Women Principals in Cyprus Primary Schools: Barriers to Accession

by

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the barriers that women principals face in Cypriot primary schools. This research had six aims including the overarching aim. The overarching aim of this research is to examine the career progress of female principals in Cyprus primary schools and to address the apparent under-representation of women in leadership positions. The research also aimed to establish the barriers that female leaders face in order to be promoted as principals, and how they can be overcome. Another aim was to establish how gender issues play a part in creating barriers to promotion as a school principal and how these may subsequently affect them in leading the school. A third consideration was to comprehend what barriers women may have faced in their childhood years and to establish whether, and to what extent, female leaders face internal and external barriers in Cyprus schools. The research also sought to identify the support or enablers that may facilitate women's career progression.

The enquiry was conducted using mixed method approaches, including both surveys and interviews. These quantitative and qualitative methods were combined to facilitate methodological triangulation. The data were collected sequentially, with the surveys preceding the interviews. This sequence was planned to obtain generalisable data first and to secure self-selected participants for the interviews. The quantitative data were collected through a whole population questionnaire survey administered to all women principals (C.187) in Cyprus primary schools, using Survey Monkey. Qualitative data were collected, from all twenty women principals who agreed to be interviewed.

The findings show that societal culture and discrimination, the influence of the patriarchal family, family and domestic responsibilities, the intersection between women's age, sex and the location of schools and professional development, were powerful influences on the career trajectory of these women primary school principals. These themes recur in several places, showing the pervasive nature of these influences on women principals in Cyprus. The thesis reports these findings and connects them to other literature on women principals. The present work is informed by contemporary feminist and gender theories.

Acknowledgements

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and no material from this thesis has been used or published previously. I confirm that the thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another University.

Maria Karamanidou

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CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

In educational systems, women remain under-represented in leadership roles, even where the majority of the workforce is female (Lumby, 2010). The purpose of this study is to examine women in principalship positions in Cyprus primary schools and the barriers that they experience as they seek accession to such positions. As more females progressively enter leadership roles in Cyprus, which traditionally have been occupied mostly by males, there is a need to conduct research to establish the experience of female leaders.

The present thesis will focus on female leaders, and include a review of conceptual and empirical literature. This will include sources focused on Cyprus, as well as international literature. These sources will be used to develop a thematic review of the relevant literature. A significant feature of these sources is their discussion of the barriers, internal and external, that affect the career progress of women leaders. The researcher refers to internal barriers as socialization, personality, aspiration level, individual beliefs, attitudes, motivation and self-image. External barriers might be the gender role, stereotyping, discrimination, lack of personal preparation, and family responsibilities. These, and other related issues will be addressed in the Cyprus context through the author's research.

Theoretical Context

<u>Introduction</u>

This section reviews the literature about gendered leadership. The theoretical literature review will focus on feminist and gender theories. Research on gendered leadership in developed and developing countries, Small Island Developing States, Greece, and Cyprus is presented. The researcher also identifies and highlights commonalities in gendered theories and practice.

The extensive literature provides several explanations for these persistent forms of gender dissimilarity, including traditional approaches towards men in decision-making leadership roles, the impact of the media, the function of structural barriers, for instance gender disparity in

the home and family, and in educational success (Norris and Inglehart, 2008).

Concepts of leadership

According to Hojgaard (2002), the societal conventions on the topic of gender and leadership customarily eliminate women, and top leadership is mostly considered to be a masculine domain. She adds that the cultural construction of leadership is responsible for such differences and this is only now being altered or contested as women gain admittance to leadership positions. Linked to this, Coleman (2010:327) states that the 'identification of management and leadership with the male is pervasive'.

At the organisational level, women are affected by traditional and deeply embedded patriarchal values and practices that devalue transformation processes aimed at achieving gender equity (Chisholm, 2001). At the social level, women are hindered by a lack of support from their families and the cultural association of principalship with masculinity, which assumes every principal has some form of support at home. Yet the inequalities at all levels are still stark, and hence are a major policy concern (Chisholm, 2001).

Schein (1994) has shown that unconscious or semi-conscious assumptions about maleness and leadership are held by most men, to a lesser extent by women, and by both younger and older age groups in a range of international settings. Schmuck (1996) adds that these views shape the way that women leaders are perceived and perceive themselves.

Similarly, Coleman's (2004) research, based on the orthodoxies related to gender and leadership, signifies that women as principals often mention some 'commonplace misunderstandings which are brushed aside by the women who mentioned them, but they still have to be regularly overcome and are indicative of the underlying assumption that the leader is male and that women as leaders are 'outsiders'' (Schmuck, 1996). 'The fact that women are under-represented in leadership and management positions is nothing new' (Lumby, Crow and Pashiardis, 2008:121). It is an arguable point that arbitrary partitions among leadership are connected with immutable conjectures that the public world of work, with its persistent focus on efficiency, competitiveness, hierarchy, strategy and the unchallengeable logic of the market, is equally a male and masculine domain (Lumby, Crow and Pashiardis, 2008).

A number of previous studies have shown that organizations function in gendered ways (for example Blackmore, 1999; Chase, 1995) and, as a result, women are less represented at high levels of leadership and decision-making (Coleman, 2001). 'In a number of countries, for instance England, Australia and the US, the under-representation of males in the teaching profession has caused considerable public concern and debate' (Lumby, Crow and Pashiardis, 2008:122). This concern is twofold: the reduction of numbers of men, and the increase in the number of women, in classrooms (Lumby, Crow and Pashiardis, 2008). Nevertheless, there does not appear to be a comparable disquiet surrounding the numerical dominance of men in principalship positions is schools. This noticeable deficiency of concern may lie in the rhetoric of the authoritative masculine image (Linghard and Douglas, 1999; Shakeshaft, 1987; Schein, 1994, 2001) that is ideally suited to the hierarchical organization of schools, schooling and educational leadership (Lumby, Crow and Pashiardis, 2008).

Cultural factors

A range of factors are at work in hindering women's aspirations to leadership positions. Sadie (2005) argues that a major constraint faced by women is the patriarchal system, where decision making powers are in male hands.

'The fact that women tend to take the major responsibility for family and the home, coupled with the cultural identification of men with leadership, do make it more difficult for women to take on management roles in education and elsewhere' (Coleman, 2001:76). As a consequence, women teachers do not apply for senior positions because of their family commitments: 'This issue is a major factor inhibiting career progress for teachers in Greece (Kaparou and Bush, 2007). 'The evidence is that motherhood takes priority over work and hampers women in balancing their work and family life. Women often have to make a choice between their career and children. Those who succeed despite this role conflict usually have other people looking after their families' (Kaparou and Bush, 2007:228).

An additional consideration is the awareness by the selection panel that mothers will be less satisfactory as principals than men because of the latter's childcare duties (Kaparou and Bush, 2007).

Domestic issues

Underlying the position of women in leadership positions is an implicit view that the leader is one who works harder, longer, is free from domestic limitations, creates quick and correct decisions and commands respect from staff and students so that there are no discipline problems.

The cultural identification of women as caring, domestic, and implicitly of lesser importance and status than men, needs to be examined. In addition, 'support and encouragement from their husbands, families and peers influence women's attitudes to promotion' (Kaparou and Bush, 2007:230). However, men do not regularly help and support their partners (Bush and Coleman, 2000). Women do not feel able to hold senior positions in education due to the dual demands of management and family responsibilities (Kaparou and Bush, 2007). This problem is also evident in other countries (Coleman, 2001) and the present research aims to explore if this issue is also prevalent in Cyprus. The principal's role is a challenging one for both women and men but Maragkoudaki's (1997) research demonstrates that women principals have to confront further difficulties and demands than their male counterparts.

Socialization theories

Socialization theories stress that culture and domestic beliefs are necessarily learned through the continuation of traditional gender roles learned in other spheres, such as home and family, local society, schools and the workplace (Kiamba, 2008). Social role theories typically propose that men and women may perhaps sometimes be at variance in manifest behaviour, but not because they have inherent gender-differentiated psychologies. Instead, whilst males and females appear to be different, it is because they inhabit different social or gender roles and have received dissimilar socialization experiences throughout their development (Eagly 1987; Wood and Eagly 2002).

Hadjipavlou (2003) states that, in Cyprus, women have not been given space to articulate their achievements and have been given even fewer resources to help them to aspire to leadership positions. One major reason is the structural organization of Cypriot society, which can be characterized as patriarchal and gender specific. The structures of domination have prevented women from actively participating in, and contributing to, the enrichment of public discourses (Hadjipavlou, 2003).

Women who seem to 'make it' as leaders often end up meeting the requirements of the strong male culture in the work place, and adopting male leadership styles (Coleman, 2002).

As a consequence of all these factors, women are still under-represented in many government and non-government organizations, especially in positions of power and leadership (De la Rey, 2005).

<u>'Glass ceiling' concepts</u>

'The excitement about the presence of just a few women in powerful positions raises the question of why, with women's roles changing so dramatically in the last decade, the numbers of women in these positions are so small. Indeed, the concept of the glass ceiling was introduced by the Wall Street Journal to account for this disjunction (Hymowitz and Schellhardt, 1986) and has since been acknowledged by journalists and the public as an external but powerful barrier that allows women to advance only to a certain level' (Carli and Eagly, 2001:630). Where women have confronted the norm in terms of the dominance of male leading positions, they are likely to face particular difficulties in reconciling home and work and are making choices, which involve the most basic human instinct of reproduction (Coleman, 2003).

<u>Barriers arising from feminine leadership styles</u>

The barriers that many women face may be internal or external. This could be due to the way they lead, as there seems to be evidence to suggest that many women lead in a different way from men (De la Rey, 2005). For example, women tend to represent a more participatory approach, are more autonomous, allow for authority and information allocation, are more responsive, more developmental than men, focus on relationships and allow others to make contributions through designation (De la Rey, 2005; Growe and Montgomery, 2000; Tedrow, 1999).

Women are more or less persecuted for seeking an executive position. This is largely due to society's attitude toward appropriate male and female roles. In their conversation regarding barriers women face in leadership positions, Growe and Montgomery (2000) say that, in contrast to men, women accept little or no support to look for leadership positions.

Coleman (2002:122) adds that 'the stereotypical attitudes support men in achievement in the public domain and locate women in a supporting role, derived from an atavistic identification of women with the private domain of domesticity and motherhood'. Related to this, since women tend to have the main responsibility for children, the decision to have a child, and whether to have more than one, is difficult for a woman who aims for a leadership position (Coleman, 2002).

Women may also be hesitant to take up leadership positions because of the stress involved. For women who do seek leadership positions, several factors contribute to this stress, comprising balancing work and family, domestic violence and discrimination (Cole, 2006; Gardiner and Tiggermann, 1999). The issue of children, or family, is one that concerns many women as they make the choice to be promoted into leadership positions. Therefore, it is not surprising that some women are perceived as avoiding success in order to care for their families (Coleman, 2002).

Gender in leadership

Historically, gender debarred most females from becoming leaders. The theory that males were more suitable than females for leadership positions was hardly ever questioned. There has been considerable research on the differences in leadership styles among men and women (Reynolds, White, Brayman and Moore, 2008). The majority of research regarding gender and leadership has concentrated on comparing male and female leaders.

Previous research, looking in general at women's senior level promotion, has problematized the process from either a societal (macro) or individual (micro) perspective paying less attention to organizational (meso-level) influences (Ely and Meyerson, 2000) and the interrelationships between these three dimensions. Each level is defined in the following way: macro-level influences include societal factors (e.g. societal views about women); meso-level influences include organizational processes, rituals and routinised behaviours (habitus) at work that lead to inequality of opportunity; micro-level influences are related to individual power, motivation and agency to create change (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

The main distinction between the two approaches to leadership are the task-oriented style (associated with males), and maintaining interpersonal relations by nurturing others' confidence and wellbeing (associated with females) (Barnett, 2010). 'It seems that the impact of gender on leadership is considerable, first of all in terms of differential access to power' (Coleman, 2003:337).

Coleman (2003:328) adds that:

> The numbers of women in leadership positions are irrelevant as, no matter what proportion, they will still be operating in society

where deep-rooted constructs of society identify maleness with leadership.

Gender-based theories are essentially related to the societal construction of gender related behaviour. According to Judith and Farrell (1991), this social construction of gender is used to set a theoretical viewpoint concerning gender and their categorization.

The Cyprus Context

Cyprus is a relatively small island situated in the north-eastern segment of the Mediterranean sea, with a notable history of governance related to the ethnic composition of its population. The Cyprus population comprises two major ethnic groups: Greek Cypriots (77 percent) and Turkish Cypriots (18 percent). The remaining 5 percent includes Maronites, Armenians and Latins as well as a significant number of immigrants. The two major communities, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, have always had separate educational systems (Ross, 2008). The author's study does not focus on the educational system in the separate Turkish part of Cyprus as, since the conflict between the two communities in 1974, it is only possible to gain limited information on education there (European Commission, 2007). Throughout this thesis, where the Cyprus education system is mentioned, this relates only to the Greek Cypriot system.

Significant to Cyprus may be the influence of the ancient Greek civilization, where knowledge of theory was considered to be greater than the knowledge of practical skills (Koyzis, 1997). Moreover, Greek Cypriots have historically associated the theory of the 'educated Cypriot' to the knowledge tradition of Greece. On the whole, 'the main aim of education in Cyprus is the development of democratic citizens who in the future will be capable to contribute to the promotion of cooperation, respect and mutual understanding among the individuals and people for the prevalence of freedom, justice and peace' (Stavrides, 2000:4).

Historical and current background of the Cyprus educational system

The Cyprus educational system (CES) has always been a significant sub-system of the Cypriot society as it has articulated the society's spiritual, financial as well as technological achievements (MOEC, 2009). Moreover, most of the teachers used to be priests and the system then was decentralized. The CES then became centralized,

since the aim was to manage education and bestow all the authority on the director of education (Ministry of Education, 1994). Since Cyprus became independent in 1960, the educational system has remained centralized and began to expand quickly with a significant increase in the number of schools and teachers.

Cyprus has an adventurous history, mainly because of its geographical position at the juncture of three continents, which indirectly affected the current situation with education in Cyprus. The expansion and prosperity of the CES was interrupted by the Turkish invasion in 1974, when 42 percent of students vanished from their schools and 41 per cent of the academic staff were kept away from their workplaces by force (Ministry of Education, 1994). Turkey occupied approximately 40% of the total territory of the Republic. The Turkish invasion influenced every part of life in Cyprus, especially the economy, the education system, and the wider society. Following the 1974 invasion, the state became much more involved with pre-primary education through its establishment of nurseries and kindergartens for the thousands of refugees from northern areas. Pre-primary education was intended to support refugee families, equalize educational opportunities across economic groups, and above all to enable more mothers to secure gainful employment (Kambouri, 2012). From 1974, women had to become more resilient in trying to keep their families together. As there was a majority of refugees, women tried to make sure that the right values were embedded. This had an impact on gendered roles as more women seemed to be staying at home to raise their children, whilst men became the bread-winners.

Pashiardis (1996) points out that 'educational institutions, communities, parents and legislators are all interested in the management of schools. They all want a greater participation in the whole educational process and schools are asked to be more responsive to the demands and wishes of the society which supports them' (Pashiardis, 1996:6).

The overall aim of the CES is the growth of democratic citizens who in the future will have the potential to contribute to the promotion, cooperation, respect and mutual understanding between the individuals and people for the prevalence of liberty, justice and peace (Stavrides, 2000).

The educational system in Cyprus

The educational system in Cyprus is highly centralized and controlled by the government. The responsibility for educational policy and the administration of Cypriot schools lies with the Ministry of Education

(MOEC, 1994), as it is accountable for the development of educational policy, enforcement of educational laws and the preparation of educational bills. It also prescribes the syllabus, the curriculum and the textbooks used in all levels of education (MOEC 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007).

Cyprus has an educational system divided into four levels: pre-primary, primary education, secondary education and finally tertiary education. Laertius (2007) states that 'the foundation of every state is the education of its youth.' This self evident truth, uttered by the Greek philosopher Diogenes Laertius, signifies that, if a country does not have a good educational system, then this country's' future is at stake due to the fact that children grow up to lead the country.

According to the 10-year schooling education programme (MOEC, Annual Report, 2009), a major aim of Cypriot education is to create and secure the necessary learning opportunities for children, regardless of their age, gender, family, social background and mental abilities, so as to enable them to:

• Develop harmoniously in the cognitive, emotional and psychomotor domains, using to the maximum the means that contemporary technology offers;
• Deal successfully with various problems they may come across, including difficulties in being familiarized with the school and the wider environment;
• Promote socialization;
• Acquire positive attitudes towards learning;
• Develop social understanding, belief in human values, respect for our cultural heritage and human rights, appreciation of beauty, develop disposition to creativity and love for life and nature, in order to become sensitive in preserving and improving the environment (MOEC, Annual Report, 2009).

These values are expected to be followed by all principals, who are responsible for the school, the academic staff and the children (MOEC, 2009).

Leadership in Cyprus

A school leader's role is multi-dimensional, challenging and can affect school performance and efficiency. However, Cyprus may be deficient in programmes that train school leaders for these demands and the challenges of school leadership (Reppa, Lazaridou and Lyman, 2008).

Linked to this, Smulyan (2000:6) states that, 'leadership within a school is a dynamic process of negotiation that considers the demands of the moment, the institutional structure, and the historical definitions of power and relationships'.

To become a primary school principal in Cyprus, an applicant has to have served in the position of deputy principal for at least three years and have a minimum of 15 years of educational experience (five of which have to have been served at a school). (The World Bank, 2014). Cypriot principals are centrally selected, promoted and appointed to schools around the country by the Educational Service Commission (ESC) - a five- member independent body appointed by the President of Cyprus for a period of six years. Unlike other European countries, such as Belgium, Spain and Finland, where headship preparation is compulsory, in Cyprus teachers may enter the competition for headship when they fulfil the requirements for the post. A minimum of 15 years of satisfactory teaching experience and at least three years of service in deputy headship (Eurydice, 2013) are the sole criteria for eligibility for promotion.

In order for a teacher to be promoted as an assistant principal B, s/he has to be evaluated by the Committee of Evaluation (Inspectors). For a teacher to be evaluated by the inspectors they have to complete their fifteenth year of experience in the teaching field. These evaluations cover the following four factors:

- Professional training;
- Effectiveness on the job;
- Organization, administration, human relations;
- General behaviour and actions' (Reppa, Lazaridou, Lyman, 2008:9).

Moreover, Cypriot principals have to attend a special seminar before undertaking their new duties, which means that socialization and incorporation into their new leadership role should be straightforward (Reppa, Lazaridou and Lyman, 2008). Due to this, many people 'often see capable members of the educational community excluded from the principalship when colleagues with more years of experience take available openings' (Reppa, Lazaridou and Lyman, 2008:11).

When available positions are announced by the ESC, prospective candidates apply for the posts (Theodosiou, 2015). The applications are examined by a committee of inspectors which grants points to candidates based on three factors: (1) seniority of the staff, (2) the

numeric teacher's performance evaluations by the Inspectorate and (3) postgraduate academic qualifications that deputy principals may have. When, a short-list of the individuals who qualify for the post is compiled, an interview of qualified candidates with the ESC follows (Pashiardis, 2004a; Thody et al., 2007). Candidate principals may accumulate up to five points during the interview based on their knowledge of pedagogical and methodological subjects (one point), comprehension of the role and responsibilities of headship (one point), critical analysis of administrative and organisational aspects of headship (one point), effectiveness in communication and sufficiency of documentation (one point), personality (0.5 points) and language proficiency (0.5 points). Thus, the selection of principals is based on teaching performance evaluations conducted by school inspectors, additional qualifications held by candidates, years in service and interview results. Years in service could be a damaging factor for women who take career breaks (e.g. maternity leave).

