

Barriers to Women's Promotion in Primary School Management Positions

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ABSTRACT The teaching profession is dominated by female educators. However, the irony is that most top school management positions are currently occupied by male educators. Unfortunately, most researches dealing with the issues of under-representation of women in management position tend to focus on gender differences. Less or no attention has so far been paid to the fact that most school management positions, and thus most schools staff selection committees are dominated by men. The objective of the present research is to find out whether the perception on women under-representation, is in any way affected by the fact that respondents in this research are occupying school management positions or not. The research question guiding this study is: *to what extent does holding a management position affect the educators' perception on the causes of under-representation of women in school management positions?* The research methods employed to emerge with data relevant for this study were primarily literature review and interviewing technique with 20 primary educators systematically and purposefully selected from five public primary schools in the Lulekani Circuit, Mopani District, Limpopo Province in South Africa. The findings indicated that occupying school management positions influences the respondents' perceptions on some factors but gender seems to be the main cause of these observed differences in others. The complex and contradictory nature of these findings justify the need for further studies around the gender equity at secondary schools.

INTRODUCTION

The survey of literature confirms the existence of gender bias which leads to limited promotion opportunities being availed to one gender and not to the other (Pirouznia and Sims 2006). However, the effect of one's position on the perception of different factors responsible for women's underrepresentation has not been sufficiently studied. Historically, especially in countries such as South Africa, during apartheid and to a certain extent, the United States of America (USA), race, culture and ethnicity, religion and language as well as marital status have

been identified as the main factors affecting and defining experiences of women (Moorosi 2010). Black women teachers were the most affected by these factors in general, but also women managers were often affected (Lumby and Azaola 2011). In the context of South Africa, a recent study by Moorosi (2010) revealed that women face the challenges at three levels in their journey to principalship. The first phase, according to Moorosi (2010: 2), is the anticipation phase, which prepares women for management. The second phase is the acquisition phase which deals mainly with the problems even suitably qualified and experienced women face when seeking access and entry into organisational management positions.

"The term 'management position' is generally applied to positions of leadership in any public or private organisation (Mathevula 2013: 6 citing Pirouznia and Sims 2006: 7). However, in this article, it refers specifically to educators, both male and female, who occupy positions such as principals, deputy principals, heads of schools or heads of departments in

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schools (Uwizeyimana and Moabelo 2013); but more specifically in primary schools, which are the main focus and comprise the setting of this study” (Mathevula 2013: 6).

The third and final phase in Moorosi’s analysis is the performance phase where the actual management function is performed. In this phase, the emphasis is placed on the fact that even women who have attained these positions still face lack of mentors and support from their colleagues (both subordinates members of the school management teams) (Moorosi 2010). Moorosi’s argument in these three phases is that, “women seem to stack at the third phase because of insufficient support even when they have made tremendous efforts at the two preliminary phases, ‘anticipation phase’ and the ‘acquisition phase” (Moorosi 2010: 17).

Besides, other identified barriers to women’s promotion to management positions include discriminatory hiring and promotion practices, lack of mentoring systems in the teaching profession, lack of support systems from family and colleagues, lack of networking, lack of female role models and lack of support from colleagues and administrators (Chisholm 2001; Lewis 2006; Chen, et al. 2012: 240; Singh et al. 2006; Baldoni 2013). Literature review also abundantly attested to the point that underrepresentation of womenfolk in school management position is likely to persist as long as there are cultural and social norms that encourage gender stereotyping, sex-role stereotyping as well as family responsibility that tend to limit the role of women to that of home-makers (that is, taking care of household, husband and children) (Burton and Parker 2010; Osumbah 2011). *Women ‘Take Care’ Men ‘Take Charge’ (Welbourne 2005: 1)*. As long as women are anticipated to discharge certain responsibilities at homes which their counterparts namely, males, are excluded from, that could continue to retard their willingness to declare their availability for leadership roles in educational organisations (Ginige et al. 2007).

