CHAPTER 1
ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In 2004, South Africa celebrated 10 years of freedom, and in August women have celebrated 48 years of women’s activism. South African women have come a long way and yet the battle for women empowerment still rages on. Women have not yet fully achieved equal status. In fact, the struggle for women leadership has intensified in a sense that nowadays-influent positions are also associated with sensitive perks and career patching, which means women are more than ever seen as a threat in relation to the occupation of these positions.

Women are faced with challenges when they have to apply for or be placed in management in schools. This study seeks to explain why the number of female principals at Ekurhuleni East High Schools is less than of male colleagues. Considering the fact that the ratio between female educators and male educators favours women, it is questionable why management of schools is assigned to males. This brings us to the challenges women have to deal with when they are supposed to be selected for management positions. Ozga (1993:4) supports the above statement and argue that women form the majority of the work force in education: yet they are underrepresented in its management.

Women under-representation is and can be attributed to the treatment women receive because of their gender. Thus, the major barrier to selection and recruitment of women is gender. Women are seen as less than and different from men. Interestingly, gender has somehow become synonymous with women. The teaching profession in South Africa has long been characterized by unequal treatment of women in education.
Other problems associated with career progress of women are devaluation of women, lack of support system, low self-confidence, which can be attributed to the fact that they are women and the position they are in, is seen as being male dominated.

Wisker (1996:94) notes that how successful they might be, but women were aware of times when they had been ignored, put down, patronized, sidestepped, silenced, overlooked, criticized and denied because of their gender.

This assignment of less value to women takes the form of attitudes that favours males over females for administrative positions at schools. These negative attitudes become discriminatory actions, when women seek senior administrative positions in schools. The teaching profession in South Africa has long been characterized by an unequal treatment to women educators.

This study attempts to show that there are barriers playing a major role in selection of women to management positions, the effects of inequalities when women are in question and the unfair discrimination against women. Education management, like management elsewhere, is largely done by men, and is therefore defined by men. Not only are women managers largely absent from the service in which they form the majority of the workforce, management as practiced by women is also absent from discussion of educational management.

Despite the many changes, which have taken place in education in recent years, women in management positions are still in minority. Pigford and Joosen (1993:15) point out that although more women are meeting formal specific requirements, fewer women are able to survive the informal screening process that, assess candidate’s ability to fit into the position of educational management.
1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The reason for this study is to bring to light the difficulties faced by women. Gender inequality is the main bone of contention. Women are being treated unfairly when positions of management have to be filled.

Sometimes it is as if they are not good enough to occupy senior management positions. They are made to be in the shadow of their male colleagues so as to make them feel incomplete. However competent they may be, because of the way they are being rated, they don’t perform to the best of their ability. They are being put under a lot of stress just because they are females.

Considering the number of high Schools in Ekhurhuleni most of them are managed by males. Because of these factors women aspiring to be in management positions feel threatened by the male superiority that is being emphasized. They feel their attempts won’t be recognized because the emphasis, as the voice of Sadty (2004:18) puts it in its topic: ‘Women and Leadership’, that gender policies and quota systems are not focused on gender struggle in relation to women leadership. Another challenge facing the labour movement in relation to gender is the lack of workplace-focused programmes.

One general challenge facing the danger struggle is that few women understand the concept of gender struggle, and the legacy of oppression weighs heavily on women in the male dominated area. This study researches how gender affects the selection and factors that are in place as regards their placement.
1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the past women were deliberately denied the opportunity to explore themselves in the leadership role in managing schools. The role of managing was attached to men, as they were unfairly given the high status of leadership.

The problem of discrimination and prejudice are the main barriers when recruitment and selection of schools principals is concerned. Women feel that they are being marginalized because of their gender. Bush and West-Burnham (1996:179) state that despite the fact that the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 makes direct or indirect discrimination illegal, women still rate discrimination and prejudice as the greatest deterrent to their career progression.

Dealing with the challenges that women face, the problem that needs to be addressed is how to make sure that no one is prejudiced because of their gender as it is a violation of human rights as stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. When filling posts, both men and women should be treated equally. Gender insensitivity, stereotyping and discrimination should be eradicated by putting laws in the place. The problem of the study revolves around the fair and equal inclusion of women in leadership and management of schools in Gauteng with special reference to the Ekurhuleni East High Schools.