The main disadvantage of the promotion system is the importance placed on the seniority of qualified candidates rather than their competency for headship (Athanasoula-Reppa and Lazaridou, 2008). Until 2010, promotions were made based only on seniority, as the majority of candidates had much the same academic qualifications and evaluations (Theofilides, 2004). Hence, senior teachers were mostly the ones promoted shortly before retirement (Menon-Eliophotou, 2002; Pashiardis, 2004a,b). In 2010, a careful examination of the personal characteristics of successful individuals revealed that postgraduate qualifications appear to count as an advantage for promotion to headship (Polis, 2013). Women who have children might not have the time and energy to apply for postgraduate qualifications, as this requires lots of dedication and free time, and therefore this might be disadvantageous for them. During the promotion cycles in 2012 and 2013, candidates possessing doctoral and master's degrees - relatively younger than their counterparts who did not have additional qualifications - had spent fewer years in deputy headship prior to appointment to headship (Polis, 2013). Nevertheless, appointments to headship in Cyprus remain largely based on seniority, as the three and five points allocated to master's or doctoral degree holders respectively are easily outweighed by years in service (Athanasoula-Reppa and Lazaridou, 2008).

Successful candidates are informed of the school to which they are appointed only very shortly before taking up headship (Thody et al., 2007). The allocation and transfer of primary principals across the country is based on a rotation policy held by the ESC on the basis of

transfer credits accumulated during their teaching service. The credits earned during each school year vary according to the school's size, location and distance from a teacher's residence. Typically, new principals possessing a small number of transfer credits are sent to rural schools or schools in different districts for a minimum period of two years before being transferred to a school nearer their residence. Women might be hesitant to apply for leadership positions, as they might not want to relocate away from their families for a long time. An additional barrier is that they would not want their children to change schools for the period that they will be relocating to another city (Athanasoula-Reppa and Lazaridou, 2008).

Inevitably women principals who have children and other responsibilities will consider this several times before applying for leadership positions. Principals usually serve in the same school for between two and five years, depending upon the availability of posts in each region as outlined by the educational authorities. Therefore, Cypriot principals experience short tenures in each school and they are forced to move around schools, especially during their early years in post. Consequently, women Cypriot principals experience different career phases from those in other Western countries.

The selection of school principals for leadership positions in Cyprus has been based on criteria that do not correspond with the skills and abilities that candidates considered necessary for a school organization (College of Education, 2006). Principal selection has for many years now been the result of a 'game' that has powerful political dynamics (Athanassoula 2001, 2005). The strongest emphasis in this 'game' can be found in the interview with a candidate. In fact, more often than not, the interview is the reason that mainly overshadows all other considerations. However, it should be noted that Cyprus is 'now in a period of major restructuring of processes for the selection of school principals' (Reppa, Lazaridou, Lyman, 2008:7).

Statistics related to gendered leadership

This section presents data on the proportion of female principals, compared to male principals, in Cyprus primary schools, from 1961 to 2011, which are most recent available data. The data were obtained from the Statistics Department of the Ministry of Education in Cyprus.

Throughout the past 50 years, the proportion of male principals has been significantly bigger than that of females. In 1961, there were 240 male headmasters and only 21 female leaders. From 1976 until 1981,

there was a noticeable increase in male headmasters, whilst there was only a small rise to 35 women holding leadership positions. By 1984, the number of males increased dramatically, to reach 254, while the number of female leaders increased more slowly to 42. By 1991, the number of males declined to 209 and women comprised 58 principals (see table 1.1). The term 'headmasters' appears in these official figures and portrays a sexist view of school leadership.

Σχολικό έτος School year	Διευθυντές Headmasters			Σχολικό έτος School year	Διευθυντές Headmasters		
	Άντρες Men	Γυναίκες Women	Σύνολο Total		Άντρες Men	Γυναίκες Women	Σύνολο Total
1961/62	240	21	261	1987/88	207	47	254
1962/63	245	21	266	1988/89	213	50	263
1963/64	248	21	269	1989/90	207	55	262
1964/65	241	21	262	1990/91	207	58	265
1965/66	257	21	278	1991/92	209	58	267
1966/67	265	23	288	1992/93	210	67	277
1967/68	276	27	303	1993/94	206	72	278
1968/69	277	27	304	1994/95	193	69	262
1969/70	263	26	289	1995/96	213	65	278
1970/71	273	28	301	1996/97*	-	-	-
1971/72	270	28	298	1997/98	174	82	256
1972/73	273	28	301	1998/99	180	96	276
1973/74	267	28	295	1999/00	188	101	289
1974/75	240	27	267	2000/01	370	402	772
1975/76	236	24	260	2001/02	353	461	814
1976/77	236	22	258	2002/03	320	488	808
1977/78	242	24	266	2003/04	297	501	798
1978/79	247	32	279	2004/05	293	560	853
1979/80	244	34	278	2005/06	269	577	846
1980/81	240	35	275	2006/07	252	619	871
1981/82	242	37	279	2007/08	246	627	873
1982/83	246	39	285	2008/09	223	662	885
1983/84	224	27	251	2009/10	221	662	883
1984/85	254	42	296				
1985/86	216	42	258				
1986/87	203	39	242				

Table 1.1 Teaching personnel (Headmasters and Assistant Principals) in Cyprus public primary education by gender, 1961/62-2009/1

Table 1.1 shows a sharp increase from 2000/2001. This is because the figures were modified to include assistant principals as well as principals (Ministry of Finance, 2010). This was also the year in which the figures show a majority of female leaders, but this is almost certainly attributable to the inclusion of assistant principals. By 2011, the last figures available, there were 221 male leaders and 662 females.

Overall, table 1.1 shows that there were many fluctuations regarding the numbers of male and female teachers who were promoted to leadership positions in the primary schools of Cyprus. In the 50 years since 1961, the proportion of women has increased significantly, to reach some 75% of principals and assistant principals by 2011.

To provide further evidence of under-representation, table 1.2 demonstrates the percentage of men and women becoming principals from 1961 to 2000 (Ministry of Finance, 2010). Table 1.2 shows that, on average, 20% of men became principals in Cypriot primary education between 1961 and 2000, with a much lower percentage (4%) of women taking such positions. These figures remain remarkably consistent across these four decades.

As noted above, the numbers of principals and assistant principals were merged in 2000/2001, following EU guidelines. The data for both categories of leader, by gender, are shown in table 1.2.

SCHOOL YEAR	MEN						WOMEN					
	Assistant Principals	%	Principals	%	Total	%	Assistant Principals	%	Principals	%	Total	%
2000/2001	159	35%	186	66%	345	47%	295	65%	95	34%	390	53%
2001/2002	196	36%	181	60%	377	45%	345	64%	123	40%	468	55%
2002/2003	201	37%	146	50%	347	42%	341	63%	148	50%	489	58%
2003/2004	191	35%	133	44%	324	38%	352	65%	167	56%	519	62%
2004/2005	193	32%	119	40%	312	35%	405	68%	180	60%	585	65%
2005/2006	180	30%	119	39%	299	33%	416	70%	185	61%	601	67%
2006/2007	167	27%	111	36%	278	30%	452	73%	198	64%	650	70%
2007/2008	155	25%	114	37%	269	29%	476	75%	196	63%	672	71%
2008/2009	144	22%	116	37%	260	27%	506	78%	199	63%	705	73%
2009/2010	136	21%	119	38%	255	27%	511	79%	194	62%	705	73%
2010/2011	122	19%	123	39%	245	25%	526	81%	192	61%	718	75%

Source: Educational Service Commission, 2010

Table 1.2 Gender representation in Principalship (1961-2000)

According to article 35/1969/2007 of the Public Educational Service Commission legislation (Educational Service Commission, 2010), access to headship in all public sectors is open to all qualified assistant heads irrespective of gender, provided that they have completed at least two years in the assistant head's post. However, the figures in tables 1.2 and 1.3 show that gender inequality persists in Cypriot society despite such legislation.

Women's disproportionate representation is 'a walking phenomenon' (Morton, 2002) in Cyprus, an indicator that 'things don't work properly' (Al-Khalifa, 1992:95) in the distribution of management between

genes. Women in primary education seem to have been disadvantaged in accessing leadership positions for many decades, even though they dominate the profession.

THE PERCENTAGE OF MEN AND WOMEN BECOMING PRINCIPALS
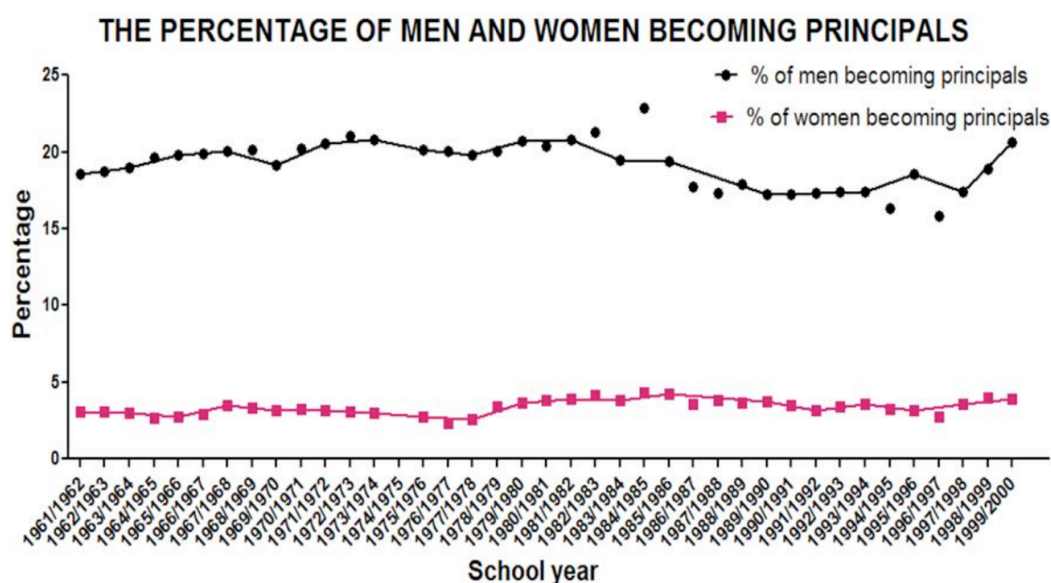
Source: Ministry of Finance, 2010

Table 1.3 Number of men and women progressing to leadership posts (2000 - 2011)

Tables 1.2 and 1.3 show that, while women's representation in principalship has steadily increased, resulting in them outnumbering men in this post since 2002/2003, women are still not present in proportion to their numbers in teaching. Moreover, women seem to concentrate in great numbers in the 'pastoral role' of assistant principal and somehow 'lose their way' to principalship. This is not the case for male principals, most of whom seem to perceive assistant headship as the first step towards principalship to which they escalate more readily than women.

Aims of the Research

The main overarching aim of this research is to examine the career progress of female principals in Cyprus primary schools and to address the apparent under-representation of women in leadership positions. The research also aims to:

1) Establish the barriers that female leaders face in order to be promoted to school leaders and how they can be overcome.

2) Establish how gender issues play a part in creating barriers to promotion as a school principal and how these can affect them in leading the school.

3) Comprehend what barriers women may have faced in their childhood years.

4) Establish whether female leaders face internal and external barriers in Cyprus schools and, if so, what these are.

5) Identify what support or enablers facilitate women's career progression.

This research should make a major contribution to knowledge on this issue in Cyprus and other small island states.

Several writers (Burns, 2001; Fennell, 2002; Moller, 2002) document female leaders' perceptions, behaviours, beliefs and experiences. The present research aims to develop a portrait of female leaders in Cyprus and to compare it with similar studies in other countries. The research also explores the leadership experiences of female principals in Cyprus schools in order to create a significant discourse for understanding school leadership nested in social, political and cultural contexts. These female leaders, who may confront education challenges of social justice, democracy, and equity in their schools, provide valuable data to enable the researcher to answer her research questions.

Research questions

The research questions are linked to the aims, as shown in table 1.4:

Research aims	Research questions
Examine the career progress of female principals in Cyprus primary schools and address the apparent under-representation of women in leadership positions.	*RQ1) What aspects of a female's life can influence her leadership progress?*
Establish the barriers that female	*RQ2) What are the barriers for*

leaders face in order to be promoted to school leaders and how they can be overcome.	*women in seeking to access leadership roles?* *RQ3a) How can these barriers to leadership positions be overcome?*
Establish how gender issues play a part in creating barriers to promotion as a school principal and how these can affect them in leading the school.	*RQ2) What are the barriers for women in seeking to access leadership roles?*
Comprehend what barriers women may have faced in their childhood years.	*RQ1) What aspects of a female's life can influence her leadership progress?*
Establish whether female leaders face internal and external barriers in Cyprus schools and, if so, what these are.	*RQ2) What are the barriers for women in seeking to access leadership roles?*
Identify what support or enablers facilitate women's career progression.	*RQ3b) What forms of support are significant in helping women to access leadership?* *RQ3c) What types of training and development contribute to women's preparation for principalship?*

1) *What aspects of a female's life can influence her leadership progress?*

The researcher intends to explore whether, and to what extent, women principals' childhood and adult years influenced their career progress. Linked to this research question is Coleman's (2003:326) statement, that the' concept of patriarchy, and the distinction that underpins our thinking about men and women, tend to influence our perceptions of the worth of both'.

2) *What are the barriers for women in seeking to access leadership roles?*

The researcher aims to establish what barriers exist to limit women's access to leadership positions as the norms, folkways, and the background of each society correspond with dissimilar socialization examples that direct females and males into different areas of work and differential pay and status (Schmuck, 1980).

3a) *How can these barriers to leadership positions be overcome?*

The researcher explores how these women principals have been able to succeed as leaders despite the barriers they may have faced. Coleman (2010) states that, despite various barriers faced by women, they are dynamic; the field is slowly changing. 'More than ever before, opportunities for women to overcome traditional barriers are available' (Coleman, 2010:9).

3b) *What forms of support are significant in helping women to access leadership?*

The researcher intends to establish the extent and nature of support for women to access leadership positions. This is linked to Coleman's (2010) comment that 'a literature review on the support and development of women in leadership at work identified the importance of networking and mentoring in the career progress of women'.

3c) *What types of training and development contribute to women's preparation for principalship?*

The researcher aims to establish the nature of preparation required for women to access leadership positions. Previous studies indicated that women need time to grow together professionally and to learn from other women (Irby and Brown, 1998).

Overview

The statistics presented in this chapter suggest that the education system in Cyprus favours males. The literature shows that there are barriers for women leaders, and this appears to be the case for Cypriot female leaders. The literature also implies that Cyprus is a patriarchal society where change is slow, and women who aspire to leadership positions need to break the 'glass ceiling' to access the principalship (Pashiardis and Tsiakkiros, 2002).

The researcher's aims and research questions are intended to enable her to establish the influences on women principals' professional careers, the enablers and barriers to accessing the principalship, and the ways in which these barriers can be overcome.

The next chapter is the literature review where the author presents a review of conceptual and empirical literature on female leaders in education, drawing on international as well as Cypriot sources.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature related to women leaders in education, including the barriers that they may face in order to be promoted to leadership positions. The review identifies themes and concepts. It also examines the body of research investigating women's representation in principalship positions within primary schools, globally and in Cyprus, as well as considering the ways in which women have successfully attained these positions. The main focus of this research will be to examine the career progress of female principals in Cyprus schools and the under-representation of women in leadership positions.

Men usually outnumber women as leaders in education although, in many countries, the number of women in leadership positions is slowly rising (Coleman, 2003). However, despite major progress across the European Union in recent decades, men still largely outnumber women in leadership positions, particularly at the highest levels (European Comission, 2014). Nevertheless, women in leadership roles are inclined to be seen as exceptions to the rule and may be subject to stereotyping (Eagly, 2003).

The rationale of this thesis is to examine the experiences of women in principalship positions in Cyprus primary schools, and the barriers that they experience as they seek accession to such positions. This literature review draws on gendered literature. The theoretical literature review focuses on feminist and gender theories. Research on gendered leadership in developed and developing countries, Small Island Developing States, Greece, Cyprus is presented. The researcher identifies and highlights commonalities in gendered theories and practice. The researcher aims to clarify why, as more females progressively enter leadership roles in Cyprus, that traditionally have been occupied mostly by males, several internal and external barriers are preventing some women from being promoted into leadership positions.

Feminist and Gender Theories

<u>Feminist theories</u>

The entry of women into the leadership field is one of the noteworthy aspects of globalization over the last 50 years (Hammond et al. 2009). Feminist theory does not ask merely to include women as objects in the patriarchal discourse, in which sameness is emphasized rather than difference. Smyth (1989) argues that it is impossible to incorporate, or 'add on', a feminist perspective. Escalating the visibility of women leaders in educational research, carried out mainly by women researchers, is situated in feminist theory of equality. Women search for equal access to social power by indicating that they are just as able as men (Fuller, 2013). Feminist leadership is more than leadership style based on female socialization. Yet there are differences between men and women based on sex (biology) and gender (social construction) (Heather, 2012).

Feminism has been highly influential in the study of gender and leadership (Kark, 2004). Feminist educational leadership rests on emancipatory politics, arising from women's experiences and beliefs. Women's beliefs, values and attitudes are central (Glazer, 1991) but feminist educational leaders may not be wholly concerned with these. Rather, they may encompass a wider emancipatory agenda, which includes issues of race, class, sexuality and differing abilities. Consequently, feminist educational leadership comprises, but goes beyond, being woman-centered and embraces a wider political agenda that is anti-racist as well as anti-sexist (Joyce, 1987; Gosetti and Rusch, 1995). Blackmore (1993) suggests that feminists are motivated by equity. Feminist educational leadership is about the 'doing of feminism' and leading in a way which challenges and changes hegemonic institutional practices (Blackmore, 1996).

The basic goal of feminism, characterised by LeGates (2001:ix) as a diachronically fluid, diverse and shifting social movement across cultures, had been to 'challenge patriarchal control whether in thought or in action'. This illustrates why, when mentioning 'gender', feminists mainly emphasise the socio-cultural content of the term and not its natural/biological dimension (Kyriakou-Savva, 2013).

Gender resistance feminism survives in opposition to the gender reform approach (Kark, 2004). This author believes that this is significant in terms of the philosophical study and theorizing of women's situation and knowledge, contending that women have specific experiences and

interests that fundamentally differ from those of the majority of men, at least with regard to how these experiences are shaped and endorsed under the existing patriarchal conditions (Alvesson and Billing, 1997).

Earlier literature, on gender confrontation perspectives, as applied to leadership, led to work emphasizing that 'women's ways of leading', and their relational skills and instinctive mode of thinking, were not weaknesses but advantages for corporate efficiency (Grant, 1986; Helgesen, 1990; Lipman-Blumen, 1992; Peters, 1990; Rosener, 1990, 1995).