In support of what has been articulated, Eagly and Carli (2011) declare that women suffer from two primary forms of prejudices, namely, being viewed to be less qualified for myriad management positions in learning institutions and being regarded to be inappropriate for employment in school management positions of authority and influence in schools. Quite clearly, all these types and causes of prejudices towards

females are immersed in the cultural and social norms such that to eliminate and eradicate them, would require and demand the involvement of all societal members (men, women, young and old, educated and non-educated from all races and religion, in power and not in power etc.). That is, everyone who is explicitly affected or implicitly touched by the gender bias and prejudices. This view is for example held by Pirouznia and Sims (2006) in their argument that women managers now possess self-confidence, high motivation, educational credentials, high quality work and interpersonal skills that could easily advance them to senior management positions, in case they were receiving sufficient support from their organisational, state and family captains. This point is manifestly being captured by Okafor et al. (2011), when accentuating the fact that women managers possess all the attributes for school management positions, but what affects them were individual factors as well as organisational factors within their context of operation. Thus, at times women, who are ready to avail themselves for senior positions in educational institutions, could be let down by the nature of the institution’s environment which is largely inhibitive and antagonistic to say the least (Okafor et al. 2011). Wangui (2012) sounds optimistic that more women representation could be pushed through to the management position levels in organisations, despite the ever perennial challenges of gender barriers that need to be contained. One of these things women need to do to break the barriers set by society is to be assertive enough to aspire to leadership positions, to apply for these management positions when they qualify for them (Pirouznia 2006). However, while there are few females who have made it into the school management positions, the fact that the top-management positions are already dominated by males means that these men also dominate the selection committees which are charged with the responsibilities for promotion into the school management positions. While the view of these males, who are into school management positions has generally been that of prejudice towards their female counterparts, the view of these few women who have made it into the school management positions remains a mystery. It is for this reason that the research title and objective of this research is double barrel in nature. Does holding a management position influence perceptions include

already promoted womenfolk who are currently in management positions in educational institutions? Of critical importance here is to find out whether women's perception of the barriers to women's promotion in management positions change when they get into these management positions or not. Understanding the perception of females who are in management positions on the issues is very important because their perception will likely affect the effort and strategies they use to champion the causes of other women who are aspiring to get into these school management positions.

METHODOLOGY

In terms of methodology, this is a qualitative research located within the interpretive research paradigm. It is qualitative in the sense that qualitative data on the reality of participants' lived experience was collected through semi-structured interviews (Welman et al. 2005). Literature has shown that "interviews, especially ... semi-structured ones are best for qualitative research [like this] because they offer considerable researcher flexibility" (Woods 2011: 1). The researchers were, however, able to use systematic thematic coding to turn such qualitative data into quantitative data that was reported in Table 1 in this research. Thus, while the researchers are well aware that an attempt to use qualitative methods to extrapolate quantitative data is "dangerous"; Abeyasekera (2005: 1) viewed that, "the use of quantitative procedures in analysing qualitative information can also lend greater credibility to the research findings by providing the means to quantify the degree of confidence in the research results". Therefore, while the percentages reported in Table 1 are numeric/ quantitative in nature, the analysis in this research should be treated for what it is: qualitative research. Numbers and figures are only used to reinforce qualitative data, which is reported and analysed in this research. The participants of the research come from 5 of the 21 primary schools of the Lulekani Circuit in Mopani District of Limpopo Province. These five public primary schools were sampled through the stratified sampling procedure. The main criteria for categorising schools were based on them being either urban or rural area schools. "Out of these five primary schools that participated in this research three are in the rural areas and two in the

urban area of the district" (Mathevula 2013: 38). The other criteria for stratification were whether the schools are 'fee paying' or 'no fee paying' schools (Uwizeyimana and Moabelo 2013: 115). All the schools in the rural areas are no fee paying schools; while the two schools in the urban area are fee-paying schools. The names of the schools are withheld for the purpose of confidentiality and will only be referred to as school A, B, C, D and E. Lehlaha (2011) maintains that a relatively small number of participants systematically selected from the larger population under study, can provide the researchers with an adequate higher degree of probability that the selected sample will be a true reflection of the whole population. This is, and has been the conviction in the literature when resorting to this kind of manageable sampling.