The following questions are an attempt to bring forth the difficulties women are facing as they strive for career progression:

- What are the challenges associated with the recruitment and selection of women into management positions?
- Are there in-service training to empower managers?
- Are there laws in place to protect women who are in these management positions?
• What are the perceptions about women holding management positions in schools?

1.4 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The problem in this study is the way in which women are denied promotions because of their gender. Gender inequality is playing a major role in this instance. The aim of this research is to highlight how gender inequality affects the selection and recruitment of women into management positions.

In order to achieve the general aim the following more specific aims are delineated:

• Causes of women under-representation in education management.
• The kind of treatment women receive from males in the same positions as they are.
• Investigate how laws can be used to help women in management positions.
• Gender differences in Leadership.

1.5 METHODS OF RESEARCH

1.5.1 The research Paradigm

In this research the qualitative methods of research will be used. Qualitative researchers often attempt to study human actions. The primary goal of study using this approach is defined as describing and understanding rather than explaining human behaviour.

In this attempt to differentiate between qualitative and quantitative approaches, Dabbs (1982:32) cited in Berg (1998”3) indicates that the notion of quality is
essential to the nature of things. On the other hand, quality is elementally an amount of something. Quality refers to the what, how, when, and where of a thing, its essence and ambience.

The current study is best suited to the qualitative research approach because this approach focuses on describing and interpreting the events, behaviour and actions of the participants in their natural setting (Bell, 1993:111). Open-ended questions will be used during the interviews while the verbal and non-verbal forms of communication of the participants will be noted (See section 3.1.1).

1.5.2 The research method

The researcher will get permission to conduct interviews with the educators at the three public high schools in the Ekurhuleni-East district. The researcher will observe the participants in their natural setting, conduct focus group interviews and analyse documents pertaining to the leadership of women (See section 3.2).

1.5.3 Sampling

The sample will comprise the principal, one deputy principal and one head of department from each of the three public high schools in the Ekurhuleni-East district. The participants will be randomly selected and will include both genders (See section 3.3).

1.5.4 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis involves an inductive process whereby data is organized into categories and patterns or relationships are identified (Bernard, 2000:145). In the current study the researcher will capture the direct words of the participants
by using a high quality tape recorder and comprehensive field notes. Coding techniques will be used to categorize the responses according to their individual perspectives (See section 3.5).

1.5.5 The researcher’s role

The researcher will act ethically and legally and will strive to adhere to all the requirements of the Helsinki Declaration. The researcher will get written permission to conduct the study and the participants will be assured of the strictest confidentiality and anonymity (Bogdan, 2003:68). The researcher will strive to be honest, objective and empathetic. The participants will be allowed to withdraw at any time without penalty or victimization and they will be protected from any forms of abuse.

1.5.6 The trustworthiness of the study

The researcher will ensure the current study is trustworthy by being impartial and by accurately reflecting the phenomena observed during the investigation (Merriam, 1998:199). The four criteria of Guba’s model will be adhered to so that trustworthiness can be improved (See section 3.6). This study will have both internal and external validity and reliability so that the study is credible and confirmable.

Validity is defined as the ability of an instrument to measure what it is designed to measure (Bell, 1993:65) whereas reliability refers to the consistency of the measuring instrument, the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collecting (See section 3.6).
Qualitative research thus refers to the meaning, concepts, definition, characteristics, metaphor, symbol and description of things. In contrast, quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things.

Qualitative research also involves several methods of data collection, such as focus groups, field observation, in depth interviews, and case studies. In all these methods the questioning approach is varied. In other words, although the research enters the project with a specific set of questions, follow up questions are developed as needed. The variables in qualitative research may or may not be measured or quantified.

In some cases, qualitative research has certain advantages. The method allows a researcher to view behavior in a natural setting without the artificiality what is sometimes experienced in experimental or survey research. In addition, qualitative techniques can increase a researcher’s depth of understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. This is especially true when the phenomenon has not been investigated previously. Finally qualitative methods are flexible and allow the researcher to pursue new areas of interest.

Those are however, some disadvantages associated with qualitative methods. First, the sample sizes are sometimes too small (sometimes as small as one) to allow the researcher to generalize the data beyond the sample selected for the particular study.