There is a body of literature which argues that women's leadership styles are different from those of men's (Shakeshaft, 1987; Loden, 1987; Rosener, 1990; Neville, 1988) due to their dissimilar life experiences and socialization practices. Shakeshaft's (1987) wide review of research-based articles and dissertations concluded that women administrators had a unique style of leadership characterized by collaboration, open relationships, and sharing with others. However, other writers offer a different perspective, suggesting that gender plays little or no role in formalizing a leader's behaviours (Day and Stogdill, 1972; Powell, 1990; Rizzo and Mendez, 1988; Weiner, 1995).

A number of authors (Chorn, 1995; Loden, 1987; Rogers, 1988) asserted the significance of feminine values in leadership settings, such as schools, as a method of opposing the dominant 'masculinity' perspective. For example, Loden (1987:60-61) explained a feminine leadership style as cooperation in excess of competition, team structures where power and influence are communal with interpersonal competence, and participative decision making. She identified feminine qualities as 'concern for people, interpersonal skills, intuitive management and creative problem solving'.

Shakeshaft (1989:94) explains that:

> This ideology of patriarchy is also called androcentrism, meaning male centered. Androcentrism is the practice of viewing the world and shaping reality from a male perspective. It is the elevation of the masculine to the level of the universal and the ideal and the honoring of men and the male principle above women and the female. This perception created a belief in male superiority and a masculine value system in which female values, experiences, and behaviors are viewed as inferior.

McCrea and Ehrich (2000) contend that there is value in focusing on feminine values such as those identified above but do not argue that feminine values belong to, should fit in to, or portray, all women. This argument differs from that of 'feminine/feminist leadership' (Loden, 1987; Shakeshaft, 1987, 1995) whose advocates claim that these values and behaviours are the domain of women. Women have been socialized to be carers and nurturers (Shakeshaft, 1989) who place substantial meaning upon relationships with others (Gilligan, 1982).

Essentialist second wave feminism

The literature (e.g. Stone, 2004) shows that the heated feminist debates over 'essentialism' of the 1980s and early 1990s have largely died away, yet they raised fundamental questions for feminist moral and political philosophy, which have still to be fully explored. Identifying any central themes within feminist discussion of essentialism is complicated, though, as this discussion contains a bewildering variety of strands. Blackmore (2013) argues that feminism is best depicted as shared understandings as to the significance of focusing on gender as an analytical category with the aim to achieve social justice, itself a problematic concept. While there are many feminist perspectives, most reject the reductionist binaries embedded in twentieth century Western social, philosophical, political and economic theory between mind/body, rationality/emotionality, public/ private, objective/subjective that reduce to essentialist understandings of man/woman (Blackmore, 2013).

Blackmore (2013:146) claims that 'feminism is not itself an uncontested field of theory or practice'. She argues that the central issue in feminist controversies over essentialism was whether there are any shared characteristics common to all women, which unify them as a group. Many leading feminist thinkers of the 1970s and 1980s rejected essentialism, particularly on the grounds that universal claims about women are invariably false and effectively normalise and privilege specific forms of femininity (Stone, 2004). However, by the 1990s it had become apparent that the rejection of essentialism undercut feminist politics, by denying that women have any shared characteristics, which could motivate them to act together as a collectivity. An 'anti-anti-essentialist' current therefore crystallised which sought to resuscitate some form of essentialism as a political necessity for feminism (Stone, 2004).

Such simple, biological, essentialism was commonly held prior to second wave feminism, typically as the view that all women are constituted as women by their possession of wombs, breasts, and child-

bearing capacity (Stone, 2004). Arguably, this view played a crucial ideological role in justifying women's confinement to the domestic sphere as natural and necessary. Second wave feminists therefore opposed essentialism in its pre-feminist, biological, incarnation. However, feminist antipathy to essentialism rapidly extended to elements of biological essentialism perceived to persist within feminism. In the 1970s, socialist feminists criticised the essentialism they detected in the work of some radical feminists who urged revaluation of women's allegedly natural features, such as their child- bearing capacity (Stone, 2004). Within these socialist feminist critiques, (biological) 'essentialism' was typically contrasted with social constructionism', which relies on the distinction between biological sex and social gender. So, while being female may require certain anatomical features, being a woman is something different, dependent on identification with the feminine gender – the social traits, activities, and roles that make up femininity. Following this recognition of the gap between gender and sex, social constructionists could reject biological essentialism for confusing these two levels of analysis and consequently making a fallacious – and ideologically motivated – attempt to read off the contingencies of social arrangements from the necessities of biology (Stone, 2004).

Post-structural feminism

The author supports Fuller's (2014) view that translanguaging among the discourses of second wave feminism and post structural gender discourses is beneficial. Literature throughout the decades reveals that feminism is a highly contested term, as is post-structuralism, so it is impossible to produce a comfortable synthesis from those vertiginous locations, a new foundation on which to situate post-structural feminism.

According to Adams (2000), feminists who support post-structural critiques have given up on finding out 'exactly' what is going on. She adds that they are sceptical about that kind of question, because it is grounded in descriptions of knowledge, truth, rationality, and subjectivity that humanism put forward centuries ago to make sense of a world very different from the one we live in today. Within the post-structural feminism, much work has been done to identify the essence of 'woman'. Some feminists, however, are concerned that the desire to fix this 'essence' is dangerous since they believe that all the identity categories – race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, wellness, not just gender, must be taken into account in thinking about people's lives. They believe that a person is the 'intersection' (Crenshaw, 1995) of these identity categories; thus, race or wellness, at different times, might be as important to someone as gender. The present author's concern is

that once the differences are erased by identity, women can more easily be slotted into a hierarchy or grid and then manipulated, dismissed, and oppressed.

> The conceptualisation of gender/gendered leadership discourses recognises the powerful gender monoglossic facade, the discursive struggles of a heteroglossic exposé and eventual polyglossic simultaneity (Fuller, 2014:334).

It marks a shift from the language of androgynous educational leadership (Fuller, 2010). Instead of finding a language to think and talk about gendered educational leadership, there is a need for multi-discursiveness in thinking about the underrepresentation of women (and some men) in secondary school headship as well as engagement with (pro)feminist and masculinist leadership discourses by women and men (Fuller, 2013).

Black feminism

The contingent and critical project of black and postcolonial feminism is to chart the story of raced and gendered domination across different landscapes and time lines through the counter memories of black/ ethnicised women (McKittrick, 2006).

McKittrick (2006) asks whether on going debates exist concerning whether a Black women's standpoint, should be named womanism or whether Black feminism reflects the basic challenge of accommodating diversity among Black women. Earlier literature (e.g. Brah 1996) notes that black feminist thought, which is grounded in an understanding of the nature of power, draws on an intersectional analysis to explore the way 'the black/othered woman's difference' is systematically organised through the modalities of race gender and class in everyday social relations.

More recent literature (e.g. Collins 2005, Oesterreich 2007) says that Black feminism was more expansive than the agenda put forth by White women, in that specific social, economic, and political issues facing African American communities were incorporated into a theoretical paradigm called Black feminism. The ultimate goal of Black feminism is to create a political movement combating the interlocking systems of racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression, but that also 'seeks to develop institutions to protect what the dominant culture has little respect and value for - Black women's minds and bodies' (Taylor, 2001:18).

Collins (2005) argues that using the term 'Black feminism' disrupts the racism inherent in presenting feminism as a for – whites - only ideology and political movement. Inserting the adjective 'Black' challenges the assumed whiteness of feminism and disrupts the false universality of this term for both white and Black women. Notably, the term Black feminism makes many African American women uncomfortable because it challenges Black women to confront their own views on sexism and women's oppression (Collins, 2000; Oesterreich, 2007). Collins stressed that:

> No homogeneous a Black women's standpoint. There is no essential or archetypal Black woman whose experiences stand as normal, normative, and thereby authentic. An essentialist understanding of a Black woman's standpoint suppresses differences among Black women in search of an elusive group unity. Instead, it may be more accurate to say that a Black woman's collective standpoint does exit, one characterized by tensions that accrue to different responses to common challenges (p.28).

Black women historically have been forced acquire leadership and power in non-traditional ways in comparison to their male counterparts, both black and white (Rosser-Mims, 2010). Hence, the emergence of Black female leadership in the United States represents a history of their struggle for liberation from oppression to 'lift' the Black community out of racial, economic, and educational subjugation (Hanson, 2003; Rogers, 2005, Rosser-Mims, 2005). From a Black feminist analysis, even classical leadership theories and contemporary leadership models have ignored Black women's contributions to their communities and the impact of the seamless web of class, race, and gender oppression. For example, 'black women have traditionally formed networks that provide the structure for the emergence of their community leadership. Yet, these community structures are often ignored by social scientists in general and community leadership/development specialists in particular' (Allen, 1997:1).

Black feminist thought is grounded in an understanding of the nature of power and the way 'the black/othered woman's' difference' is systematically organised through social relations (Rogers, 2005). A history of a situated black and postcolonial feminism cannot be confined to a chronological unfolding of time and place. Post-colonial feminism will be analysed in the next subsection below.

Post-colonial feminism

Blackmore (2013) argues that focus on the social and political relations of organizations means moving away from observing women's disadvantage as an individualized problem addressed by changing women. Instead, the focus should be on how privilege is gained and retained by dominant perspectives and groups. The researcher supports Leonardo's (2009) view that white feminists have been prompted about their whiteness and privilege by black and post-colonial feminists who have pointed to how they as white women are complicit in hierarchies of inequality. Indeed, they can learn about alternative ways of being leaders and understanding leadership from different cultural perspectives (Mabokela, 2007; Mirza, 2009; Shah, 2010; White, 2010).

Postcolonial feminist approaches situate the 'spectral' power of colonial times as it appears and disappears in the production and reproduction of racialised and gendered knowledge in the spatially challenged present (Subedi and Daza 2008; Ali 2007; Rizvi et al 2006). Feminist post-colonial perspectives of leadership argue that leadership is not only situated, but that the nature of knowledge and the ontological position of white-Western leadership are also contested (Blackmore, 2010a). Post-colonial research on leadership contextualizes leadership within wider relationships between education, economies and societies around issues of globalization, educational inequality, poverty and cross-cultural relations (Mabokela, 2007; Mirza, 2009; Asher, 2010; Shah, 2010). A post-colonial perspective also focuses on the situated nature of leadership and how leadership is shaped by the cultural, organizational, structural constraints of place and time. Therefore, different questions have to be asked. For example Mirza (2009) asks how is 'black and ethnicized female identity and subjectivity, and the way her 'difference' is systematically organized through social relations in our political and economic structures, politics and practices'?. Challenges to white middle class feminist privilege, and their claim to be the voice for all women, has been an opening to discuss and investigate on-going racial and ethnic inequality (Leonardo, 2009). However, Connell (1995) claims that there is no such questioning by white masculinities as to their on-going position of privilege and dominance of leadership or their claims to represent the universal good, or what that means symbolically in democratic culturally diverse societies.

Theories of gendered leadership

Theories focusing on women's under-representation in leadership roles have been suggested and investigated over the past 25 years (Riger

and Gallingan 1980; Morrison and Von Glinow 1990). This approach has been termed the gender-centered or person-centered approach and is based on theories of gender differences (Riger and Callingan, 1980). The literature on gender and leadership suggests that gender has a huge impact on women's access and entry into leadership positions (Coleman, 2005; Blackmore, et al., 2006).

The researcher believes that much leadership literature tends to assume that the same behaviours and traits will be successful in any context, so cultural sensitivity is not typically emphasized within traditional leadership frameworks. However, leadership is context bound and organizationally determined and good leadership varies by institutional environment (Birnbaun, 1992). Gender has been identified as a factor affecting principals' experiences during their accession to leadership (Coleman, 2002; Bright and Ware, 2003), as well as when enacting leadership (Coleman, 2002; Browne-Ferrigno, 2003, Earley, 2013). Gender has also been indicated as a factor influencing promotions to primary and secondary headship in Cyprus (Nicolaidou and Georgiou, 2009; Polis, 2009, 2013).

As noted in the above section, feminists have been prompted as to their whiteness and privilege by black and post-colonial feminists who have pointed to how they are complicit in hierarchies of inequality. Indeed, they too can learn about alternative ways of being leaders and understanding leadership from different cultural perspectives (Mabokela, 2007; Mirza, 2009; Shah, 2010; White, 2010). Moorosi's (2010) South African paper refers to Cubillo and Brown's (2003) framing, where the personal (micro) level is where women grapple with internal issues such as professional experiences, aspirations, ambitions and confidence - what Tallerico (2000) calls the 'individual agency'. When women lack this agency, they are perceived as lacking the self-esteem they need in order to take charge of their professional lives. At the organisational (meso) level, the hierarchical structures and cultures in terms of gendered stereotypes about who can and cannot be a school manager block women's participation in management. The gendered practices influenced by cultural norms and belief systems are played out at the social (macro) level within the school and outside the school context. This context is informed by cultural discourses favouring the masculine image of management that continuously disadvantages women. Personal and organisational factors are influenced by the gendered social norms such as how the division of work and the management qualities of men and women are perceived (see also Ely and Meyerson, 2000). These influences happen across the three

phases of the principals' career route and affect negatively the participation of women in school principalship.

Murakami-Ramalho, Garza, and Merchant (2012:32), for example, argue that women, 'by nature of their communication style, value workplace relationships more than men, suggesting that female leaders may foster closer bonds with their followers than male leaders. On the other hand, men's status and power-oriented communication style suggests a more controlling authoritative leadership approach'.

Linked to this, Schein (1994) states that unconscious or semi-conscious assumptions about maleness and leadership are mostly held by men, to a lesser extent by women, and by both younger and older age groups in a range of international settings. Schein (1994) adds that these views shape the way that women leaders are perceived and perceived themselves. However, the tensions between the often-unconscious expectations of women and men are particularly apparent in the roles that female leaders play in schools and elsewhere:

> Those women who have achieved positions which are held predominantly by men have realised, consciously or unconsciously, that there are social roles and expectations governing the role of females from the culture. They must become 'abnormal' women; they must transcend the social expectations of femaleness in order to aspire to the socially prescribed role of leader. And because they do not fit the expectations of the attributes of leaders, they are also 'abnormal' administrators. Their position as administrators makes them 'insiders' to the organisation, but their 'abnormal status as women makes them 'outsiders' in their organizations (Schmuck, 1996:356).

Shakeshaft et al. (2007:105), state that 'in the field of school administration, the literature identified as gender research is almost entirely research on women in administration. The studies that include only males are not labeled gender research'. As early as 1987 (pp.9), Schmuck asserted, 'the inclusion of women within the domain of inquiry must change the nature of the inquiry'. Linked to this, Brown and Irby (2005) indicated that the more we know about women in leadership roles, how they obtain their positions, and how they have become successful, the greater the likelihood of increasing the numbers of women in principalship positions.

The researcher believes that what may be described, as theories of gendered leadership are the stereotypes that exist in the leadership field. In a sense, the numbers of women in leadership positions are irrelevant as no matter what proportion, they will still be operating in a society where deep-rooted constructs of society identify maleness with leadership (Coleman, 2003). If the status quo does not appear to favour women in educational leadership, it is not unexpected that stereotypes can be a major barrier for aspiring female leaders (Sanchez and Thornton, 2010). An existing and persistent stereotype in the field is that successful leaders must represent masculine characteristics and styles, which are often at variance to those displayed by women (Brooking, 2008; Coleman, 2003; Grogan, 2000; Kruger, 2008; Van Eck and Vermeulen, 2005; Oplatka, 2002).

As noted above, there are clear links between concepts of gendered leadership, and stereotypical views of women. Traditionally gender stereotypes portray women as deficient in attributes deemed essential for leadership success (Eagly and Carli 2003; Vecchio 2002). This is mostly based on role incongruity, in that women are not expected to show leadership traits and consequently, when they do, they are viewed more negatively than men exhibiting equivalent behaviours (Carli and Eagly, 2001). 'The dualism that underpins gender stereotypes affects perceptions of how women and men lead and manage. Women are stereotyped as nurturing, caring, kind and probably rather soft in their approach. The alternative stereotype for men is that they are aggressive, decisive, firm and probably an authority figure' (Coleman, 2003:14).

How leadership is shaped and practiced is therefore highly contextualized (Blackmore, 2013). As there is a critique of gendered leadership theory being developed largely from and by white women working in English-speaking contexts, the literature has identified parts of the UK where women attain school headship in higher percentages than in others (see Edwards and Lyons, 1994; Coleman, 2001, 2005; Fuller, 2009; Fuller, 2013). All these studies have gathered data on who does leadership and have a concern for equal opportunities. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) take into consideration women's ways of leading, how leadership is done, leadership for learning; leadership for social justice; relational leadership; spiritual leadership; and balanced leadership (with regard to any conflicts between professional and family life). Blackmore (1989) proposed a feminist reconstruction of leadership that has been used to think about women's and men's approaches to leadership to recognise that women also do masculinist leadership and men might do pro-feminist leadership (Fuller, 2013).

In addressing context and organizations, critical and feminist organizational theorists recognize how different perspectives on leadership add richness to organizational life (Sinclair, 1998). This richness does not seem to be captured in the discourse of diversity and fails to recognize legacies of past inequalities manifest in first order differences of class, race and gender (Bacchi, 2000; Blackmore, 2006). Feminist theorists see dissimilarity as socially constituted through organizational structures, processes and cultures and not just something individuals bring with them into organizations such as schools and universities. Feminists thus identify the historical processes and practices of the racialization and gendering of leadership (Young and Sklra, 2003; Mirza, 2009).

More recently, Francis (2010, 2012) refers to the terms of gender monoglossia and gender heteroglossia in her theorisation of gender and examination of 'female masculinity' (2010). An engagement with multiple opposing discourses in 'doing' and 'reading' gender and gender theory is enabled. Feminist theorists have extensively described the difficulties in choosing between conflicting essentialist second wave gender theories of equality and disparity and a poststructuralist approach that separates the body as it is biologically sexed from a performative construction of gender (see Scott-Jones, 1988; Francis, 2000; Raphael Reed, 2001; Fuller, 2013). Fuller (2014) argues that girls/women and boys/men as they are biologically sexed could be deliberated within a post-structural gender theory discourse that disconnects gender from the body (Fuller, 2014). Essentialist stereotypes about women and men as leaders still prevail, although both the women and men school principals see themselves as adopting a traditionally 'feminine' style of leadership. Women principals are likely to see some benefits in being a woman in a role stereotypically associated with men. However, there has been an increase in the proportion of women who feel that they have to prove their worth as a leader, and this may be linked with increased levels of accountability in schools (Coleman, 2007). Therefore, the present researcher recognizes the complexity of gender and feminist theories.

Research from Developed Countries

This section will present research derived from developed countries that are largely English-speaking and from white women, for example the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia.

The author believes that there is a growing body of research on gendered leadership but, as Shakeshaft (2012:1) notes, 'the number of representative studies at each of these levels varies by country. In some cases, researchers are just beginning to document the lack of women in educational leadership. In other countries, the information has been in the public domain for a number of years and studies are focusing on female leadership'. Trying to document the number of women in school leadership worldwide is difficult: administrative titles and jobs differ across countries, and few countries keep precise records by gender of administrative office holders (Shakeshaft, 2006). Consequently, there is no study that gives a global snapshot of the number of women in school administration (Shakeshaft, 2006). Cubillo and Brown (2003) acknowledge that gaining access to places of power transcends countrywide borders.

Under-representation of women

Comparing the representation of women in school administration '20 years later' is not as easy as searching the numbers (Shakeshaft et. al., 2007). 'As was true in the mid 1980s, documenting women's representation in formal leadership positions in schools continues to be difficult because of the absence of reliable and comparable data either nationally or within and across states' (Shakeshaft et. al., 2007:103).