The problem under study, namely, whether the perception of gender barriers to women's promotion to management positions of those respondents in management positions differ from those who are not holding them, necessitated the stratified sampling procedure. This is, in view of issues of gender barriers being multiple, sophisticated and changing (Eagly and Carli 2009). For the purpose of gender and position balance in this study, the total number of respondents amounted to twenty educators. Breaking the sampled number down in terms of gender, the five stratified sampled primary schools yielded eight male respondents (four in management positions and four not in management positions) and another twelve female respondents (four in management positions and eight not in management positions). One of the reasons for having more female research participants, and in particular, more women who are not in school management positions is because the females are the one being underrepresented, not males. It is, however, the view of the researchers that the views of male educators should not be ignored in this analysis because they are the one who dominate the selection committees and are often accused of being the reason why females are still under represented in school management positions. In addition, the research itself is not about different perception between genders. It is about the difference in terms of views held by the educators who are occupying school management positions and those who do not occupy them. The female educators who are not in management positions were specifically add-

ed because the researchers assumed they might have a different opinion on the issues affecting their continued underrepresentation. At least, one female and one male educator who hold management positions and one male and one female educator who were not in management positions were interviewed in each of the participating schools. An individual interview with each of the respondents lasted for between thirty and forty minutes. Responses were audio taped to minimize the loss of vital information and to enhance the accuracy and trustworthiness of the collected data (Chabaya et al. 2009). Notes-taking was as well performed to augment the captured research data. The researchers concluded the process of data collection when convinced that the aim of the study has been accomplished and that data generated from the interviews were saturated (Creswell 2010; Nel 2011).

To sum up, the capturing, coding and analysis into themes helped to generate both qualitative and quantitative data that is reported throughout this research. An inductive approach to analysing the responses from the research participants was undertaken to allow patterns, themes and categories to emerge rather than being imposed prior to data collection and analysis (Maykut and Morehouse 1999). Similar responses were grouped together into categories which were subsequently utilised for the discussion of this study's findings. The identification of themes, provided depth to the insight (Nieuwenhuis 2007) about the individual views held by both female and males who hold and those who do not hold any school management positions in relation to the causes of women underrepresentation in management positions. In terms of reporting the findings of this research, all the audiotaped data have been transcribed and typed verbatim first and similar codes were aggregated together to form a major idea from the data (Creswell 2010). Ultimately, the investigation emerged with themes which the investigator categorised and applied to discuss the findings of this study (LeCompte and Preissle 1993). The aggregates of these findings are statistically and thematically reported in the following paragraphs.

FINDINGS

As indicated in the research methodology section above, the researcher used semi-structured

interviews to find out the different views held by those educators who are in management positions and those who are not. Table 1 shows that 100% of the respondents who hold school management positions and 92% of respondents who do not hold any school management position think that conflict with family responsibilities is a barrier to women's promotion to school management positions. It also informed that 100% of both categories of respondent believe that women's lack of aspiration is the problem. Fifty (50%) of respondents holding school management positions and 67% of respondents who do not hold school management positions think that gender stereotypes are the problem. Only 33% of respondents who do not hold any school management positions think that female educators' uncertainty about their own abilities is the cause of underrepresentation of women in school management positions. No respondent holding school management position has mentioned hiring and promotion practices as the problem while all (100%) of respondents who do not hold school management positions think these practices are problematic. Lack of mobility is mentioned by 87.5% of respondents holding school management positions and 100% of respondents who are not holding school management positions think lack of mobility for women is the problem. About 50% of people holding school management positions and 67% of respondents who do not hold them think that lack of (family and co-workers') support is the barrier of women's promotion in school management positions. All (100%) the respondent holding school management position think women are fit and capable to hold school management position if given the opportunity. Only 8% of respondents who do not hold school management position disagree. All (100%) respondents in school management positions and 75% of respondents who do not hold school management positions think that lack of networking is the main obstacle to women's promotion in school management positions. Following is a discussion and interpretation of the findings summarised in this section.

DISCUSSION

The present study is undergirded by three models, namely, the individual, the systemic and the cultural perspectives. Individual perspective