**Wimmer and Dominick (2003:47)** state that qualitative research also involves several methods of data collection, such as telephone survey, mail survey, and internet survey. In these methods, the questioning is static or standardized all respondents are asked the same question.
Qualitative research properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and individual who inhabits these settings. Qualitative researchers, then, are most interested in how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense to their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures and social roles and so forth.

*Berg (1998:7)* concludes that research methods on human beings affect how these persons will be viewed *(Bogman and Taylor, 1995)*. It remains, then, for researchers to choose their procedures keeping in mind the problems that may arise in specific research settings, among certain research groups, and in unique research circumstances.

### 1.5.7 Validating and reliability

*Babbie et al (1998:119)* states that, in the abstract, reliability is a matter of whether a particular technique applied repeatedly to the same object, would yield same result each time. Babbie et al (1998:119) states that in conventional usage, the term validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept.

To make sure that the study is reliable and valid, the subject will have to focus on these challenges. As mentioned earlier gender, devaluation of women and discrimination plays a mayor role. To have a clear view gender discrimination should be seen also by the subjects as the major cause of them being denied the chances of being promoted to managerial positions.

Reliability in measurement is the same as reliability in any other context. For example, a reliable person is one who is dependable, stable and consistent over time. An unreliable person is unstable end unpredictable and may be one way
today and another way tomorrow. Similarly if measurements are consistent from one session to another, they are reliable and can be believed to some degree. 

May (1993:68) mention that the research is valid when the conclusions are true. The study is reliable when the findings are repeatable. Reliability and validity are requirements for both the design and the measurement of the research. At the level of the research design, we examine the conclusion and ask whether they are true and repeatable. In the proposal, as Baker (1988:105) puts it, a clear definition of the main concept or concepts must be given. The general question of measurement should be discussed so that it is clear that the potential problems in measuring the concepts have been thoroughly thought out. These two critical issues: validity, that is, whether the measurement of a concept in fact produces a result that truly represents what the concept is supposed to mean, and reliability, that is, whether the measurement will lead to consistent enough outcomes, if it were to be repeated, that one could have some confidence in the result.

Baker (1988:119) said the validity of a measure depends upon the correspondence between a concept and the empirical indicators that supposedly measure it. In short, validity is a property of measuring instrument that you want to test for. The most important criterion of a measure is its validity, that is, whether the measure is measuring what it intends to measure. It is also important that a measure be consistent, such what when it is repeatedly used, it will yield the same results. This consistency in measurement is referred to as reliability. However, if a measure is not valid, it is irrelevant if it is reliable. This will be discussed in chapter 3.

1.6 THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The current study will be conducted only in 3 public high schools in the Ekurhuleni-East district due to time constraints, fiscal constraints and traveling
distance. The study will focus only on schools in Etwatha and Daveyton and will only be done in English and not in the languages of the other race groups. No independent schools (private schools) were studied. The study did not include all the nine provinces and rural schools were not included.

1.7 ETHICAL ASPECTS

According to May (1993:54) the word “ethics” often suggest a set of standards by which particular groups or communities decide to regulate their behavior, to distinguish what is legitimate or acceptable in pursuit of their aims from what is not. A definition of ethical problems as they apply to social research is given by John Barnes. He defines ethical decisions in research as those which: arise when we try to decide between one course of action and another not in terms of expediency of efficiency but by reference to standards of what is morally right or wrong.

Barnes makes a distinction here and base ethical decisions upon principles rather than expediency. Ethical decisions are not being defined in terms of what is advantageous to the researcher of the project upon which they are working. They are concerned with what is right or just, in the interest of not only the project, its sponsors or workers, but also others who are participants in the research.

Ethical decision will therefore depend on the values of the researchers and their communities and will inform the negotiation which takes place between the researchers, sponsors, research participants and those who control the access to the information which the researchers seek (gatekeepers). The amount of control the researcher can exercise over the research process will also influence the exercise of ethical decisions themselves.
The Ethical guidelines of research and practice will be adhered to throughout the process of the research. Initially all prospective participants in these study will be contacted to gain written permission for their involvement in the research. Gauteng Department of Education, principal and the School Management Team (SMT) will be contacted in this regard. Participants will be assured that no actual names will be used in this study. Confidentiality will be respected under all circumstances.