The underrepresentation of women in leadership positions within Europe is a matter of some concern (Brinia, 2012; Cubillo and Brown 2003). In Europe, leadership positions are mostly assumed to be masculine-oriented with behaviours focusing on authority and discipline, whereas females are considered to be more emotional and collaborative (Adams and Hambright, 2004; Addi-Raccah and Ayalon, 2000; Brooking, 2008; Coleman 2003a, 2005; Krüger, van Eck, and Vermeulen, 2005; Shields, 2005; Wrushen and Sherman, 2008).

'The largest body of research related to women has examined barriers to women in entering the leadership hierarchy or in moving up that hierarchy' (Shakeshaft et. al., 2007:107). A review of the research on women in educational administration (Shakeshaft, Irby, Brown, Grogan and Ballenger, 2007) compared the barriers identified in the late 1980s (Shakeshaft, 1989), with those found to exist 20 years later. The majority of the studies on barriers are self-report surveys or interviews in which women identify the barriers they experienced in either obtaining an administrative position or keeping it (Shakeshaft et al. 2007).

A similar reservation can be expressed about research on women in leadership positions. Most recent studies are based on American or Western theories, and typically contrast females to males searching for individual differences or organizational effects based on gender (Hillman, Shropshire, and Cannella, 2007; Kulich, Ryan, and Haslam, 2007). There is little research on women leaders using a multi-level, cross-cultural perspective, and a very small number of studies suggest theory that is appropriate outside the samples or settings being investigated. It is important that new research encompasses multi-level frameworks that include both the macro and micro, and analysis across countries and institutional settings (DeBruin, Brush, and Welter, 2007; Minniti and Nardone, 2007).

Challenges and expectations

Coleman's (2004) research on female school principals in the United Kingdom showed that those women who stated that they had experienced barriers in their career were most likely to link it to their family responsibilities, reporting that interviewing panels showed concern that these responsibilities might impact on their ability to do their job.

Research has analysed and distinguished between internal and external barriers, and their influence on mobility and professional promotion, confirming the presence of the 'glass ceiling' and its impact on women's opportunities for advancement (Fitzgerald and Weitzman 1992, Betz and Hackett 1997). The study of women in school leadership initially concentrated on the problem of explaining the differences among the percentages of women in teaching and in administration. To appreciate this problem, researchers examined characteristics of women and their socialization that affect career selection and ambition. Women's underrepresentation in principalship positions continues to generate research interest. Lee's (2011) research shows that women principals' leadership experiences sometimes operate contrary to the traditional gendered stereotypes, and trying to meet the cultural socialization norms expected of them resulted in conflict and was at times stressful. Nevertheless, the author argues that efforts to solve this problem, and to enlighten the experiences of the few women in leadership positions, have led to attention on the impact of formal and informal organization on the behaviour, effectiveness, and mobility of males and females.

Coleman and Fitzgerald (2008) suggest that women principals may face internal barriers such as the absence of role models. Studies that

examine the barriers that keep women from becoming school leaders document several reasons that have prevented women from moving into formal leadership positions in schools. Coleman (2005) suggests that, in addressing the situation of women in top jobs, it is necessary to consider both the possible barriers to career progress for women, and factors that have helped their career success. Miller and Hoffman (2006:5) stress the 'masculine organizational culture in UK and European organizations', which influences women's aspirations and tends to promote 'masculine' ways of working, including long hours. They also identify the 'continuing stereotypes, which permeate our culture, leading to the identification of men with more agentic behaviour, and with leadership, and women with the more nurturing and supporting 'communal' roles' (Miller and Hoffman 2006:12). However, Coleman (2005:5) notes that there seems to be 'an implicit assumption that problems of equity for women have been solved and there are no issues left to address'. Moreau, Osgood, and Halsall (2007) found that many female teachers and other educational stakeholders did not recognise a gender imbalance.

Culture

Understanding cultural systems in the United Kingdom, is significant for the development of research on leadership in changeable contexts (Kirkman, Lowe, and Gibson, 2006). Around Europe, while females dominate the ranks of teachers, the field of educational leadership has traditionally comprised males (Tallerico and Blount, 2004). Similarly, Lárusdóttir (2007:263) affirms that 'the hegemony of masculine values over feminine in educational administration is not new. Educational administration as an academic field is a little over a hundred years old and for most of this time women have been largely absent from the field'.

Previous research on women principals in the United States, conducted by Shakeshaft (1985:127), showed that 'socialization and sex role stereotyping have been potent obstacles to increasing women's participation in the management of schools'. Young and McLeod, (2001:494), add that 'many school board members, search consultants, search committee members, practicing administrators, and private citizens continue to believe old myths that have prevented women from becoming educational leaders in the past'.

The researcher argues that the idea of cultural barriers to women's progression is not new, as it goes back several decades. Since Duverger's seminal study (1955), it has often been assumed as a major

factor, and it receives support in surveys monitoring the attitudes of candidates and gatekeepers in many countries (Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Norris 1997).

Coleman (2001) documents the masculine nature of the leadership culture and points out that it can serve to marginalize and separate females. Consequently, women may not seek leadership positions because the status quo does not appear to favour them (Coleman, 2005). Coronel et al's (2010) research in Spain shows that principals have felt the nervousness created by the inconsistency between the male culture in the educational field and the numerical dominance of women in the preschool and elementary schools studied. Coleman (2000) established that male teachers resented women head teachers in the UK and Wales and that women continued to have to provide evidence for themselves more than males. Linked to this, Coleman's (2003) data from two large surveys of all the women and a one in three sample of men school principals in England and Wales showed that culture can act as a barrier. Being a woman and a principal is a very dissimilar experience from being a man and a principal. 'The evidence of sexist attitudes from colleagues and peers is strong and women leaders face stereotypical assumptions about their abilities from staff, governors, parents and students' (Coleman, 2003:17).

<u>The role of the family</u>

Coleman's (2001) research in the United Kingdom showed that women may have to choose their career over family life (Sanchez and Thornton, 2010). She added that this may be due to the gendered roles of females as domestic caretakers and posited that women might take time off work to care for children or aged relatives (Coleman, 2001).

Research has shown that it is 'woefully apparent that the overwhelming responsibility for managing work-family conflicts falls largely on women administrators' (Loder, 2005:768). In Coleman's (2003) research on 'gender and orthodoxies of leadership', the majority of women stated that they were put in positions where they had to rationalize their position as principals because of their femininity. This was most strongly expressed by the women who were married with children (Coleman, 2003:330).

In many families across Europe, including Cyprus, women are expected to maintain traditional family roles independent of existing or new job responsibilities. Coleman (2004) notes that the identification of women as caring, domestic, and implicitly of lesser importance and status than

men, impacts on the experience of women in positions of leadership. Only three of the partners of women principals were identified as house husbands and most of the women had used a combination of child-minders, nursery or nanny for childcare' (Coleman, 2003:12). Therefore it is not surprising that women who aspire to leadership positions are often not mothers (Coleman, 2001).

Coleman (2003:12) adds that, 'in the households of the married women principals, particularly the younger ones, the partners tended to have similar careers, and domestic responsibilities were to some extent shared. However, it was notable that, even though the older women were in dual career households, they still carried the main domestic responsibility. For male principals, the domestic pattern was traditional, with the man's job taking precedence over his partner's and with little sharing of domestic responsibilities'.

Women also find it difficult to balance their work and family obligations (Coleman, 2001, 2005; Mahitivanichcha and Rorrer, 2008; Moreau, Osgood, and Halsall, 2007; Wrushen and Sherman, 2008). The system is also inclined to maintain 'married female workers who have the full-time domestic support such that they can be free of home and family responsibilities' (Mahitivanichcha and Rorrer, 2008:493).

Women may be less dedicated to jobs that require more time as a consequence of their mutual work and family roles (Addi-Raccah and Ayalon, 2000). These responsibilities often lead others to question whether women are capable of being effective educational leaders. Women may need additional support, which comes from different sources such as family, partners and employers. Women face less conflict when they feel that their employers support their lives beyond work (Friedman and Langbert, 2000).

Shakeshaft's earlier (1989:113) research in the United States shows that, 'home and family responsibilities provide obstacles for women administrators in two ways: the women not only must effectively juggle all of her tasks, she must also contend with the bulk of male school board presidents and superintendents who erroneously believe that, not only is she unable to manage the balancing act, but that it is inappropriate for her to even attempt it'. Because women could be stereotyped as being nurturing and emotional, this may impact negatively on their accession to leadership positions (Coleman, 2001; Krüger, 2008; Young, 2005).

<u>Discrimination</u>

Discrimination in respect of aspirant and practicing principals has been acknowledged in Australia (Blackmore 2006), China (Coleman et al. 1998), England (Coleman, 2002), Greece (Kaparou and Bush 2007), South Africa (Buckland and Thurlow 1996; Bush et al. 2006a) and the USA (Shakeshaft 1989). Because the requirements of leadership roles have been argued to be generally constructed in masculine terms, there is some degree of contradiction among these prospects and those of the female gender role (Eagly and Karau, 2002).

While Burke and Mattis (2005:13) argue that 'the glass ceiling that women encounter refers to a subtle strong barrier that prevents women from moving up to senior management', Mitroussi and Mitroussi (2009) note that there are individual European country-by-country accounts which document the underrepresentation of women in school management and which offer a reliable understanding of international practice, due to the glass ceiling factor.

Coleman (2007) reports that half of the women secondary heads in England said they had experienced discrimination in relation to applications and promotions. Fuller et al's (2014) findings on members of SLT in the United Kingdom show that women principals experienced discrimination, from within the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), or from parents and teaching staff. The role congruity theory of prejudice towards female leaders proposes that an obvious inappropriateness between the female gender role and the leadership role leads to prejudice (Eagly and Karau, 2002).

Coleman's (2004:17) research on women principals in England suggests that 'gender in the context of leadership is seen to be a woman's problem and gender discrimination is much more likely to be perceived by women than by men'. Coleman (2007) comments 'that some of the respondents appeared to be capable of holding conflicting and ambiguous views, stating that there was no discrimination whilst recalling actual examples of how they had experienced it'.

Huffman and Houston (1993:9) express the view that 'women have difficulty in developing an authoritative voice, they tend to be modest about their achievements and knowledge and to only speak assertively when concerned about others'. Possibly the women's lack of forcefulness on issues affecting them is a result of their learning to be caring, loving, broadminded, understanding, tolerant, accommodative, and passionate even when events and situations demand otherwise. A

study of Catholic principals in New South Wales, Australia, shows that women believed that the environment was unsupportive and that gender issues and discrimination were a chief rationale for why women were not accessing leadership positions (D'Arbon et al., 2002).

One reason for persistent inequities in educational leadership may be because male leaders tend to dominate the field and tend to make employment decisions. Linked to this author's belief, Fuller et al's (2014) project on women leadership preparation in the United Kingdom shows that women participants admitted that they have either experienced or witnessed discriminatory practices. Rusch and Marshall (2006) also acknowledge that there is a gender bias in respect of leadership roles. They posited that gender filters are present, and they (a) replicate and reify privilege and tradition, (b) are delicate and conflicting, and (c) modify conduct.

Research from Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

Javidan and Carl (2005) point out that leadership research emanating from the U.S. and Europe is significant, but question its universality across cultures. This section discusses research about gender in developing countries and small island developing states (SIDs), including black and global majority and minoritised women. There is only limited literature on gendered leadership in SIDS, so the author's thesis makes an important contribution to the limited evidence base in such contexts. Under most criteria Cyprus would appear to qualify as a SIDS country. SIDs are low-lying coastal countries that have a tendency to share similar sustainable development challenges, including small but rising populations, inadequate resources, remoteness, vulnerability to natural disasters, vulnerability to external shocks, excessive dependence on international trade, and fragile environments. The SIDS were first recognized as a separate group of developing countries at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in June 1992. The Barbados Programme of Action was produced in 1994 to assist the SIDS in their sustainable development efforts (United Nations Division for Sustainable Development ,1994).

The factors that affect women's participation in leadership roles are different across the world, especially in developing countries (Bajdo and Dickson, 2001; X-P. Chen and Li, 2005; D. N. Den Hartog, House, Hanges,Quintanilla, Dorfman, and Associates, 1999; Erez and Gati, 2004; Stelter, 2002).

Culture and under-representation of women

Moorosi's (2010) research, which reports on data from a larger scale study exploring female principals' experiences of their career route to the principalship of secondary schools in South Africa, makes it clear that women are disadvantaged in communities where strength is linked to a male stereotype and where such highly gendered perceptions still reign. These prejudicial views held by many of those who have the responsibility to appoint principals seem to be affecting women more at the entry level, acting as gate keeping criteria that bar many women from accessing the position of principal in secondary schools Moorosi (2010). This is clearly influenced by the cultural attitudes towards women and what their role is in society.

Elisha's (2012) qualitative study of women principals in the Solomon Islands suggests that, if women principals were not exposed to western culture, they would not see that they have the right of decision making and leadership in school organizations. This study adopted a qualitative methodology that used the Talanoa (Pasifika) research. A thematic approach was used in analysing data. Interviews were conducted with nine teachers who were working under women principals. Previous research on Melanesian women shows that culture can be considered as the main recurring barrier to women being involved in leadership roles which results in the underrepresentation of women in Melanesia (Akao, 2008; Vali, 2010; Oplatka, 2006).

Women tend to occupy less observable positions of leadership, through support roles, mainly in developing countries. Elisha' (2012:87) research shows that perceived cultural roles and gender stereotypes were significant features in this setting. This is evident in statements such as: 'women lack the leadership skills'; 'are weak in decision making'; 'leadership was meant for men and not women'; 'no confidence in women leadership', and 'women's role is at home'. The relative isolation of SIDS may mean that such attitudes are likely to be slow to change. These examples are typical of the stereotypical thinking that is common in Solomon Islands. Such insights would appear because of the cultural beliefs that are still held by a majority of people. This is the major factor in the underrepresentation of women as leaders in the Solomon Islands (Akao, 2008; Pollard, 2006).

This is also comparable to the position in the Caribbean. Drayton and Cole-George (1991:189) report on research in ten Caribbean countries, where 'this under representation of women in decision making positions

exists alongside an education system and a culture which perpetuates stereotypical views of male and female roles'.

Family: facilitator or inhibitor?

Lumby et al's (2010) South African research shows that a lot of principals found their family to be very supportive, giving help and advice, and accompanying them to school or related functions. Eagly and Carli (2004) claim that, because of women's greater participation in domestic work, their attention is often diverted from training and efforts made in the direction of paid work, causing them to experience interruptions in their work history, to a greater extent than men.

The researcher believes that families can also be perceived as inhibitors towards their progression. Lumby et al (2010) note that not having domestic and family responsibilities left her participants free to invest as much time as they needed in their career and related studies. Their survey and interview research showed that most South African women still carry the most important domestic responsibilities and this inhibits their career progression. Moorosi (2010) acknowledges that family and domestic issues might be an indistinguishable barrier as women's chances of promotion were narrow due to their family responsibilities. This seems to be supported by one of Lumby et al's (2010) South African women participants, who said that:

> With a husband I was going to be unable to study, because the husband can give you, sometimes, lots of trouble. Sometimes they are depending on you a hundred percent. You must cook for him, prepare for him, and then, ...eh prepare his clothes, see to it that, before you get to work, you must, you must do everything for him. So, without a husband, if I don't want to cook, I don't cook.

Lumby et al's (2010) research on women principals acknowledges that those principals who were married to a supportive partner view their marital status as an advantage for their career progress. Lumby et al. (2010) also note that most principals with families perceive their families as beneficial to their career progress.

Moengangongo's (1988:15) earlier research in small Caribbean communities suggests that 'education and employment have not only taken women away from the home but they have also exposed them to the new values and ideas of modern society, in which women expect equality in all aspects of social life, from domestic to national'. In small Caribbean communities, women play traditional roles related to caring for children and the elderly, and preparing household meals. Even though there are few cultural limitations on women obtaining employment outside of the home, the imperative of domestic responsibilities frequently means that women have a double workload (Brown and Tuiloma-Sua, 2012). Research conducted in the Solomon islands shows that the traditional view is that women are seen as the backbone for how the family functions in the home (Elisha, 2012).

Barriers

Connolly and Clandinin (1990) conducted a study of women from nine, mainly developing countries; Indonesia, China, Cyprus, Greece, Kuwait, Iraq, Dominica, Gambia and Zambia. Although the researchers drew on women from a wide range of international cultures, the discussions centered largely on issues relating to gender equity and the barriers they face, for example culture and socialization. Moorosi's (2006) study shows that women principals seemed to continue to face barriers in performing leadership even after they have been appointed to such positions. Reasons for this include lack of acceptance and resistance to their authority. Moorosi (2010) also notes that cultural and historical factors are regarded as barriers to women's advancement. In a study of international patterns of women's educational leadership, Cubillo and Brown (2003:279) acknowledge that 'the teaching profession in this country and internationally is, with few exceptions, dominated by women. However, a look at the statistics reveals that, despite large numbers of women in the profession, they are greatly under-represented in positions of management'.

Research in South Africa, by Dominique et al. (2014), who interviewed twenty primary educators purposively selected from five public primary schools in the Limpopo Province, showed that 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, can be considered as barriers that women primary school principals face during their accession to leadership.

Deliberations based on the gendered separation of leadership have centered on the dissimilar behaviours of males and females (Shakeshaft, 2007). Moorosi (2010) argues that, for the South African women in her study, breaking the glass ceiling did not seem to lead to women being accepted in the school community by either their colleagues or communities around the schools.

Lumby et al's (2010) research on women school principals in South African schools showed that many participants had considered that the principalship process was subject to discriminatory attitudes. Almost half (47%) of the survey respondents 'were aware of gendered attitudes and felt that they must be better educated and experienced to compete successfully with male candidates' (Lumby et al., 2010:2).

Elisha's (2012) findings in the Solomon islands supports previous research on Melanesian women that suggests culture as the main recurring barrier to women being involved in leadership roles (Akao, 2007; Pollard, 2006). From a Maltese perspective, women aspiring to leadership positions may be facing barriers, as Malta is a patriarchal society and the main role of the female has tended to be that of a housewife (Boissevain, 2006; Camilleri, 1997; Sammut, 2005). Azzopardi and Bezzina (2014) argue that there is a need to acknowledge that barriers are ingrained in the Maltese cultural context and to try to mitigate their impact on women aspiring to leadership positions through institutional changes.

There is only limited literature on gendered leadership in SIDS, including Cyprus, but Elisha (2012) notes that males are preferred to hold leadership positions (Elisha, 2012). Some of the barriers that women principals are facing in SIDS (gender discrimination, women's low self confidence and job- family conflicts) are similar to those found in developed countries, however a few (cultural background, low girls' participation in primary education and a majority of men in teaching positions) are unique to developing countries (Akao, 2008; Oplatka, 2006; Warsal, 2009). Moorosi's (2010) South African research findings support the assertion that women face discrimination at the level of training, access into principalship, and during their enactment as newly appointed school principals.

