are men. Furthermore, even at top management levels, there is a gender difference in family structure; as women assume managerial positions at very high levels; they are less likely to be married or to have children. However, for men it is different, "in general, the more successful the man in objective terms, the more

likely he is to have a spouse and children” (Powell and Graves 2003: 200). However, some would argue that there are leadership styles amenable to women leaders.

### LEADERSHIP STYLES

Women and men in positions of leadership are supposed to lead their organisations. Drawing a vision, communicating that vision, leading a culture of the organisation are some of the functions of a leader in any organisation. The debate of which style is more effective than the other is as old as leadership. It is a critical commonplace that women and men have certain qualities that distinguish one from the other. Valerio (2009) points out that some research shows that there is tendency for women to adopt a more democratic (participative) style and for men to adopt a more autocratic (directive) style. Women have been found to be more of transformational leaders than males are. Valerio (2009: 34) affirms:

*Female leaders are more likely to be transformational leaders than male leaders. Women leaders demonstrate more transformational leadership, particularly for those behaviours that communicate the organisation’s mission, examine new perspectives for solving problems, and develop and mentor followers. These closely resemble the visionary, participative, and coaching styles previously mentioned.*

Flora (2003) concurs with the above as she states that women leaders are best suited for transformational leadership. She also states that men are more likely to use a transactional management style than the transformational style. Flora quotes Alice Eagly who speculates that transformational leadership style may suit women because it includes nurturing aspects, and women are traditionally socialized to be nurturers. Powell and Graves (2003) also highlight that transformational leadership is regarded as superior for leaders who motivate followers to transcend their self-interests for the good of the organisation. Moreover, transformational leaders set high standards for performance and then they develop followers to achieve these standards.

On the contrary transactional leaders focus on clarifying the responsibilities of followers and then respond how well followers execute these (Powell and Graves 2003). They exhibit two

kinds of behavior; contingent reward by promising suitable rewards if followers achieve the assigned duties. Secondly, transactional leaders do what is referred to as *management by exception* by intervening to correct follower performance. Transactional leadership is different from transformational leadership; it neither focuses on individual characteristics of followers nor supports their individual development (Winkler 2010). Furthermore, Winkler posits that transactional leaders are concerned with the exchange relationship between the leader and follower. From these arguments one can see how different transactional leadership is from transformational leadership.

Bush (2007) states that transformational leadership is linked to collegial management model. He cites Caldwell who points out that transformational leaders succeed in gaining the commitment of followers to such an extent that higher levels of accomplishment become a moral imperative. Therefore the literature cited above would argue that women leaders are prone to cherish dimensions that support the followers effectively. Winkler (2010) states that transformational leadership has four important factors and these are: charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration. Winkler (2010) adds that transformational leadership results in performance beyond expectations. The implications here, some would argue, point to the fact that women are potentially better leaders than men in a time of change. However, despite this potential there are other barriers that hinder women advancement.

### OTHER POSSIBLE BARRIERS TO ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Skenjana (2009) raises an important argument pertaining to women empowerment and leadership. She contends that although women are oppressed in a male-dominated society, they also perpetuate oppression through their expectations, perceptions of their roles that have been entrenched by their experience. Women tend to have poor perceptions of themselves thus complicit in the oppression of women in general. Mathipa and Tsoka (2001: 324) list barriers which represent faulty perceptions of the true positions regarding women:

- Poor self-image, which is a factor attributed more to women than men;
- Lack of assertiveness: as a habit associated with women than men;
- Less career orientation: as a sign of less interest in women as leaders;
- Less confidence: as an argument that women, unlike men generally lack the will to achieve;
- Poor performance: a myth used as an excuse for employing less women in demanding occupations;
- Discrimination as a sign of low interest in the recruitment of women into leadership positions; and
- Demotion: as a form of punishment thought to suit women better as they are perceived to be lazy and arrogant.

Yet the researcher can argue that although the writers blame women, these barriers are created by the discriminating patriarchal society. Women end up being propelled by the self-fulfilling prophecy; believing that as leaders it is difficult to prosper in a man's world. Skenjana (2009:2) also writes:

*Although the patriarchal system still operates in traditional authority and political structures, there is deliberate inclusion of women in decision-making processes. However, it cannot be confirmed whether women do set the agenda of the meetings or whether they have been able to manipulate thoughts as this requires time for the mindset change. This leadership gap is more enhanced because communities have little confidence in women leadership.*

However, women empowerment can be successful only if women set the agenda and believe in themselves. This needs reintrospection and audacity to consciously shirk off the societal stereotypes and oppression. Chabaya *et al.* (2009) study in Zimbabwe's schools found that as long as gender inequality persists, there will be factors that impede the advancement of women into leadership positions. Chabaya *et al.* (2009) also concur with Mathipa and Tsoka above, that women tend to have low self-esteem and lack confidence. They cite Smith who pointed out that many women have internalised the attitudes and role expectations about women, that they have learnt to fit neatly into the stereotypes. In a society full of these stereotypes women are less likely to aspire to be leaders. Furthermore, Chabaya *et al.* (2009) reiterate aspects highlighted by Mathipa and Tsoka; that

lack of support and stereotypes as well as family roles are some of the obstacles that thwart women's advancement.