May (1993:55) concludes that research ethics take on a universal form and are intended to be followed regardless of the place and circumstances in which the researcher finds themselves. One such doctrine is that of informed consent. Berg (1998:47) states that informed consent means the knowing consent of individuals to participate as an exercise of their choice, free from any element of fraud, deceit, duress, or similar unfair inducement or manipulation. Confidentiality is an active attempt to remove from the research records any element that might indicate the subject identity.

Kumar (1999:192) argues that in every discipline it is considered unethical to collect information without the knowledge of participants, their informed willingness, and expressed consent. Seeking informed consent ‘is probably the most common method in medical and social research’. Informed consent implies that subjects are made adequately aware of the type of information you want from them, why the information is being sought, for what purpose it will be put to, how they are expected to participate in the study, and of how it will directly or indirectly contribute to the study. It is important that the consent should also be voluntary and without pressure of any kind.

Baker (1988:76) adds that if the subject knows what the study is, understands his or her level of confidentiality in the study, comprehends the objectives of the
study, and agrees to co-operate, then the onus of invasion of privacy is lifted and the problem of coercion avoided. What is crucial here is that the subject be truly informed. First, the researcher should give the subject accurate and complete information as to the nature and purpose of the study and the part the subject will play in it. Babbie et al (2001:522) states that social research should never injure the people being studied, regardless of whether they volunteer for the study or not. The clearest concern in the protection of the subjects’ interest and well being is the protection of their identity, especially in survey research.

Baker (1988:75) states that granting information to someone who promises that you will remain completely anonymous is the maximum assurance you can receive that your privacy will not be invaded.

Baker (1988:75) states that confidentiality is a promise to keep the identity of the subjects known only to the researcher and perhaps selected members of his or her staff and to minimize in any available way the possible exposure of the subject’s identity.

1.8 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

1.8.1 Recruitment

- According to Lumby, Middlewood and Kaabwe (2003:57) recruitment is managing to attract the most appropriate application. Invancevich and Glueck (1995:154) states that a sample is set of activities an organization uses to attract candidates who have the ability and attitudes needed to help the organization achieve its objectives.
1.8.2 Selection

- According to Lumby et al (2003:57) selection is managing to appoint the most appropriate person to a job. Livy (1988:107) says it is a process of job matching, and must begin with description of the jobs to be done and the identification of personal qualities necessary for their successful execution.

1.8.3 Educational Management

Management as defined above implies the science or technique of being in charge of or has the skills to supervise the affairs of an organization. Hence, ‘educational management’ refers to a person or persons who have the educational expertise, the educationists who have the overall authority in matters that have to do with teaching and learning (education/education).

1.8.4 Democracy

Democracy refers to the government by the people, especially through elected representatives. From the concept ‘democracy’ the term ‘democrat’ derives, which implies ‘someone who is in favour of social equality’. Democratic relates to democracy or equal rights.

1.8.5 Discrimination

To discriminate means to treat something or someone as different or inferior, especially because of prejudice. Discrimination can be on the basis of colour, creed, age or gender.
The following concepts will be defined because the research revolves around them (i.e. they form the gist of the study); management, leadership, educational management, democracy, and discrimination.

1.8.6 Management

‘Management’ is an act or manner of managing, the science or technique of managing. To ‘manage’ is to be in charge of something in an organization, a business or a club. It also implies to ‘supervise’ the affairs of an organization. Management means a person or group of persons that runs the daily affairs of an organization in order to achieve the organization’s goals and objectives; also, a person or persons that have the executive control in an organization (van der Westhuizen, 1996:28).

1.8.7 Leadership

A ‘Leader’ is a person or thing that leads, especially a person with overall authority. ‘Leadership’ means being a leader with overall authority and leading by example, being exemplary and participating in the event of the organizations where one is leading (van der Westhuizen, 1996:34).

1.9 PLAN OF STUDY

Chapter 1 is intended to highlight what this research is all about.
Chapter 2 investigates what other researches have found about the challenges associated with the selection and recruitment of women into management positions. This is presented in the literature review.
Chapter 3 will focus on the empirical design.
Chapter 4 presents the analysis and interpretation of empirical data.
Chapter 5 provides the conclusion and recommendations of the study.
1.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has introduced the research project, set the parameters and the purpose of the research essay, which is to highlight the challenges associated with the selection and recruitment of women as school managers in Ekurhuleni East high schools.