Research from Greece

The name Cyprus comes from the Greek word for copper (*kypros*). The island's Greek heritage dates back to the Achaeans from southern

Greece, who settled there between 2000 and 1600 BC. Despite differences in pronunciation, the Greek Cypriots share the same twenty-four-letter alphabet of the Greek mainland. The major religion of the Greek Cypriot population is Greek Orthodox (Papadakis, 2012). The Church of Cyprus has the same Orthodox traditions and liturgy as the church on the Greek mainland. As Cyprus and Greece share the same culture, history and religion, it seems sensible to give specific attention to gendered leadership in this context.

'The male is by nature superior and the female inferior […] the one rules and the other is ruled', according to Aristotle, a Greek philosopher. Mitroussi and Mitroussi (2009) believe that this appears still to be the perception in many modern societies, including Greece.

In Greece, from the 19th century, occupational segregation has led to a build-up of female domination in teaching in public schools (Ziogou, 1995). According to Mitroussi and Mitroussi (2009), cultural factors partly explain women's low participation in educational leadership in Greece. Their research shows that, in this male-dominated context, women have to establish themselves over and over again before they are acknowledged and so great psychological strength, self-assurance and dedication are necessary to cope with that pressure (Mitroussi and Mitroussi, 2009).

Athanassoula and Lazaridou's (2008) survey research on newly appointed female school principals in Greece and Cyprus found that each situation a school principal encounters is unique to that principal and it links to the school's building, district, and culture. 'Changing educational careers requires an individual to relinquish the comfort and confidence of a known role – such as being a female teacher – and experience the discomfort and uncertainty of a new, unknown role – being a principal' (Ferrigno, 2003:470). Kaparou and Bush (2007) aimed to identify the factors that affect female representation in secondary headship positions, drawing on interviews with six female head teachers. They found that the reasons for women's under-representation in leadership positions are linked in part to cultural stereotypes and to gender discrimination, underpinned by cultural perspectives, which identify management as 'masculine'.

Kyriakoussis and Saiti's (2006) research suggests that the under-representation of women in educational leadership positions can be attributed to a complex set of reasons related to a number of social influences. For example, most (79.9%) respondents in their study stated

that the Greek education system failed to be objective and favoured promotion of men. The researchers also point to other factors:

- The prevention of leadership positions is happening due to women's unnecessary levels of work, work pressure and stress;
- School administration is stereotypically androgynous; and
- Competition among spouses (men do not yet fully accept an equal share of responsibility in raising children and doing the housework).

The first time leadership position may be understood as organizational socialization. 'During this period, principals experience a plethora of emotions as they try to determine answers to questions and face problems for which they do not yet know the answers. As the teacher moves up the professional ladder into the principalship, there is much to learn about educational administration' (Reppa, Lazaridou and Lyman, 2006:4). Athanassoula-Reppa (1999) adds that women's under-representation is often linked to socialization and cultural factors.

In Greek culture, males still have the major accountability for meeting the financial needs of the family, whilst women are accountable for family caring (Kaparou and Bush, 2007). Women dominate pre-primary and primary education, which are perceived to be a continuation of family structures, motherhood and childrearing/childcaring (Athanassoula-Reppa and Koutouzis, 2002). Theodosiou (2015) suggests a strong link between family factors and the career progress of female principals in Greece, as women were found to strike a balance between family and career.

Most domestic tasks are undertaken by women, particularly those linked to children (Hatzipanagiotou, 1997). Women are expected to prioritize family over work. Kaparou and Bush (2007) say that this dual role affects women's career development, as one of their participants notes: 'as far as I am concerned, the imbalance in the Greek education context is due to the fact that women educators keep aloof from coping with school management, as long as they have the control of their families. In many cases, they decide to perform management duties after 20 years of education activity. During this period, their male colleagues of the same grade push their advantage of applying for senior positions' (Betty, age-group 50–59, upper secondary school). As these gendered roles are so deeply rooted in Greek culture, this might be a more dynamic influence than in many other countries (Hatzipanagiotou, 1997; Maragkoudaki, 1997).

The researcher shares the view that family responsibilities may be even more challenging for educators without partners. Three of the principals who took part in Kaparou and Bush's (2007) research claimed that 'family responsibilities can impede women's career development if they have no spouses or extended family to provide support' (Eleni, age-group 50–59). This issue is a major factor inhibiting career development for teachers in Greece (Kaparou and Bush, 2007). Avgeri's (2015:63) comparative research on Greek and Swedish women school principals leads to a similar conclusion that 'females are assigned by the Greek society to take on the weight of overall domestic and childcare arrangements as well as to develop themselves professionally but up to a certain extent'.

Kyriakoussis and Saiti (2006) show that 94.1% of Greek female teachers had not applied for leadership positions. The majority of the respondents were discouraged from a position in school leadership for two main reasons: 'the Greek education system is unreliable' (79.9%) and 'displacement through promotion' (95.1%). Another noteworthy result was the apparent failure of Greek educational administrators to give confidence and motivate women in seeking promotions early on in their careers (43.1%) (Kyriakoussis and Saiti, 2006). Research on Greek women principals show that they feel constrained by the centralized system, the laws, a lack of resources and differences between their values and those of other people, mostly men (Sobehart, 2009).

Kaparou and Bush's (2007) research on women secondary school principals in Greece shows that societal perceptions and male dominance constitute barriers to women's career progress. One of the participants commented that the 'social perceptions that prevail in modern Greece, do not 'condemn' a woman if she does not hold a senior position in education, contrary to a man where he will be deemed as a failed educator if he gets to his retirement holding the rank of a teacher' (Betty, age group 50–59, upper secondary school).

In the Greek educational system, the acknowledgement of efforts and performance of a school principal by school community members is a factor that contributes to heads' job satisfaction and is an intrinsic motivator (Bouradas, 2005), which seems to be important in order to overcome possible barriers. In other words, a school has a lot to gain from a head who feels that her contribution is well acknowledged and rewarded with benefits, such as praise and promotion to the higher levels of educational hierarchy. However, Saitis (2007) found that Greek primary and secondary education lack the positive recognition and

acknowledgement that should be derived from the educators' work and this may constitute a barrier.

Classical Greece introduced the world to the concept of democracy. However, in relation to women's status, the Greek city-states of the time were actually not democratic and this seems to be linking with the glass ceiling that women principals are facing in the 21st century (Kyriakou-Savva, 2013). The problem of the glass ceiling applies to Greece as much as to other countries. Women in leadership positions face artificial barriers that prevent them from aspiring to higher level leadership positions. 'In Greece the doors have not opened to women as much as in other countries and only an extremely small number of the women who have managed to pass through them have advanced to the upper levels of the managerial ladder' (Kottis, 1996:30).

Papastamatis and Kantartzi's (2006) survey revealed that teachers treat female principals with suspicion and believe men are better suited for school leadership positions. Such attitudes seem to epitomize a glass ceiling barrier that women have to overcome.

Avgeri's (2015) survey in Thessaloniki found that women are greatly underrepresented in leadership positions and face discrimination. Kyriakoussis and Saiti (2006) show that a large minority (38.6%) of female teachers believe that promotions into school leadership are discriminatory in that male teachers are more likely to be promoted. This view stems from the way that educational leaders are chosen and because the legislative framework (Presidential Decree 25/2002) does not establish consistent selection criteria (Saitis, 2007).

Taki's (2006) study acknowledged that women principals in Greece face negative approaches and discrimination from both men and women. As the council for selection of educational leaders consists mainly of males, the under-representation of women in educational managerial positions cannot be linked only to the view that 'males are naturally better suited to school administration' (Vasilou-Papageorgiou, 1995:508).

Research from Cyprus

Greece and Cyprus share many common features as result of their shared heritage (Reppa and Lazaridou, 2008). However, there is only limited empirical research on gendered leadership in Cyprus and on the barriers that women face while aiming to be promoted to leadership

positions. Cyprus is situated in the north-eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea. Additionally, Cyprus is considered to be the largest island in the eastern Mediterranean as well as being the third smallest country in the EU, after Malta and Luxembourg (European Union, 2015).

In the aftermath of the Russo-Turkish War (1877–1878), and the Congress of Berlin, Cyprus was leased to the British Empire which de facto took over its administration in 1878 (though, in terms of sovereignty, Cyprus remained a de jure Ottoman territory until 5 November 1914, together with Egypt and Sudan) in exchange for guarantees that Britain would use the island as a base to protect the Ottoman Empire against possible Russian aggression. The island would serve Britain as a key military base for its colonial routes. By 1906, when the Famagusta harbour was completed, Cyprus was a strategic naval outpost overlooking the Suez Canal, the crucial main route to India which was then Britain's most important overseas possession.

Following the outbreak of the First World War and the decision of the Ottoman Empire to join the war on the side of the Central Powers, on 5 November 1914 the British Empire formally annexed Cyprus and declared the Ottoman Khedivate of Egypt and Sudan a Sultanate and British protectorate. In 1915, Britain offered Cyprus to Constantine I of Greece on condition that Greece joined the war on the side of the British, which he declined. Considering this historical background, and Cyprus being an English colony, the influences in terms of education and culture appear to have much in common with South Africa and SIDs.

Kythreotis and Pashiardis's (2006) research, on principals' contribution to school effectiveness in primary schools in Cyprus, shows links to related issues such as culture. The Cypriot patriarchal family model still seems to be embedded in its cultural roots. Hadjipavlou (2009), states that, in Cyprus, the acknowledged head of the family is still the father. Initial conceptions of headship are ultimately reshaped in light of the contextual peculiarities and culture, while new principals' professional identity as principals frames leadership enactment in particular contexts (Theodosiou, 2015).

Theodosiou's (2015) findings on women principals in Cyprus show that culture was very important during their accession to leadership positions. 'Of importance here was the notion of culture and how new heads attempt to create a new school culture which reflects their vision

for the school and yet at the same time are shaped by the existing culture or the one they inherit from their predecessors' (pp.21).

Theodosiou's (2012) findings regarding Cypriot principals highlight the important role of people as sources of socialisation, such as previous heads, counterparts, colleagues, mentors and trainers. Vryonides (2007:95-96) argues that, in Cyprus, 'boys and girls have traditionally been socialised to fit gendered expectations leading men and women to different social positions that have sustained and reproduced gender inequalities'. Although these expectations and inequalities evolved over time, women 'still lag behind men in most areas of social life' (ibid:96).

Similarily, Theodosiou (2015) shows that new principals' leadership enactment is also influenced by numerous socialisation challenges encountered in fulfilling the role. Such challenges have been found to shape the way newcomers construct a role for themselves and perform leadership (Theodosiou, 2015). New principals reach the post with conceptions of their role as heads developed through various formal and informal anticipatory and professional socialisation experiences (Theodosiou, 2015). Kyriakou-Savva's (2013) research on women primary school principals in Cyprus shows that gender role socialisation and stereotyping were among the parameters which adversely affected Cypriot women educators' career ascent.

Angelidou et al's (2002) research on Cypriot women principals in primary schools shows the impracticality for many women of working long hours because of their family duties, and that this is a major factor in inhibiting their progression. The findings of this study suggest that there is a strong link between family factors and the career progress of female principals in Cyprus, as women were found to strike a balance between family and career.

In Cyprus the typical family arrangement is the nuclear family, often with fairly strong ties towards a more extended family, especially the parents. The more traditional division between the public domain (work, etc.), which is overseen by the male, and the private domain (the home), which is overseen by the female, is still strong, regardless of women's entry into the labour market, including school leadership (Papadakis, 2012).

Hadjipavlou's and Mertan's (2010:254) research shows that 'both patriarchal and confrontational issues prevented women to aspire leadership positions as this cultural understanding of the role of women influenced the girls' education in the Cypriot society and how much

schooling they ought to have'. Hadjipavlou's and Mertan (2010), and Hadjipavlou (2004, 2010), show that women find themselves in a transitional phase among traditional values and modernity, as the patriarchal arrangements stay unaffected with many women still facing the dilemma of choosing either 'career or family'. Similarly, Kyriakou-Savva (2013) acknowledges the longstanding patriarchal structure of Cypriot society, identifying leadership with men, as having profound effects on females' socialisation and as a corollary to their leadership orientation.

The absence of female role models can be considered a barrier for women who aspire to leadership positions. As early as 1998, Kythreotis and Pashiardis's (1998a: 7) research on women principals points to the absence of role models as a negative feature of their career development:

> Women principals all had varied, diverse and very strong experiences and took chances with their careers. They all made strong efforts to further their education in order to enhance their options for advancement in the educational system, as it seemed they did not have any extra support from other women principals in such positions.

In Papadakis's (2012) research on Cypriot women principals, the respondents exhibited a lower level of self-confidence. The Cypriot women credited this to the 'European culture and society' in which she was socialised (Papadakis, 2012). Nevertheless, on moving on to headship positions, further support is needed for women to perform the role (Theodosiou, 2015). However, unlike the long career in headship and routes to headship that aspirant heads in other countries have, appointments to headship in Cyprus remain largely based on seniority, as the three and five points allocated to master's or doctoral degree holders respectively are easily outweighed by years in service. A suggested way to overcome this barrier is to change teachers' evaluation, selection and promotion scheme and criteria, so as young and qualified individuals can be promoted to a leadership post at an early age. Theodosiou's (2015) research shows that Cypriot principals experience short tenures in each school and they are forced under the regulations to move around schools, especially during their early years in post. Consequently, Cypriot heads experience different career phases from heads in Western countries.

Within this context, the lack of precise preparatory programmes for appointment to any leadership post in Cypriot schools is noted and may

have particular resonance for women (Michaelidou and Pashiardis, 2009; Eurydice, 2013; Ylimaki and Jacobson, 2013).

With regards to leadership development programmes in Cyprus, there are only a handful of studies to draw upon about the National In-service Training Programme for School Leaders (NITPSL) and participants' needs (e.g. Michaelidou and Pashiardis, 2009; Nicolaidou and Petridou, 2009, 2011) - indicating the gap between emerging challenges and national priorities regarding school leadership of women principals and their need for support during their early years in post.

Theodosiou's (2015) research on women principals in Cyprus primary schools showed that one in five principals (19%) referred to external influences coming from parents, indicating appreciation and support to principals' work, as well as negative critic, lack of understanding and pressure on principals. Novice principals also mentioned human interactions with staff as the major negative experience, as their disapproval of new heads' vision for the school generated feelings of low efficacy among heads and lack of trust.

'The term ''glass ceiling'' has become the most representative metaphor comprising the whole range of structural external barriers hindrances which women come across on their way to the top' (Kyriakou-Savva, 2013:32). Thus, although women may have access to middle level leadership, which is focused on the interpersonal element, they continue to be excluded from the higher levels of leadership in education. Even when they succeed, the culture of the administrative act, the 'glass ceiling', is always there (Angelidou et al., 2002).

The status of women in society in general, and education in particular, has long been an area of discussion, which adds to the glass ceiling issue prevailing in Cyprus. Regardless of the view that biological differences should not generate socio-professional disparities, and that men and women should be similarly educated to benefit society, the underlying argument persists that '...men will, on the whole, perform ... better' (Kyriakou-Savva, 2013). Linked to the above mentioned, Cyprus has adopted an approach that leads to the appointment of highly experienced, and usually male, principals (Pashiardis and Ribbins, 2003) who do not seem to be influenced, likewise to women who have to break the 'glass ceiling'.

Hadjipavlou and Mertan (2010) claim that Cypriot society is male dominated, and patriarchical structures gave rise to social stereotypes, gender prejudices, and the sexual division of leadership positions. Apart

from the long established traditionally patriarchal contexture of Cypriot society that fuelled gender stereotypes, it appears that gendered policies imposed by the British colonial government before independence in 1960 (Persianis, 1998), also stirred up gender stereotyping. Such policies were identified by some participants in Kyriakou-Savva's (2013) research, as an additional significant factor impeding, or even terminating, women's career development. For example, one interviewee noted that 'women were forced to stop working after marriage [by British colonial government] ... Stereotypes ... played a role'. Another participant also referred to the British colonial government's stereotypical attitude towards Cypriot women educators through her personal experience:

> Once women were married, British colonial government was dismissing them ... As soon as I gave birth to my daughter in 1957, my service was interrupted and I was re- employed on a temporary basis ... In this way, you didn't have hopes for promotion ... and you began from the scratch. A major inspection was then carried out for us by five superintendents ... There were extra requirements from us. It was as if we changed as teachers ... and 'un-learned' how to teach ... Many years passed by ... All my classmates, even those who weren't so capable, became heads while I was losing everything ... because I gave birth (pp.175).

Against this highly discriminatory background, women educators of the 1950s and early 1960s had to make a 'painful' decision about their lives and careers (Kyriakou-Savva, 2013). 'They should either choose to get married and ''accept'' that their career development would be delayed or terminated, or they should remain single in order to continue their career journeys unobtrusively' (Kyriakou-Savva, 2013:175).

Although teaching evidently continues to be a female-dominated profession, promotion statistics in Cyprus point to the unequal allocation of headship posts between male and female candidates and show the under-representation of women in leadership posts (Nicolaidou and Georgiou, 2009; Polis, 2013).

Although teaching clearly continues to be a female-dominated profession, promotion statistics in Cyprus point to the unequal allocation of headship posts between male and female candidates and designate the under-representation of women in leadership posts (Nicolaidou and Georgiou, 2009; Polis, 2013). While, during the last cycle of promotions in 2013, female principals comprised the 77% of candidate principals,

they occupied 68% (28 out of 41) of the available posts (Theodosiou, 2015).

'The discrimination against women in appointments to headship becomes apparent when a comparison between the number of female and male candidates and that of appointees is made (Theodosiou, 2015:101). Georgiou et al. (2002:81), referring to Cyprus, say that 'discrimination against women in regards to their promotion to leadership posts… should be considered unfair' (Georgiou et al., 2002:81). 'In addition, in research among university students, the majority (65%) said that men are more suitable for school leadership and only 5% supported female principals' (Orphanos, 2010:4). Female principals are faced with stereotypes, which lead to discrimination (Orphanos, 2010).

Commonalities in Gendered Theories and Practice

Across the gendered theories mentioned earlier, there are several commonalities in terms of the factors hindering women from entering and enacting leadership. These commonalities that reappear in different countries are cultural factors, socialization theory, domestic and family issues, barriers to women's leadership, the 'glass ceiling' and discrimination issues. The literature also identifies a number of facilitators that might help women principals to overcome these barriers.

Socialization

Socialization theories stress that culture and domestic beliefs are necessarily learned through the persistence of traditional gender roles learned in other spheres, such as home and family, local society, schools and the workplace (Kiamba, 2008). Socialization is a 'process by which the individual learns to become social, a member of society' (Hyman, 1972:529). In contrast, social role theories typically propose that males and females might perhaps occasionally be at variance in manifest behaviour, but not for the reason that they have inherent gender-differentiated psychologies. Instead, whilst males and females appear to be different, it is because they inhabit different social or gender roles and have received dissimilar socialization experiences throughout their development (Eagly 1987; Wood and Eagly 2002).

The power of socialization that underlies this system cannot be ignored. Sexist, patriarchal values are so deeply engrained in society. The socializing agents could be parents, friends, or peers and mentors in the workplace (Sahgal and Pathak, 2007). Blackmore (1999:209) adds that: 'the continued association of strong leadership with hard masculinity provides no alternative conceptualizations of masculinity for those men who seek leadership, but who, as many women do, reject the values of competitiveness, coercion and control and seek to reconceptualise leadership in more socially just and inclusive ways'.