## CONCLUSION

The male dominated society highlighted by De Beauvoir is still in existence. Its vestiges manifest in various workplaces differently. One of the ills that were fought against during the apartheid era in South Africa was the sexist society. Yet years after the dismantling of apartheid some gender activists point out that women in society are still oppressed. Some of the societal institutions such as families are stunting the growth of women in workplaces. However, the challenge is upon the women themselves to tackle the impediments that would submerge their attempts to assume leadership positions. As research illustrates above, basically women and men have similar leadership styles. There are however, many complexities when one tries to uncover the roles as determined by society. The school's success depends upon the enactment of the culture of teaching and learning. When these are in place learners are likely to achieve as the school succeeds. The latter has less to do with the principals' gender and more to do with commitment and vision.

## REFERENCES

- Adler NJ 1993. An international perspective on the barriers to the advancement of women managers. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 42(4): 289-300.
- Bush T 2007. Educational leadership and management: Theory, policy, and practice. *South African Journal of Education*, 27(3): 391-406.
- Carrim NH 2006. *Human Rights and the Construction of Identities in South African Education*. Doctoral Dissertation, Unpublished. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand.
- Chabaya O, Rembe S, Wadesango N 2009. The persistence of gender inequality in Zimbabwe: Factors that impede the advancement of women into leadership positions in primary schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 29(2): 235-251.
- Coleman M 2005. Gender and secondary school leadership. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 33(2): 3-21.
- Cotter DA, Hermsen JM, Ovadia S, Vanneman R 2001. The glass ceiling effect. *Social Forces*, 80(3): 655-681.
- De Beauvoir S 2009. *The Second Sex*. (Trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier). London: Random House.
- De Beauvoir S 1972. *The Second Sex*. New York: Penguin.
- Dykeman TB 2001. Simone de Beauvoir: Facilitator for feminist ethics. *The International Journal for Field Being*, 1(1): 1-10.

- Flora C 2003. Women Make Better Leaders. Psychology Today. From <<http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200309/women-make-better-leaders>> (Retrieved on November 22, 2011).
- Ghosh R, Haynes RK 2008. Cross Gender Mentoring in the Era of Globalisation: Implications for Mentoring the Organisational Women of India. From <[www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/record](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/record)> (Retrieved on November 18, 2011).
- Grant C 2005. Teacher leadership: Gendered responses and interpretations. *Agenda*, 65: 44-57.
- Harvey W 2009. Racializing the glass escalator. Reconsidering men's experiences with women's work. *Gender and Society*, 23(1): 5-26.
- Hesse-Biber SN, Carter GL 2005. *Working Women in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kanjere MM 2010. Challenges Faced by Women Leaders as School Principals in Rural Areas. From <<http://www.emasa.co.za/files/full/Kanjere.pdf>> (Retrieved on August, 2, 2013).
- Le Doeuff M 1980. Simone de Beauvoir and existentialism. *Feminist Studies*, 6(2): 277-289.
- Leimon A, Moscovici F, Goodier H 2011. *Coaching Women to Lead*. East Sussex: Routledge.
- Lumby J 2003. Managing motivation. In: J Lumby, D Middlewood, ESM Kaabwe (Eds.): *Managing Human Resources in South African Schools*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat, pp. 155-170.
- Lumby J, Azaola MC, De Wet A, Skervin H, Williamson A 2010. *Women School Principals in South Africa: Leading the Way*. London: University of Southampton.
- Mathipa ER, Tsoka EM 2001. Possible barriers to the advancement of women to leadership positions in the education profession. *South African Journal of Education*, 21(4): 324-331.
- Mestry R, Schmidt M 2012. A feminist post-colonial examination of female principals' experiences in South African secondary schools. *Gender and Education*, 24(5): 535-551.
- Moorosi P 2007. Creating linkages between private and public: Challenges facing women principals in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 27(3): 507-521.
- Msila V (In preparation) 2010. *This is Not a Man's World: Women Leading Schools*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Powell GN, Graves LM 2003. *Women and Men in Management*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Sitterly C, Duke D 1988. *A Woman's Place: Management*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Skenjana N 2009. A focus on women: Politics and development. *Afesis-corplan*, 1-3.
- Stead V, Elliott C 2009. *Women's Leadership*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Valerio AM 2009. *Developing Women Leaders: A Guide for Men and Women in Organizations*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Williams C 1992. The glass escalator: Hidden advantages for men in the female professions. *Social Problems*, 39(3): 253-267.
- Williams CG 2011. Distributed leadership in South African schools: Possibilities and constraints. *South African Journal of Education*, 31: 190-200.
- Winkler I 2010. *Contemporary Leadership Theories: Enhancing the Understanding of the Complexity, Subjectivity and Dynamic of Leadership*. Dordrecht: Physica-Verlag.