looks to women as individuals for the cause of their relative failure to attain school management positions in terms of personal "traits, characteristics, abilities, or qualities" (Uwizeyimana and Mathevula 2014: 1204, citing Growe and Montgomery 2000). Individual attitudes, such as self-image and confidence, motivation, and aspirations also fall into this cultural perspectives domain (Uwizeyimana and Mathevula 2014: 1205, citing Pirouznia and Sims 2006). The belief associated with this model is that women are not assertive and not qualified enough to aspire to leadership positions and, therefore, are the one to blame for their own continued underrepresentation into management positions (Pirouznia and Sims 2006). There is a view that the systemic perspective turns our attention away from the individual to the educational system itself and its policies and practices (Khumalo 2006: 3). According to this model, it is the organizational structures, not the individual's own 'lack of knowledge, skill and willingness to work hard, desire and aspiration to higher positions' that condition women's behaviours and attitudes in the workplace (Uwizeyimana and Mathevula 2014: 1205, citing Welbourne 2005: 1; Pirouznia and Sims 2006). According to this model, the problems are, therefore, external rather than internal, to women (Neidhart and Carlin 2003). The cultural model emphasizes those cultural and social norms that encourage discriminatory practices. According to this model, the ideology of patriarchy can explain why men, and not women, occupy the formal leadership positions in schools and society (Pirouznia and Sims 2006). Based on the cultural model, most of the authors seem to pointing to the issues such as gender "stereotyping and sex-role stereotyping, as well as family responsibilities" (Uwizeyimana and Mathevula 2014 citing Warsame 2006; Chuma and Ncube 2010; Osumbah 2011).

In the present study, the three models, namely, the individual, the systemic and the cultural perspectives which are framing this study, dovetail and amalgamate into the Critical theory (Growe and Montgomery 2000). The Critical theory is a philosophy that centres on unmasking the truth (Higgs and Smith 2006). Truth in this context refers to expounding clearly whether the perceptions on women underrepresentation, is in anyway affected by the fact that respondents are occupying any school management positions or not. The very same theory stresses that truth

very often serves the status quo (Growe and Montgomery 2000). This signifies that where there is underrepresentation of women in school management position of an educational institution, there is a great likelihood that, that kind of practice is deliberate and thus serving the interests of those perpetuating that nefarious practice. Men are often quoted in the literature as being the sole beneficiary of the women underrepresentation in management positions of any organisations (Uwizeyimana and Mathevula 2004). Men's overrepresentation in these management positions suggests they have access to well-paying posts, they hold positions of powers and control, they, not only direct policies, but also direct policy implementation to maintain the status quo (Smith-Doerr 2004), but the few women in these powerful positions also get to benefit in terms of better salaries, power and social status like their male counterparts. In line with the famous aphorism: "Power tends to corrupt [*both men and women*], and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (Uwizeyimana 2012: 133, citing Lord Action 1834-1902 as cited in Heywood 2002: 7), did getting access to the generally men's benefits turn these women into adopting males' perception of why women remain underrepresented into school management positions? Table 1 presents the summary of the

Table 1: Perceptions of those in school management positions vs. those respondents not in management positions

<i>Type of barrier to women</i>	<i>(%) Educators-Holding management positions</i>	<i>(%) Educators-Not holding management positions</i>
Conflict with family responsibilities	100	92
Women's lack of aspiration	100	100
Gender stereotypes	50	67
Female educators uncertainty about own abilities	100	33
Hiring and promotion practices	0	100
Lack of mobility	87.5	100
Lack of support	50	67
Women not fit to hold management positions	0	8
Lack of networking	100	75

different views held by the educators who are in management positions and those who are not. The outcomes of thematic coding in the following paragraphs are also aligned with those general perspectives, namely the individual, the systemic and the cultural perspectives which have been identified in the current literature.

The Individual Perspectives

Some of the reported individual perspectives include females' fitness to hold management positions and their uncertainty about their God given management abilities. Indications are that much of the views held on women managers, particularly by their male counterparts, are unfounded myths that actually do not belong to this era. For instance, all (100%) respondents in management positions and 92% of those who are not in management positions agree that women are fit to hold management positions. However, despite this finding, there remains a category of female educators apparently those who are in school management positions, who continue to harbour the view that as females, they are dubious and self-sceptical about their own abilities to successfully manage and lead learning institutions (Oplatka and Tamir 2009). One of the female principal remarked on the need for women to be affirmed by others:

'Very few female educators are aware of their own capabilities while the majority are not aware of their talent and skills. This is a barrier because they will wait for someone to tell them that they can be capable managers before they can start aspiring for management positions'.

Such view was, however, rejected by at least most of the female respondents who are not in management position who said *'they are aware of their God given leadership abilities'*. The emergence of divergent rather than convergent views on women leaders in school management positions being uncertain about their abilities to productively and profitably lead and manage an institution of learning is not entirely astonishing if one takes into account the fact that patriarchy has conditioned females to be seen and see themselves as home-makers (Prentice and Carranza 2002). One of the female principals summarised the views of those in management positions, both males and females, by arguing that:

'Females can be as good leaders as their male counterparts but they often suffer from a belief that by keeping one's head down and working hard, you get noticed. This can be the main problem as this can lead to the lack of advertising themselves to others'.