Because some of the traditional stereotypes cast women as socially unequal as leaders, they face additional challenges in becoming included in the organization (Hart, 1995). Christman (2003) indicates the existence of a societal climate of unexpectation for women who hold administrative positions. Possibly due to this 'unexpectation', women experience a more difficult socialization procedure into the profession than men (Shakeshaft et. al., 2007). Carr (1995), Reese (1993) and Christman (2003) argue that one of the reasons for the complicated socialization procedure is male dominance of the profession.

Ummanel's (2012) research on school principals' career paths in Ireland, Cyprus and Malta was carried out with fifteen primary school principals, five from each country. Their data show that becoming a principal necessitates a long and difficult process, especially in terms of socialization. The researcher claims that, during this process, female principals' lives are inevitably affected. At the start it is essential to socialize with the families, school and other reference groups. 'Then they seek advancement and in due course prepare for promotion to principalship. They develop their capacity and relationships with their peers and patrons. Finally they become principals and need to become familiar with the workplace norms of the school and community' (pp.13).

Women often face socialization practices, particularly in hiring, selection, and recruitment procedures (Alston, 2000; Brooking, 2008; Coleman, 2005; Young, 2005). Women may also be deficient in social networks and have often had fewer opportunities for training and development (Addi-Raccah and Ayalon, 2000; Coleman, 2001). Whilst it is imperative to look at overall issues of women in educational leadership, 'It cannot be unilaterally assumed that experiences of women based on their social and ethnic location are the same or similar' (Fitzgerald, 2003:433).

Being expected to be accountable for a family helps to form stereotypes concerning women and what is appropriate work for them (Coleman,

2003), which are linked to their socialization as women grow up (Bass, 2008). Social and developmental psychologists have given significant attention to the socialization of children. The family roles have been perceived as a key means for socialization, despite the fact that it is only one of several sources, such as school, peers, the media, the legal system, the cultural belief system, that play a role in the process of socialization of children (Arnett, 1995; Maccoby, 1992). The way children are socialized is compatible with parents' cultural values, actions, and socioeconomic status (Zayas and Solari, 1994).

Female primary school principals reach the post with ideas of their role as principals, developed through various formal and informal anticipatory and professional socialisation experiences. Traditionally, women resolve problems and prioritize needs differently from men (Moorosi, 2010).

<u>Domestic and family issues</u>

In most countries, women are expected to preserve traditional family roles alongside existing or new job responsibilities (Sanchez and Thornton, 2010). When women attain or seek positions as educational leaders, it is not easy to balance their work and family obligations (Coleman, 2001, 2005; Mahitivanichcha and Rorrer, 2008; Moreau, Osgood, and Halsall, 2007; Wrushen and Sherman, 2008). Grogan's (2000:125) review of the US superintendency over the past 50 years recognized that 'a superintendent is not encouraged to put his or her own family needs first'. At the same time, the system tends to sustain 'married male workers who have the full-time domestic support such that they can be free of home and family responsibilities' (Mahitivanichcha and Rorrer, 2008:493). It is not surprising, then, that women who attain positions of leadership are often not mothers (Coleman, 2001).

The demanding job of headship means that men and women both have to reconcile competing demands of home and work (Coleman, 2003). Shakeshaft (2002) acknowledges that there are still a lot of women who consider that parental responsibilities restrain them from performing their jobs as school principals, and that such responsibilities may make women objectionable candidates for administrative positions. Women are still likely to take the major responsibility for childcare, and to feel that it is their duty to do so, even in dual-career households. In addition, it is only in the dual-career households that there is any evidence of change in the traditional balance of the women taking major responsibility for the household (Davidson and Cooper, 1992).

Silverman (2004) highlighted concerns about family obligations and added that women may not be willing to move their home to attain leadership positions. They may also be unwilling to take jobs, which are very demanding in terms of time, because of the need to combine work and family roles (Addi-Raccah and Ayalon, 2000). These dual obligations often lead others to question whether women are capable of being effective educational leaders (Sanchez and Thornton, 2010:7). Coleman (2004) supports that in general, the classification of women with domestic responsibilities and childcare seems to develop the essentialist stereotype, which perceives women as 'carers' instead of managers and leaders.

Earlier literature, such as Grogan (1996), Gupton (1998), Watkins, Herrin and McDonald (1993), and Wynn (2003), also noted that family responsibilities were considered by women when choosing whether or not to apply for, or remain in, administrative positions. Shakeshaft (1985) noted research studies from the late 1970s (Baughman, 1977; Schmuck, 1976), which asserted that women customarily had a small degree of support, encouragement, or counseling from family, peers, or other educational institutions, to aspire to careers as principals. Even a small amount of support from a few people inside the school district helped women's confidence to aspire to principalship positions or to remain in them (Shakeshaft et. al., 2007).

The principal's position is undoubtedly a 'greedy' one with most of the female and male principals rating 'hard work' as one of the reasons for their achievements (Coleman, 2003). However, she adds (2003) that those women who were married with children and the male principals, who were almost all married with children, experienced their responsibilities for work and home in a different way. 'In most cases the men had wives or partners who had subjugated or delayed their career so that they could bear the major responsibility for domestic responsibilities and childcare. The women principals did not have this option. Coleman (2004) notes that the classification of women as compassionate, domestic, and absolutely of lesser significance and status than males, impacts on the experience of women in such leadership positions.

As noted in the previous chapter, the tensions between the often unconscious expectations of women and men become apparent in the role female leaders play in schools (Coleman, 2003). Moreover, 'support and encouragement from their husbands, families and peers influence women's attitudes to promotion' (Kaparou and Bush, 2007:230). Lumby et al. (2010) also note that most principals with

families perceive their families as beneficial to their career progress. However, men do not regularly help and support their partners (Bush and Coleman, 2000). In Greece, women do not feel able to hold senior positions in education due to the dual demands of management and family responsibilities (Kaparou and Bush, 2007). This problem is also evident in other countries (Coleman, 2001).

Although women experience conflict between home and work/life balance (Coleman, 2002; Lumby et al., 2010; Moorosi, 2010; Nai- doo, 2013; Smulyan, 2000; Uwamahoro, 2011), their ability to overcome the known barriers and constraints of the patriarchal societies in which they work shows their commitment and their 'agency' (Smith, 2011). Women teachers often have difficulties with their professional and family life balance, as there is no time off work for the children (Coleman, 2005b). Shakeshaft (2002) argues that the search for balance among family, work, and personal lives illustrates some women's unwillingness to take on the public responsibilities that come with some leadership positions. Work and family are the main life roles for the majority employed women in contemporary society (Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000). Another perception of this conflict between family and professional lives is the lack of support which also creates problems for women, who are expected to negotiate a balance between their work and family lives (Moorosi, 2010).

Coleman's (2001) UK study produced similar findings consistent with the discussion above. She explored reasons for the lack of women in educational leadership and found that women might have to choose their career over family. Coleman (2001) noted that part of this might be attributed to the gendered roles of females as domestic caretakers and posited that women might take time off work to care for children or elderly relatives.

The conceptual framework of the present research suggests that female principals' perceptions are developed within a framework of balancing personal and professional needs and responsibilities. Coronel, Moreno and Carrasco's (2010) qualitative research in Spain found that most of the women leaders who are married and have families embrace both their family and work roles. Instead of women being 'superwomen' who hold themselves to the highest standards for all of the role-related tasks of being wives and mothers, they adopt different internal and external strategies to redefine their roles (Coronel, Moreno and Carrasco, 2010). 'They learn to let go and outsource household tasks just as they would outsource work in a busy office. They recognize that they do not have to do it all by themselves. They alter their internal conceptions of the

demands of their work and family roles and define these roles in ways that are meaningful and helpful to them' (Coronel, Moreno and Carrasco, 2010:143). The facilitator needed for women to overcome the barriers is to reduce the domestic demands through outsourcing.

Barriers to women's leadership

Globally, the barriers which exist to women achieving leadership positions arewell known and researched (Blackmore, 1999; Kaparou and Bush(2007); Coleman, 2002, 2012; Fitzgerald, 2003; Grogan and Shakeshaft, 2011; Moorosi, 2010; Uwamahoro, 2011). Studies on gender and leadership have revealed a number of barriers to women seeking educational leadership and management positions (Olsson and Walker 2003). A number of writers have attempted to identify and categorize some of the barriers to the progress of women's careers in educational leadership (e.g. Brown and Ralph, 1996; Coleman, 2001; Hall, 1996).

Stereotypes may contribute to the barriers that women leaders face in order to be promoted into a leadership position. These may be premised on differences between male and female leadership ability and can create a cultural prejudice that assumes men are better suited to leadership positions (Heilman, Block, Martell and Simon 1989). Jackson (2001) argues that this perception is further reinforced by women having so few female role models. Davidson and Cooper (1992) declare that, where the number of women in leadership positions is so restricted, it is complicated to develop a model of women as leaders. In addition, women frequently fail to plan their careers (Morrison, 1992) and to build networks and effective mentoring relationships; they have been socialized to subordinate their careers in favour of home life and family (Fagenson and Jackson, 1993).

Internal barriers, such as lack of confidence, lack of competitiveness, and fear of failure, have also been identified for women's entry into leadership positions. Cubillo (1999), for example found that women's lack of confidence was more to do with unfamiliarity with the territory than with a lack of faith in their abilities. The fear of failure, too, tended to be much reduced once women were aware of the "rules of the game". Women leaders in education need to find the leadership styles that, without denying its feminine origins, result in effectiveness.

As Meyerson and Fletcher (1999) acknowledge, the barriers to advancement are not just above women, but they are all around them within the structures of their organisations and their cultures. Tharenou (1999) proposes that precise but dissimilar factors impact on both the

individual and the organization, which may facilitate or hinder progression to higher leadership levels. The impact of these factors leads to women not advancing to senior positions (Tharenou 1997, 1999). This argument suggests that career progression is dependent on succession throughout a number of stages, with the enabling factors favouring males over females. Coleman (2003:326) claims that the position 'is evolving and has raised for me the importance of the concept of patriarchy and the distinction that underpins our thinking about men and women tending to influence our perceptions of the worth of both'. Paechter (2001:43) adds that 'these dualisms are deeply implicated in gendered power relations, aligning themselves with and underpinning the distinction between masculinity and femininity'.

Theories that explain women's lack of progress, prevent their accession to leadership, and inhibit its enactment, have been surprisingly similar across countries and cultures. 'Social barriers in the form of broader cultural expectations in terms of the sex role stereotypes, political, traditional and historical influences are even more problematic because they are so deeply rooted in the society and in the institutional cultures and are therefore not easy to eradicate' (Moorosi, 2010:16). Linked to Moorosi's perception is Coleman's (2003:330) comment that 'the difficulties faced by women with families seem to be dealt with most often by separation on their part between family and work, and a decision to work even harder, so that there might be no criticism of them as leaders.

Mentoring as support for aspiring women leaders would be effective in breaking down the barriers for women and as a tool for leadership development (Uwamahoro, 2011). The researcher recommended that the following seemed to be possible strategies to address the challenges: mentoring, modeling, support for further studies, women's networks as well as training programmes. Support networks for women leaders in schools could be set in place for their assistance (Uwamahoro, 2011).

Much international research suggests that women have to find a way to overcome all these problems in order to access and enact school leadership. Of critical importance here is to find out whether women's perceptions of the barriers to women's promotion in leadership positions change when they get into these positions or not (Pirouznia, 2006).

The 'glass ceiling'

The glass ceiling that women encounter refers to a subtle and almost invisible but strong barrier that prevents women from moving up to senior-management.

(Burke, 2005:13)

The term 'glass ceiling' was first used in 1986 in a special report in the Wall Street Journal on the status of corporate women (Hymowitz and Schellhardt 1986). It was coined to describe the corporate traditions, practices and prejudices that blocked women in organizations (Diamond, 2007:8). The term 'glass ceiling' is now used extensively in the literature and refers to the barriers that keep women and minorities from rising above a certain level in organisations (Davidson and Cooper 1992; COE 1992; Adler, Laney, and Packer, 1993b; Cassel and Walsh 1994). Auster (1993) argues that the glass ceiling is an amalgam of pervasive forms of gender bias that happen in both overt and covert ways. The 'glass ceiling' exists in all societies and is most evident at higher executive levels, mainly at the most senior level where female executives are very rare (Oakley 2000). Moreover, it is chiefly significant to note the small percentage of female principals in the upper levels of administration (Young and McLeod, 2001). In a field that is populated by women, the glass ceiling effect is still present (Addi-Raccah and Ayalon, 2001; Mahitivanichchaa and Rorrer, 2008; Moreau, Osgood and Halsall, 2007). Although most leadership positions in education are held by men, the proportion of women leaders and leaders is steadily growing in the UK (DfEE 2002) and elsewhere. However, in both developed and developing countries, males are more likely to be educational leaders (Davies, 1998, Coleman 2002). The proportion of male and female leaders is more balanced in some countries than others.

The two most important challenges for aspiring women who wish to break through the glass ceiling remain discrimination based on gender stereotypes and the difficulties of combining motherhood with a career (Coleman, 2011). The 'subtle' barrier of the glass ceiling, as noted by Burke and Mattis (2005), 'continues to be a force in the lives of women' (Coleman, 2011:6). Some research on gender and leadership has focused on the concept of the glass ceiling. Women face the challenge of responding to stereotypical expectations of male leadership characteristics. Many of the current studies focus on leadership styles, the context of leadership, and career progression. Eagly (2007) supported this notion when she refuted the glass ceiling metaphor. She stressed that women may be able to devise diverse strategies to become leaders and thereby avoid obstacles. Several study participants

noted that, although challenges and obstacles existed, the stereotypes they observed could often be used as a way of learning and growing as leaders.

Empirical research shows that the glass ceiling has also not changed much in 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.

It would appear therefore that 'despite equal opportunities legislation and awareness of the concept of the glass ceiling, the chances of women obtaining leadership positions continue to be considerably less than those of their male peers' (Coleman, 2003:3). There is also a suggestion that women may not help each other in breaking through the glass ceiling (Diamond, 2007). The 'queen bee syndrome' is used to recognize those women who have attained top positions, frequently in a male environment, and who then adopt a 'counter militancy' approach that is based on their own professional and social accomplishments (Rindfleish 2000). Mavin (2006) proposes that competitive behaviour among women may broaden beyond professional rivalry to include sub-conscious essentials linked to a number of dissimilar factors such as age, weight and dress sense.

Discrimination

As Maruani (2000) noted, women's position in the work market cannot simply be examined as a consequence of the traditional separation of work from the home. Since the 1980s, a considerable volume of literature informing gender discrimination in the labour market has developed. Women's traditional patterns of employment, which often do not fit with what Agnew (1989) explained as the 'masculinist', dominant, linear career pathway, have long been described as hindering their career succession. For example, Hutchings (2002) proposed that women who take statutory maternity leave or longer breaks may find themselves more disadvantaged for promotion, having to compete with candidates who seem to have comparable knowledge but are younger and therefore viewed more constructively by appointment panels.

The ways in which appointment and endorsement criteria can discriminate against females in leadership positions, including in unintentional ways, has been extensively described (Boulton and Coldron, 1998). Other authors have illustrated discourses of leadership

as 'masculinist' and commented that hegemonic masculinity is situated as the leading model of leadership (Blackmore, 1999; Ozga, 2000; Mahony and Hextall, 2001).

Sanchez and Thornton (2010:5) argue that stereotypes are 'intertwined with barriers of sexism, bias, and discrimination against potential and current females in educational leadership'. Women are often subject to discriminatory practices, mainly in hiring, selection, and recruitment procedures (Alston, 2000; Brooking, 2008; Coleman, 2005; Young, 2005). Although current research indicates that women are able to lead effectively, stereotypes and challenges exist that may impede the success of female leaders. Gender discrimination is alive and continues to hinder women's advancement (Hopewell, McNeely, Kuiler, and Hahm, 2009).

Moorosi's (2010) South African research shows that, although the participants in the study had actually been successful in accessing the positions, some of them had experienced direct discrimination in their earlier attempts to apply for the principalship. One blatant example is evident in the following extract: '... in one of the schools they even told me that I was good but unfortunately they were looking for a man. So they couldn't take me (Lindi) (Moorosi, 2010). What is evident from all these studies is that, although gender discrimination is not a direct result of apartheid, the former cannot be divorced from the historical and traditional issues of race and ethnicity that bear huge and different cultural impositions on women managers and women aspirants to management (Moorosi, 2010).

Coleman (2012) suggests that there are many issues to be taken into account when considering diversity and leadership including 'equal opportunities, equity, equality, social justice, inclusion and discrimination' (pp.600). Moorosi (2010) comments that principals experience discrimination in the acquisition phase, which focuses on access and entry into leadership positions. Coleman (2005), and Blackmore (et al. 2006), also note that this is the phase at which most discrimination takes place. Women also appear to be deficient in social networks, have a smaller amount of training or fewer opportunities for progress, and general bias against them can happen (Addi-Raccah and Ayalon, 2000; Coleman, 2001).

Rusch and Marshall (2006) agree that there is gender bias in expectations for principalship positions. 'They posited that gender filters exist, and they reproduce and reify privilege and tradition, are subtle and contradictory, and modify conduct; in addition, such filters generally

favour males in educational leadership' (Sanchez and Thornton, 2010:5). Women also face discrimination (Moreau, Osgood, and Halsall, 2007; Silverman, 2004; Young, 2005), and women and men are equally likely to discriminate against female leaders (Young, 2001). Consequently, 'although women are interested and qualified, they encounter constraints that limit their choices and decisions,' such as sexism, bias, and discrimination (Mahitivanichcha and Rorrer, 2008:485).

Coleman's research over two decades shows that women experienced discrimination (two-thirds in 1996, half in 2004), and were most likely to link it to their domestic and family responsibilities, reporting that interviewing panels showed concern that domestic responsibilities might impact on their ability to do their job. Although considerably less direct and indirect discrimination was reported in 2004 than in the earlier surveys, there remained a perception of a usually covert preference for male leaders, mainly on the part of governors in both primary and secondary schools (Coleman, 2004).

Shakeshaft (2007:4) claims that 'gender discrimination in educational leadership is primarily rooted in the devaluation of women in society or the socialization of members of society into patterns and beliefs that support unequal expectations and rewards for women and men'. In contrast, Fitzgerald (2002) argues that Maori women in New Zealand historically represented a society in which women and men were equally valued, without any discriminatory issues, even if differently valued.

This review that the main factors influencing women's career progression are cultural issues, socialisation, domestic and family issues, barriers, the glass ceiling and discrimination. Principal training may be a facilitator, to address these problems. Nevertheless, in most small island states, there are no such formal requirements (Bush, 2005).

Facilitators to overcome barriers

In order to accept the alternative means of fulfilling the demands of a role, many women leaders redefine the structural and personal roles that the workplace and the society have imposed on women (Frone, 2003).

Wangui (2012) is optimistic that another facilitator should be that more women could be pushed through to school leadership positions, despite the ever perennial challenges of gender barriers that need to be contained. One way for women to break the barriers set by society is to be assertive enough to aspire to leadership positions, and to apply for these positions when they qualify for them (Pirouznia 2006). Of critical importance here is to find out whether women's perceptions of the barriers to women's promotion in leadership positions change when they get into these positions or not. Understanding the perception of females who are in leadership positions is very important because their perception is likely to affect the effort and strategies they use to champion the causes of other women who are aspiring to get into these school leadership positions (Pirouznia and Sims, 2006).

Recognition of the role of interpersonal relationships to promote a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere at work is reflected in the attention to the smallest of details (Samier et al. 2006). Female participants seem to cultivate an atmosphere of caring, built around relationships; they demonstrate a preference for collaborative leadership and place importance on networking (Samier et al. 2006). Women principals do often promote a somewhat kinder, more socially compassionate version of organizational goals and social policies, and place more emphasis on democratic relationships, participatory decision-making, delegation, and team-based leadership skills (Eagly, 2005). Therefore, women principals generally prefer frequent contact and information sharing as they construct what Hegelson (1990) calls a 'web of inclusion', where strong connections exist between all members of the educational community, dialogue is ongoing, and information is disseminated in all directions. This facilitates their decision to access these positions.

Case study research by Uwamahoro (2011) sought to investigate barriers faced by women principals in accessing principalship in Rwanda. Her findings suggest that mentoring as support for aspiring women leaders would be effective in breaking down the barriers for women and as a tool for leadership development. The researcher recommended that the following seemed to be possible strategies to address the challenges: mentoring, modeling, support for further studies, women's networks, and training programmes. Support networks for women leaders in schools could be set in place for their assistance (Uwamahoro, 2011).

Another facilitator that could help women to overcome barriers is professional development to help their preparation for principalship, advocated by many authors (see Bush and Jackson 2002;

Tekleselassie 2002; Mestry and Singh, 2007). As Moorosi (2010) argues, the support women received in her South African research was important in that it influenced their job satisfaction, which could have positive implications for retaining women principals. The more support women principals received from stakeholders, the more they seemed comfortable with principalship. The development of adequate infrastructure and policies to facilitate women to reconcile their privateand public lives is another step towards equality that should urgently become the focus of attention of policy makers, as indicated by several pilot studies conducted by the Cyprus Gender Equality Observatory (2007).

Coleman's surveys in the 1990s, and in 2004 (Coleman, 2009:17) 'recognised family, colleagues and primarily their own headteacher as encouraging and supporting them'. Likewise, fathers, husbands, male relatives and/or colleagues were mentioned as major supporters by women leaders in the traditionally patriarchal Pakistani society (Rarieya, 2005). Women face less conflict when they feel that their employers support their lives beyond work. However, Shakeshaft(2007) argues that women's lead responsibility for child-care and home maintenance increases their workload. This might be something that the Cypriot educational system will have to reconsider as this research has shown that their career development might be affected due to the lack of family support.

Research about principals in New Zealand (Court, 2004) showed that balancing excessive workloads and responsibilities was found to negatively affect a school principal's life and personal development and result in stress and bad health.

Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the feminist and gender theories (essentialist second wave feminism, poststructural feminism, black feminism and postcolonial feminism), theoretical, international, SIDS, Greek and Cypriot literature, addressing issues such as the internal and external barriers that women principals face in primary schools. The chapter also examines the supporting strategies and mechanisms that need to be incorporated in order to overcome these barriers

Over the past few decades, a number of researchers sought to understand the barriers women may face in accessing and enacting leadership. Transition to leadership has been represented as a life-

changing event, which entails personal transformation as well as overcoming the barriers encountered by aspiring and new principals.

The literature discussed in this chapter, examined the barriers that prevent women from becoming school principals and document a number of reasons that limit women from moving into formal leadership positions in schools. What is really important from the theoretical literature presented above is that female principals' perceptions are developed within a framework of balancing personal and professional needs and responsibilities.

The international literature review, drawing on research and insights from many countries, shows that the main factors influencing women's career progression are cultural issues, socialisation, domestic and family issues, barriers, the glass ceiling and discrimination. Women have to find a way to overcome all these problems in order to access and enact school leadership. These theories that explain women's lack of progress have been surprisingly similar across countries and cultures.

The author also draws on the limited Cypriot literature on the barriers that women principals face. Female primary school principals reach the post with ideas of their role as principals, developed through various formal and informal anticipatory and professional socialisation experiences. Initial conceptions of leadership roles are ultimately reshaped in the light of the contextual peculiarities and Cypriot culture, including the patriarchal family.

These considerations underpin the design of the author's research, which is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses both the conceptual framework and the practical elements of the research. It explores the research questions, and discusses what methods are the most appropriate to answer them. It is significant to place the research within an ontological position and to discuss the epistemology as both affect how the research questions are addressed. Different methods of data collection are discussed, focusing on the reasons for choosing particular methods. This is followed by a discussion of the practicalities of how the data collection was conducted, and the approaches taken to data analysis.

Aims and Research Questions

The main purpose of this research was to examine the career progress of female principals in Cyprus primary schools and to address the apparent under-representation of women in leadership positions. The research also sought to establish the barriers that female leaders face in order to be promoted to school leaders and how they can overcome these.

The researcher aimed to establish if gender issues play a significant part in creating barriers to promotion as a school principal and how these can affect them in leading the school. The author was also aiming to comprehend the experience of women in their childhood years and how these influenced their career aspirations. She also aimed to establish whether female leaders face internal and external barriers in Cyprus schools and, if so, what these are.

The research questions regarding the under-representation of women in leadership positions in Cyprus primary schools are linked to the aims and reprised below. They are discussed in more detail in chapter one.

 1) *What aspects of a female's life can influence her leadership progress?*

2) *What are the barriers for women in seeking to access leadership roles?*

3a) *How can these barriers to leadership positions be overcome?*

3b) *What forms of support are significant in helping women to access leadership?*

3c) *What types of training and development contribute to women's preparation for principalship?*

Research Paradigms

Bassey (1999:38) states that research is 'a systematic, critical and self-critical enquiry which aims to contribute towards the advancement of knowledge and wisdom'. The study of education is both multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary. 'A range of aims and purposes guides all educational research; decisions to settle upon one research project rather than another are guided implicitly and explicitly by researchers' (Morrison, 2007:17). While research is full of challenges and uncertainties, 'methodology is the theory of how researchers gain knowledge in research contexts and why' (Morrison 2007:19). Morrison (2007) discusses three broad approaches:

- Positivism
- Interpretivism
- Mixed methods

Positivism

Positivism is a social theory and, Bryman (1988:15) states that 'there is a wide range of definitions' attributed to it. The key point regarding positivist approaches to educational research is their adherence to the scientific method (Bryman, 1988). 'Its basic tenet is to view the natural science as the paradigm for educational inquiry' (Morrison, 2007:20).

The term is not always familiar to educational researchers who might work within this paradigm (Morrison, 2007). According to Morrison (2007), this positivist tradition has the following features:

- ❖ People - pupils, students, heads of departments, principals and parents - are the objects of educational research.
- ❖ Only educational phenomena that are noticeable through knowledge can authentically be measured as knowledge.
- ❖ Scientific knowledge is obtained through the compilation of verified facts. Such facts can be observed 'out there' in an

educational world that is separate from the viewer. These facts feed into theories concerning educational leadership and management, for example. Theories, in turn, represent the accrued findings of educational research.

The term positivism is used by philosophers and social scientists; a residual meaning is always present and this derives from an acceptance of natural science as the paradigm of human knowledge (Duncan, 1968). Positivism here implies a particular stance concerning the social scientist as an observer of social reality. Only educational phenomena that are amenable to the researcher's senses, and observable through experience, can validly be considered as knowledge within the positivist paradigm. 'Feelings', as the objects of educational research activity, therefore, need to be ruled out, unless they can be rendered observable and measurable (Morrison, 2007).

Survey research is often identified with positivism as it seeks to gather verifiable data, notably in respect of closed questions. For example, Coleman's (2004:1) surveys led her to conclude that, 'even though the number of women in leadership roles is growing, leadership is still identified with men. The researcher adopted the positivist paradigm in the quantitative aspect of her study. The author's survey of women principals in Cyprus primary schools was designed to provide a 'measure' of the career progress of female principals and to address the apparent under-representation of women in leadership positions. Individual responses are aggregated in order to give a summative measurement.

Interpretivism

Morrison (2007:24) states that 'the starting point for interpretive researchers is to operate within a set of principles regarding what it means to conduct educational research with people'. 'As with positivism, interpretivism is subject to a number of criticisms, some of which reveal problems with the approach, especially in its purest form' (Scott and Morrison, 2006:26). Notwithstanding such problems, it is probably fair to point out that many educational researchers 'use interpretation as distinct from the interpretive paradigm' (Scott and Morrison, 2006:26). Interpretivism links to qualitative research. 'In important respects ''qualitative'' and ''quantitative'' have been seen not only in different ways of researching education but also as if in competition with one another, or as 'largely uncontaminated ''bundles'' of epistemological assumptions, sufficiently divergent to constitute

different ways of knowing and finding out about the social world' (Scott and Morrison, 2006:28).

As with positivism, interpretivism has a set of philosophical traditions. Recognizing the inter-subjectivity of educational research might be viewed as 'obviously' the most suitable way of performing research with human beings (Morrison, 2007). In keeping with the interpretivist approach, the researcher was interested in obtaining rich data in the form of participants' perceptions and, for that reason she included semi-structured qualitative interviews (Hooper and Potter, 2000) as one of her approaches.

The researcher analysed the perceptions and feelings of participants through interviews. These gave her the opportunity to identify the issues that cause the several barriers that women principals face in aspiring to leadership positions. She aimed to obtain rich data from the participants, recognizing Wisker's (2009) view that these data cannot be identically reproduced and that they are based on human situations and interactions.

Mixed methods

An alternative to positivism and interpretivism is pragmatism. Pragmatism provides a set of assumptions about knowledge and enquiry that underpins the mixed methods approach and which distinguishes the approach from purely quantitative approaches, that are based on a philosophy of positivism, and purely qualitative approaches, that are based on a philosophy of interpretivism (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Maxcy, 2003; Rallis and Rossman, 2003). This often leads to the use of mixed methods.

Researchers characteristically do not see precise questions or hypotheses particularly tailored to mixed methods research (Creswell, 2008). Nevertheless, discussion has begun relating to the use of mixed methods questions in studies and how to design them (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007; Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007). Since a mixed methods study 'relies on neither quantitative nor qualitative research alone, some combination of the two provides the best information for the research questions and hypotheses' (Creswell, 2008:138).

As Morrison (2007:29) acknowledges, 'mixed methods may be used because, in combination, they provide the best opportunity to address the question set, or specific sub-facets of the research topic'. From the mixed methods perspective, the researcher is somebody who examines all data that are potentially enlightening. Gorard and Taylor (2004:5) say

that this is like the researcher 'hoovering' up all data by 'whatever means it takes… it is very difficult to imagine why anyone would want to do anything different'. According to Halcomb et al., (2009), mixed methods research collects both qualitative and quantitative data in one study and integrates these data at some stage of the research process.

The researcher used mixed methods in her research for several reasons that are mentioned below:

- ❖ Triangulation- one of the first rationales for using mixed methods' research (Denzin, 1978). Triangulation was used to test the consistency of findings through different approaches. In the present research, methodological triangulation was achieved through the use of questionnaires and interviews.
- ❖ Complementarity - clarifies and illustrates results from one method with the use of another method. As noted above, in the present research two complementary methods were used, that of surveys and that of case examples.
- ❖ Development- the results of analysis using one method shaped subsequent methods or steps in the research process. In the present research, the survey findings were analysed before the interviews were undertaken and the survey findings informed the interview process.
- ❖ Initiation - stimulates new research questions or challenges results obtained through one method. In this case, the survey analysis informed prompts and probed in the interviews.
- ❖ Expansion - provides richness and detail by building on the findings of either qualitative or quantitative methods (Greene et al.1998). In the present research, the interviews provided greater depth to build on the survey findings.

The researcher adopted mixed methods as this facilitated a better understanding of the relationship between variables and it allowed the appropriate emphasis at different stages of the research process. Using a mixed methods approach facilitated a better overall perspective on her enquiry. The researcher used a survey approach to obtain generalizable data about the phenomenon and semi-structured interviews to add greater depth and meaning on this complex issue.

Research Approaches

<u>Survey</u>

Muijs (2012) states that survey research is one of the most broadly used research methods in the field of educational leadership, and positively the most used quantitative approach. 'This is because of its flexibility and the ease of gathering a large amount of data relatively cheaply compared to many other methods (pp.140)'. Hutton (1990:8) acknowledged that 'survey research is the method of collecting information by asking a set of preformulated questions in a predetermined sequence in a structured questionnaire to a sample of individuals drawn as to be representative of a defined population'. A survey design offers a quantitative or numeric description of trends, approaches, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population (Creswell, 2003). In the present research, the author was able to draw on the survey findings to make claims regarding the population.

Survey research involves the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions. The National Science Foundation turned to survey research for the 2000 National Survey because it is an efficient method for systematically collecting data from a broad spectrum of individuals and educational settings. Fogelman and Comber (2007:169) say that 'surveys gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared, or determining the relationships that exist between specific event'. Therefore, the researcher gathered her survey data at a particular point in time. This enabled her to describe women principals' experiences and career profiles, and link the data to the research questions.

Fogelman and Comber (2007:125) add that 'some surveys, such as a national census, are carried out on an entire population rather than a sample' (Fogelman and Comber, 2007:125). The researcher's survey applies to the whole population of women primary school principals in Cyprus and can be considered to be a census.

Denscombe (2003) states that surveys are 'an approach in which there is empirical research pertaining to a given point in time which aims to incorporate as wide and as inclusive data as possible'. He stresses that 'the survey approach is a research strategy, not a research method'. Muijs (2012:141) adds that 'it is possible to study a wide range of research questions using survey methods'.

<u>Case studies</u>

A case study is an 'empirical enquiry and the data are collected and the researcher is able to explore significant features of the case, can create interpretations of the case, and check the trustworthiness of these interpretations' (Bassey, 2007:143). There is no established view regarding the parameters of case study research (Yin, 2003) but, generally speaking, case study research aims to investigate and depict a setting with a view to advancing understanding of it. Yin (1989:23) adds that 'a case study focuses on a phenomenon in context'.

Case study research is generally conducted within a localised boundary of space and time. In this case, the present research's localised boundary comprised of Cypriot primary schools. Bassey (2007:143) stresses that 'a case study has to be in its natural context. This is one of the strengths of case study research, and again is something on which more writers agree. Case study research entails being where the action is, taking testimony from and observing the actors first hand'.

The present researcher needed to collect sufficient data to allow her to explore features, create interpretations and test for trustworthiness. But, 'sufficient' is a two-edged word, meaning 'not too little, not too much'. There is no point in the case study researcher collecting more data than can be handled successfully in the available time and that entails exercising considerable insight and judgment (Bassey, 2007). The author conducted 20 interviews with Cypriot female primary school principals who agreed to take part in response to the questionnaire survey.

These are not case studies as generally understood in the literature, because only the principals were interviewed, but they can be regarded as case examples.

Research Methods

<u>Questionnaires</u>

The field of questionnaires design is vast (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). The questionnaire is an extensively used and practical instrument for collecting survey information, offering structured, frequently numerical data, being able to be administered lacking the attendance of the researcher, and often being moderately uncomplicated to analyse (Wilson and Mc Lean, 1994).

Questionnaires may include closed and open questions, where closed questions prescribe the range of responses from which the respondent may choose (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2007). Closed questions helped the present researcher to create descriptive data for graphs and charts. Closed questions make it much easier to count up the dissimilar answers; this is particularly true if the probable answers are numbered or pre-coded on the questionnaires (The Manchester College, 2008).

Highly structured, closed questions are useful in that they can generate frequencies of response amenable to descriptive treatment and analysis (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). As closed questions are those where the respondent is given a number of alternative answers to choose from while open questions permit the respondent to answer more completely and liberally in their own way and frequently leave a space of several lines for this purpose, the researcher's questionnaire included both types of question. The researcher decided to include both type of questions, since they are suitable in dissimilar contexts and offer different kinds of information. For example, having a research question of the type 'what are the barriers for women in seeking to access leadership roles?', the survey question designed from the present researcher had to be open in order to allow interviewees to give a full response, rather than responding to a pre-determined list.

However, since open questions allow the respondent to respond in precisely the way that they wish, they are more helpful if the researcher's aim is to reveal attitudes and genuine feelings (The Manchester College, 2008). However, 'closed questions also enable comparisons to be made across groups in the sample' (Oppenheim, 1992:115). 'They are quicker to code up and analyse than word-based data' (Bailey, 1994:118) and often they are directly to the point and deliberately more focused than open-ended questions (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2007). However, the trouble with questionnaires is that, sometimes, they seem like a very easy way to get hold of a great deal of information quickly and any fool can devise one in the time it takes to drink a cup of coffee' (Bell, 2007:224).

The researcher decided to distribute questionnaires using the Internet application, called Survey Monkey. The reason for choosing this Internet application was because it offered her a platform that was flexible and scalable enough to meet the needs of a wide range of people. The researcher designed the questionnaire using pre-formulated questions in a pre-determined sequence in a structured approach. These were designed to ascertain a 'measure' of the career progress of female principals and to address the apparent under-representation of women in leadership positions. Individual responses

were aggregated to give a summative measurement. From these surveys, the researcher gathered data at a certain point in time with the purpose of relating the nature of existing conditions (Cohen et al., 2007), linked to her research questions.

Interviews

Interviewing is one of oldest and most widely used of social science research techniques. As with all methods, it is important to start with research questions, rather than focusing on a particular technique (Wragg, 2002). The researcher's five research questions were used as the starting point for developing six open-ended interview questions and this was a sequential design.

The focus of the six interview questions was around the main issues that arose from the surveys. These issues were about the female role models and their influences, their experiences in regards to the patriarchal family, inhibitors and facilitators during their career, any conflicts between their professional and family roles and women's under-representation in leadership positions. The interview schedule may be found in Appendix B (pp. 278).

The researcher chose to use semi-structured interviews, with prompts, to allow informants the freedom to express their views in their own terms while having sufficient structure to provide reliable, comparable, qualitative data (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006).

The selection of an appropriate sample is a problem throughout educational research (Wragg, 2002). The present research's interview participants were a self-selected sample, based on their response to a survey question.

The researcher recorded the interview, with the agreement of the participants. Using a recorder has the advantage that the interview report is more accurate than making notes (Opdenakker, 2006). All 20 participants agreed that their interview could be recorded.

The synchronous communication of time and place in a face to face interview also has the advantage that the interviewer has the opportunity to create a good interviewing ambience (Opdenakker, 2006). However, this requires patience to reach agreement about timing and location. All twenty interviews were conducted at the principals' schools, with dates and times based on the respondents' preferences and availability. The interview was preceded by a telephone

conversation, in order to explain the purpose of the research to participants.

Data collection and validation processes

The researcher needed to collect sufficient data to allow her to explore features of the women principals' experience, create interpretations and test for trustworthiness. The researcher conducted 20 case example interviews. The cases were female primary school principals, who agreed to be interviewed through responses to the questionnaire survey. The sampling for the case examples was based on self-selection, arising from a question in the survey instrument (questionnaire).

The researcher conducted the interviews in Greek, using a recorder. The researcher gave the principals the opportunity to listen to the recording and all of them asked to do so. No changes were requested as a result of this process. The researcher transcribed the recordings in Greek and gave principals the opportunity to read the transcripts (see Appendix D, pp.281). Most of them (18/20), did so but no changes were requested as a result of this process. The researcher translated the transcripts into English (see Appendix D, pp.281). A Cypriot teacher of English verified the accuracy of the translations.