The fact that few women have started noticing their God given abilities to manage suggest a gradual and positive change in the self-image of women is taking place. Therefore, the only thing the women who have realised their God given ability to manage have to do is to assert themselves and to fearlessly campaign for their own, and other women's emancipation (Prentice and Carranza 2002).

The Systemic Perspectives

Some of the reported systemic perspectives relate to the question of the promotion practices and the women's ability to network. One of the findings in this study centres on the hiring and promotion policies and their deficiency and defectiveness against the female gender. Discriminatory hiring and promotion procedures are uncalled for and illicit according to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). All educators who are not in management positions (60% of the respondents), agreed that unfair practices continue to exist when it comes to appointments to promotion positions at schools. One of the female educators, who was not in a management position gave her perception of gender stereotyping coming into play in these selection processes in her claim that:

'There is no fairness in the short listing and interview processes; the interview committees are bias against the female educators because they have the mentality that women are not good managers'.

This view was, however, challenged by all males and females respondents who have already attained the school management position saying that *'the promotion practices no longer constitute barriers to female educators'*. The analysis of the findings of this study shows no agreement among participants in management positions and those who were not, on the issue of unfair hiring and promotion practices. While both male and female respondents who were not in management positions (60% of the sample) were of the opinion that the existence of good policies was not manifestly assisting female ed-

ucators in achieving promotions; both male and female respondents who were in management positions (40% of the sample) think they do assist. The availability of contradictory views by research respondents on the matter of dubious promotional practices in school management positions is coming as no surprise because those who believe these policies do help are those who have already benefited from them, while those who disagree are those who have not yet benefited from them.

Perhaps, the major barrier to women's promotion is the claim about females' lack of ability to network. The technocratic world within which we currently live necessitates various forms of networking, collaboration and coordination within colleagues and beyond. Where such a networking is missing, there are likely to be unpleasant consequences (Rhodes and Brundrett 2006). Hence, one of the findings in this study centres on lack of networking by women leaders and managers as a serious obstacle to those women's promotion in school management positions. There seems to be no difference between respondents in management positions and those who are not on this issue. As one of the respondents remarked that:

'Competent or not competent, it will not be easy for you to get promotion if you are not connected. I observed so many competent people fail to get promotion because they were not connected. The moment they start to connect themselves with other people they were promoted'.

The review of literature advises that minimal networking by today's female leaders and managers could be explained in terms of lack of available female role models. Further, this could be the product of minimal mentoring systems in the teaching profession.

Cultural Perspectives

Some of the reported cultural perspectives include gender stereotype and women's lack of willingness to relocate (Omukaga et al. 2007). In the context of this study, gender stereotyping is closely tied to gender bias and gender prejudices. Another twin challenge difficult to detach from gender stereotyping is sex-role stereotyping (Prentice and Carranza 2002). Together they help to account for the underrepresentation of the womenfolk in school management positions

(Akpinar-Sposito 2012). It is fascinating when mixed reactions are secured from the research respondents pertaining to the issue of gender stereotyping (Sczesny and Stahlberg 2002). For instance, one category of research participants, especially the males, was vocal in declaring that *'gender stereotyping was not having a share in the underrepresentation of womenfolk in school management position'*. The other category, especially the females saw things differently in the sense of touting gender stereotyping to be the main reason why the multitudes of womenfolk remained underrepresented at the school management level. One of the female educators explained how gender stereotyping comes into play in the selection processes by arguing that:

'There is no fairness in the short listing and interview processes; the interview committees are bias against the female educators because they have the mentality that women are not good managers'.

Therefore, the different views in this analysis seem to be more gender based, rather than being based on holding a management position or not. Despite the divergent and mixed reactions by research respondents over gender stereotype as an obstacle, literature study plainly confirms it as such. However, as mentioned above, besides the problem of gender stereotype, women's under representations seems to be also as a result of their family responsibilities which make them unwillingness to accept positions which require them to relocate or to travel long distances from home. One of the respondents remarked that:

'Female educators do not want to work far away from their home. They do not apply for the posts that are far away even when they meet the requirements of the posts, because they do not want to stay away from their children and husbands'.

Under normal circumstances, no employee has to fail to have a desire to be promoted as long as that person qualifies and enjoys perfect health to be able to discharge fresh responsibilities associated with the newly acquired promotional post. However, in this study, employees, the female ones to be specific, were found not to be eager to be part of upward mobility. The fact that there seems to be no difference between female respondents in management positions and those who are not suggests this factor is

likely to continue to have devastating consequences on women's underrepresentation into the top hierarchical structures of schools. This can only be comprehended in terms of available insufficient support systems from both the families and colleagues in institutions of learning where female educators serve.

Finally, the reality is that some organisational positions are taxing and demanding enough such that their incumbents require and deserve unwavering family and organisational support (Omukaga et al. 2007; Oplatka and Tamir 2009). That is why one of the findings in this study touts lack of support on the part of family and colleagues at the workplace to be contributing massively to underrepresentation of female educators in school management positions. This was vindicated by most women, one of them remarking that:

'It is not easy to get support from your colleagues as a female manager. You sometimes have to employ the male leadership style in order to show your subordinates that you are in charge by being aggressive'.

In addition, all (100%) of the male respondent (both in management positions or not) also, blamed the influence of a 'patriarchal' society's for conditioning women to play dependent and submissive roles, and for being the reason members of the patriarchal society see women in this way. As one male in management position commented:

'Since patriarchy has conditioned women to see themselves as inferior, it is unreasonable to expect women to achieve independence on their own. Some talented women teachers still wish to find husbands upon whom they can be dependent'.

It is however, encouraging seeing that the predominance of the perception that women in school management positions tend to lack support from their counterparts has not scared off those women who are still aspiring to be promoted into school management positions. As Coleman (2001) would put it, these women are determined to achieve against the odds. This positive attitude is perhaps supported by the fact that some of the females' respondents who are not in management position reported seeing women performing successfully in management positions, their performance in these positions comparing more than favourably with that of men. In one of the respondents' own words:

'It is wrong to say women have weakness when it comes to management and leadership positions. We have seen so many women managers who are doing very well in their positions. Some men are worse than women in leadership position. Nowadays women are empowered to take positions and doing very well compared to male'.

Despite this positive attitude of women who are not in management position, the review of literature attested to the point that lack of colleagues and family support as well as excessive family responsibility wreaks havoc to some female educators who could have availed themselves for school management positions.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this research was to investigate to what extent holding a management position affects the educators' perception on the causes of underrepresentation of women in school management positions. The analysis of the data collected from 20 participants in the five schools of Lulekani Circuit in the Province of Limpopo, South Africa in terms of the three models: the individual perspective model, the systemic gender bias model and the cultural model generated mixed results. The results were contradictory in the sense that there were incidences in which the respondents in school management positions differ with the perception of the respondents who are not currently holding any school management position. The most important finding is, however, that there seems to be intra-gender differences based on whether the respondents were in management positions or not. For instance, the female respondents who are currently in management positions no longer complain about the inefficacy and slow implementation of the laws governing gender equity in the work place. Thus, based on these contradictory views, it can be concluded that occupying school management positions does indeed influence the female respondents' perceptions on some, but not all factors that literature have identified and blamed for perpetuating women's underrepresentation into school management positions. Therefore, hence this research has identified incidences in which the perception of women in school management positions differ with that of their female colleagues who are not in these management positions; the voice of the

women who are not in management positions should also be given sufficient attention by future researchers, gender equity activists and policy makers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The fact that the educators who are in school management positions often disagree with those who are still aspiring to achieve these positions on certain issues that keep women underrepresented in school management positions presents a serious challenge to the women's emancipation, gender equity and the fight against gender-based discrimination in the school management. If such contradictions between the views of women in school management positions and those who are not are not properly managed the women who have been assimilated by men into school management position may find it difficult to lobby for the speedy elimination of gender-based discrimination practices on the behalf of their female colleagues. It is, however, important to stress the point that the generalizability of the findings of this research is limited to the public primary schools in the Lulekani Circuit, Mopani District, Limpopo Province in South Africa where the research was conducted. However, while 20 "respondents" is too small a number to do any meaningful generalisation of the results to a larger population, the findings of this research are able to highlight the issues of different opinion between those in management positions and those who are not which have generally been ignored in the current literature. Thus, it would be very useful to conduct large scale researches to find out the extent to which the women who are currently occupying school management positions are willing to help or support other women who want to be appointed into top school management positions across different regions, provinces, cultures, countries and continents.

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