Sampling

According to Ross (2005:1), 'sampling in educational research is generally conducted in order to permit the detailed study of part, rather than the whole, of a population. The information derived from the resulting sample is customarily employed to develop useful generalizations about the population'. Identifying the appropriate population is a key aspect of survey research (Fogelman and Comber, 2007). These population simplifications might be in the form of estimates of one or more characteristics connected with the population, or they could be concerned with estimates of the strength of relationships among characteristics within the population (Ross, 2005).

The researcher acquired and used the statistical data from the Ministry of Education in Cyprus, to establish the number of women principals in Cyprus primary schools. This form of survey can be considered to be a Census. An imperative consideration in judging the trustworthiness of

research is the size of the sample (McMillan, 1996). Having an approximate portrayal of the population, which in this research is 187 women principals in Cyprus primary schools, allowed the researcher to conclude that she should gather a whole population sample for the survey, in order to facilitate generalization.

Sampling for the interviews was based on self-selection, arising from a question included in the survey instrument. All those who agreed to take part were interviewed. One of the advantages of having willing participants for interviews is that they are likely to provide a significant amount of data. However, self-selected samples also have certain risks as the sample may be biased and not representative of the greater population. People who self-select may be different from those who do not, and they might be more motivated or more obedient or more intelligent (Fogelman and Comber, 2007). The author recognizes this issue but had little choice as voluntary informed consent is at the heart of an ethical approach to research.

The researcher believes that even though Cypriot culture, Cypriot society and societal stereotypes are similar to each other, in the Cyprus context they may be slightly different. For this reason, in the questionnaire she decided to include these three terms as separate constructs and to provide participants with the opportunity to use the Likert scale in order to express their views about them. Another factor related to women's socialization is that women are expected to listen rather than to speak, and to focus on caring and serving the needs of others, especially their children (Theodosiou, 2015).

The researcher believes that Cypriot women have seen a gradual change in their role as participants in the economic revival of the country since the Turkish invasion of 1974. This has been achieved through their increased participation in the island's economic activity, the updating of family and labour law, the public awareness of women's issues, and the government's policy for the promotion of gender equality. The Turkish invasion influenced Cypriot culture as the island's institutions, represented mainly by men, have been focused on the partition issue since 1974, marginalizing other important issues such as women's rights and gender equality. As a result, Cypriot women still have a long way to go secure equal rights in society, including education. Traditionally, the expected primary role for women within the Cypriot culture has been to get married, and to have children, and all other activities were perceived to be secondary. In the 21st century, however, Greek-Cypriot women are split when asked if they believe that their social role is different from men.

76

In the Cyprus context, culture and society seem to be separate entities Cypriots even have two different words to represent these terms. Society relates to the people who represent a country (κοινωνία=kinonia) whereas culture (κουλτούρα=koultoura) means beliefs, language, traditions, religion and customs.

The Cypriot cultural conception relies upon ethnicity as its determinant of identity and as such, it is less welcoming and more exclusionary than the civic conception, since it can only accommodate people who are born into the culture (Iordanou, 2015). This is a veiled reference to the differences between Greek-Cypriot and Turkish culture. In this study, the author's references to culture refer to Greek-Cypriot culture.

Societal stereotypes are linked to discriminatory beliefs of Cypriot people that go against cultural and societal beliefs. For example, Cypriot women do not talk much about themselves, what they want and their achievements (Theodosiou, 2015; Garcia 2015). This societal stereotype is due to gender socialization, which promotes the norm for women to speak very little about themselves and when they do, to be judged inappropriately.

Instrument Design and Piloting

The researcher drew on the aims and research questions to develop the questionnaire. The items included questions on demographic factors, attitudes, previous experience and leadership practice (see Appendix A, pp.272).

Part A of the questionnaire aimed to gather data on the principals' educational background. Part B relates to their childhood and family background. Part C aimed to identify the forms of support available to the principals. Part D sought information about the barriers and facilitators influencing their careers. An additional question invited respondents to take part in follow-up interviews. The questionnaire included both open and closed questions. The former were included to give the participants the opportunity to give a fuller response.

The researcher wanted to cover the same broad themes in both the survey and the interviews. The interview schedule, therefore, included six areas of questioning, to gather data in relation to different areas of the principals' careers and lives. These themes are the patriarchal family model, the inhibitors and facilitators on their career progression as a teacher, and as a school leader, their possible experience of

conflict between their professional and family roles, and a broad question about why women are under-represented in school leadership positions in Cyprus. The interview schedule can be seen in Appendix B (pp. 278).

Fogelman and Comber (2007:131) state that 'the importance of piloting cannot be overstated. A poorly designed questionnaire will yield unusable data, which no amount of manipulation using the most sophisticated analytic procedures can rescue. Careful and appropriate piloting of research instruments will weed out inappropriate, poorly, worded, or irrelevant items, highlight design problems and provide feedback on how easy or difficult the questionnaire was to complete'.

The pilot or the field test is frequently characterized by administration of a procedure, tool or instrument to a group preceding the wider research project (Creswell, 2008; Kervin, Vialle, Herrington, Okely, 2006). Data from the pilot can provide vital information to, and experience for, the researcher before the actual study. A well-executed pilot allows the researcher to appraise and treat related processes such as time taken for participants to complete (Kervin et al., 2006) and at the same time improve the instrument itself for the substantive research project (Creswell, 2008).

Pilot testing has several potential advantages. Firstly, because respondents to educational surveys are often not willing to spend too much time filling out surveys, pilot testing the instrument can provide valuable information about how long the survey takes. Secondly, those who participate in the piloting can highlight which particular questions were unclear, were difficult to answer, or presented confusing response formats. Hence, piloting is important for improving the survey instrument before it is administered to the main survey sample (Forsyth and Lessler, 1991; Presser and Blair, 1994).

The researcher piloted her research instruments before uploading the questionnaire on to Survey Monkey. The research was piloted by administering it to a smaller group identical to those who comprised the main survey sample (women principals in Cyprus primary schools).

The researcher piloted her questionnaires by administering them to ten women primary school principals in Cyprus. Seven of them completed the questionnaires and gave feedback to the researcher. Three of the seven respondents stated that the questionnaire was too long whilst the other four noted that the questionnaire was very well structured, with important questions. The researcher's pilot study was conducted in order to serve to identify and address issues that could occur with

respect to the main study conceptualization, study design, sample size, sample selection, data collection and data analysis.

Data Collection

The data collection procedures differ depending on the type of mixed methods design. A helpful way to conceptualize data collection is to consider whether it occurs concomitantly or sequentially (Creswell, 2008). In simultaneous data collection, the quantitative and qualitative data are collected at approximately the same time (Creswell, 2008). In the author's research, the data were collected sequentially, with the surveys preceding the interviews.

Based on Wisker (2009), the researcher followed the basic steps below while collecting her data:

- ❖ Focused on the research questions, when she put her research tools into action and used her research methods to gather her data,
- ❖ Kept careful notes of when, where, and when, and for what reason, she collected and how she collected the data,
- ❖ Kept notes of her responses, the problems and surprises of all research activities and particularly those involving data collection as these details will affect how she can use or interpret the data,
- ❖ Labeled and numbered the questionnaires and interviews, by giving pseudonyms,
- ❖ Noted and filed all interviews.

The researcher obtained a list of all primary school email addresses from the Ministry of Education. All women principals' school emails were uploaded into Survey Monkey and questionnaires were sent out. Survey responses were recorded and saved directly into her Survey Monkey account. The researcher was able to track if respondents had taken the survey, allowing her to send reminders to non-respondents.

When conducting interviews, the researcher established a rapport with participants and therefore gained their cooperation. As Berry (1999:2) states, 'one essential element of all interviews is the verbal interaction between the interviewer and the interviewees'. All interviews were conducted at the principals' schools, with dates and times based on the respondents' preferences and availability. The interview was preceded

by a telephone conversation, in order to explain the purpose of the research to participants.

At the beginning of each interview, she explained that the interview was intended to be non-invasive and confidential. She also informed them that they could stop the voice recorder or withdraw at any time. All twenty interviews were conducted at the respective principals' school offices and most of them lasted about 40 minutes.

At the end of each interview, the researcher gave the principals the opportunity to listen to the recording and all of them asked to do so. No changes were requested as a result of this process.

Pseudonyms were given to each interviewee. The author then transcribed the recordings in Greek (which was the language in which the interviews were conducted). After producing these transcripts, the researcher arranged a second meeting with the interview participants so that they could read their interview transcripts. Most of them (18/20), did so but no changes were requested as a result of this process. After showing the transcripts to the interview participants, the researcher translated the Greek transcripts into English (see Appendix D, pp.281). A Cypriot teacher of English verified the accuracy of the translations.

Data Analysis

Analysis contributes to innovation since the emphasis on 'why' has greater depth and adds to the creation of knowledge as distinct from information (Watling and James, 2007). 'It identifies the core elements of a phenomenon and arrives at the underlying principles that explain the phenomenon' (Denscombe, 2003:119).

In quantitative data analysis, the researcher focused partly on 'relatively straightforward descriptive techniques, concerned with contributions of one variable and relationships between two or more variables' (Pell and Fogelman, 2007:348). Using descriptive statistics involved calculating means and standard deviations to establish the average view of the respondents, and the degree of dispersion, on each question. Descriptive statistics are likely to be helpful in the presentation and analysis of Likert scale material. This is often the first stage of descriptive analysis, when researchers might create the first results in terms of straightforward distributions and/or summary statistics such as averages and measures or dispersion (Pell and Fogelman, 2007). The researcher used tables and figures to represent the data. Using figures

enabled the researcher to look at whether there was any variation in the way that different categories (e.g. age and location) of people responded.

The researcher used a number of the features on Survey Monkey in order to do a manual analysis. Survey Monkey exports gave the researcher a presentation-ready overview of the survey results by question, known as question summaries. These exports allowed the researcher to identify how each respondent answered the survey. This export type was also helpful because it gave her the opportunity to have raw data in order to create charts and figures and to do the manual descriptive analysis. The researcher aggregated the data using tables and figures. She then looked at different patterns arising from the data, enabling her to adopt a thematic approach.

Watling and James (2007:350) acknowledge that qualitative data analysis is the 'researcher's equivalent of alchemy; the elusive process by which you hope you can turn your raw data into nuggets of gold'. Merriam (2009:360) stresses that 'data analysis and data collection occur simultaneously; to avoid it becoming overwhelming and to enhance the potential for more useful data and valuable findings. Making good sense of data as it comes in (its interpretation) is a process of organization, reduction, consolidation, comparison, and reconfiguration'.

Good qualitative analysis depends on reflection. For qualitative analysis, this means reading and re-reading the text. The next step is to link the findings to the research questions. The analysis also involves looking at how all individuals or groups responded to each question or topic. Subsequently, the researcher may code the data (Powell and Renner, 2003).

Often, some of the 'findings' of qualitative research only start to emerge when the researcher starts drafting the final report (Watling and James, 2007). As Watling and James (2007:359) state, 'you need to weigh the value of the evidence to your project as you go along, to take informed judgments on its value to your work, to interpret it and to use it as it is the basis for your understandings and your explanations'. The researcher's qualitative data analysis took place throughout the entire research process.

The researcher analysed the qualitative data manually and she followed four steps: reviewing the data, organizing the data, coding the data and interpreting the data. In order to code the data, she began to note patterns, categories and themes and she clustered them to different

groups in order to be able to make comparisons. She then used codes, to identify patterns (see Appendix E, pp.285).

The last part of the analysis was interpretation that involved attaching meaning and significance to the data. The researcher started interpreting data by making a list of key themes (see Appendix E, pp.285). Reviewing each theme that arose during the coding process, and identification of similarities and differences in responses from participants with differing characteristics, were other vital parts of the analysis.

The researcher's approach to data analysis links to Denscombe's (2003:119) acknowledgment that 'analysis contributes to originality because the emphasis on ''why'' has greater depth and contributes to the generation of knowledge as distinct from information. It identifies the core elements of a phenomenon and arrives at the underlying principles that explain the phenomenon'.

Reliability, Validity and Triangulation

Bush (2007:91) states that 'the authenticity of educational and social research can be judged by the procedures used to address validity, reliability and triangulation'. He adds that reliability in survey research requires instruments such as questionnaires and structured interviews, and careful instrument design and testing, for example through piloting (Bush, 2007). Fowler (1993) emphasizes the need to ensure that all interviewees are asked the same questions in the same way for the procedure to be reliable.

Since reliability requires a standardized approach, it may limit validity. Validity is likely to require a friendly, human approach that allows respondents to answer in their own way, expressing their thoughts and feelings, and not to be restricted by the artificiality of a standard instrument. 'In proportion to the extent to which, reliability is enhanced… validity would decrease' (Kitwood, 1977).

The researcher was not present as the survey data were collected, so she had to ensure that the instrument design and testing, for example through piloting, were components of the reliability process. Reliability was also improved by comparing survey and interview findings.

The concept of validity is used to judge whether the research accurately describes the phenomenon that it is intended to describe (Bush, 2007). 'Validity, tells us whether an item measures or describes what it is

supposed to measure or describe. If an item is unreliable, then it must also lack validity, but a reliable item is not necessarily also valid' (Bell, 1999:104).

The researcher acknowledges the need to make sure that the 'research design, the methodology and the conclusions of the research all need to have regard to the validity of the process' (Bush, 2012:65). The researcher formulated her interview questions carefully in order to minimize bias. The researcher was aware of the risk of invalidity, which occurs mostly in semi-structured interviews, where interviewer bias is possible. Cohen and Manion (1994:282), suggest 'careful formulation of questions and interviewer training as possible solutions but bias is likely to be endemic, particularly in semi-structured interviews, and is difficult to eliminate'. The researcher reduced the risk of bias through respondent validation (Scott and Morrison, 2006:252), 'where transcripts or the researcher's notes are returned to the interviewee for confirmation or amendment'.

'Triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection' (Bush, 2012:85). Triangulation involves the conscious combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies as a powerful solution to strengthen a research design where the logic is based on the fact that a single method can never adequately solve the problem of rival causal factors (Denzin 1978; Patton 1990; De Vos 1998).

Data triangulation implies the collection of accounts from different participants in a prescribed setting, from different stages in the activities of the setting and, if appropriate, from different sites of the setting (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall 1994:146). It also entails the cross-checking of the consistency of specific and factual data items from various sources via multiple methods at different times (Guba and Lincoln 1989; Patton 1990). In the present study, data triangulation comprised the comparison of qualitative data received from semi-structured interviews of 20 women principals with quantitative data from the questionnaires sent to all o187 women principals in Cyprus primary schools.

The authenticity and quality of educational and social research can be considered by the techniques used to address reliability, validity and triangulation. These are all significant terms whose significance and salience differ according to the stance of the researcher (Bush, 2012). The researcher gave careful attention to issues of reliability and validity but recognizes that these cannot be absolute in mixed methods research.

Ethical Issues

Ethical issues may stem 'from the kinds of problems investigated by social scientists and the methods they use to obtain valid and reliable data' (Cohen et al., 2007, p.51) and may arise at any stage of a research study, especially when dealing with human participants (Dowling and Brown, 2010). Hence, at a very early stage of the research process, it was essential to address some initial considerations and ethical dilemmas that would be likely to arise during each stage in the research sequence and consider possible ways to handle them. Ethical approval from the University of Warwick, where doctoral registration began before transferring to Nottingham, was gained prior to the collection of any data.

On gaining the permission of the MOEC to undertake this study in Cypriot schools, and access primary school principals in schools, a letter was sent to the appropriate official within the MOEC. The letter included a brief description of the aims and the research design, the potential impact of the study, as well as the extent of time over which the study would take effect. When permission was gained from the Ministry of Education in Cyprus was provided, the researcher proceeded to upload the questionnaires to Survey Monkey and to send them to all women principals in Cyprus primary schools.

Participants' informed consent was gained for their participation in interviews (see Appendix C, pp.280). Participants' informed consent arises from their right to participate in research after being informed about its aims, procedures and the risks which it may entail (Cohen et al., 2007). Participants were informed about the aims, and their voluntarily involvement in the study, and they were assured that their data would be treated with confidentiality and solely for the purpose of the study.

Also, participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, for example if they would feel uneasy about discussing their personal experiences in schools. Moreover, respondents' permission was gained for using an audiotape recorder to record the interviews for later transcription. The researcher sought to ensure that no sensitive issues were raised and cultural, domestic and religious issues were handled with care and respect. If participants had become upset, for example in recounting their childhood or career experiences, the researcher would have offered to suspend the interview, and to

continue at a later date, but this did not happen at any of the interviews. The interview process showed appropriate respect for participants and the researcher ensured that participants were protected from physical and psychological harm.

During the analysis and interpretation of the data, extra care was taken to ensure confidentiality and to respect participants' anonymity and privacy. According to BERA (2004:8), the 'confidential and anonymous treatment of the participants' data is considered the norm for the conduct of research' unless the participants willingly waive their right to privacy. Questionnaires were completed anonymously and participants were asked not to reveal their personal data in any way during completion.

In the case of interviews, identifiers, such as participants' names, gender, years in service and school names, were deleted from interview transcripts during the recording process and kept in a different digital file elsewhere (see Appendix D, pp.281). Also, all digital records of the data were password protected and saved in a disk where only the researcher had access. On presenting the research findings, pseudonyms were used to represent interviewees and their personal and school data were treated with confidentiality. Interviewees' anonymity and privacy, as well as schools' data, would also be maintained while disseminating the findings.

Another ethical issue that had to be addressed was that the research took place in Cyprus - a Greek speaking country - while the findings are presented in English. The questionnaire and the interview consent form were written in Greek. Interviews were also conducted in Greek. In this way, participants were facilitated to participate in the study and express their views with ease using their mother tongue. The analysis of the survey and interview data was also conducted in Greek, and, afterwards, the results were translated by a teacher of English and then presented in English by the researcher (see Appendix D, pp.281). In order to ensure reliability and accuracy in reporting the findings, a person with fluency in English as a native speaking person was asked to certify the translation by randomly selecting quotes regarding participants' views and perceptions and translating them back to Greek. The translators and verifiers had no access to the names of participants. All participants data were kept anonymous and confidential.

Overview

This chapter explains the methods, which the researcher used in her research, justifying their choice and discussing the theoretical assumptions underlying them. The researcher justified her approach in relation to her aims and research questions, linked to the research methods literature. The main focus of this research was the career progress of female principals in Cyprus schools, and the under-representation of women in leadership positions that characterize the educational system of Cyprus. As more females progressively enter leadership roles in Cyprus, which traditionally have been occupied mostly by males, there is a need to conduct research to establish the experience of these female leaders. This chapter sets out the author's explanation and justification of the research design and methods, linked to the research questions, and supported by the research methods literature.

The next chapter presents the findings from the author's survey.

CHAPTER FOUR – SURVEY FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the survey of women primary school principals. The chapter is divided into four main sections; educational, childhood and family background, forms of support, barriers, and facilitators, for the principals' careers.

Response Rate

One hundred and eighty seven questionnaires were sent to all women principals in primary schools around Cyprus, a whole population sample (CENSUS), using Survey Monkey. The women principals were identified from the Statistical Department of the Ministry of Education in Cyprus. Fifty-three women principals (28.3%) completed the questionnaires fully and twenty-three (12.3%) responded partially. The overall response rate was 40.6%. The incomplete questionnaires varied in the number of questions answered. Those which answered only the biographical data (12) were omitted from the analysis while the remaining 11 were included, because they provided some substantive data.

Biographical Data

Characteristics of respondents

Figure 4.1 presents the data on the age profile of respondents.
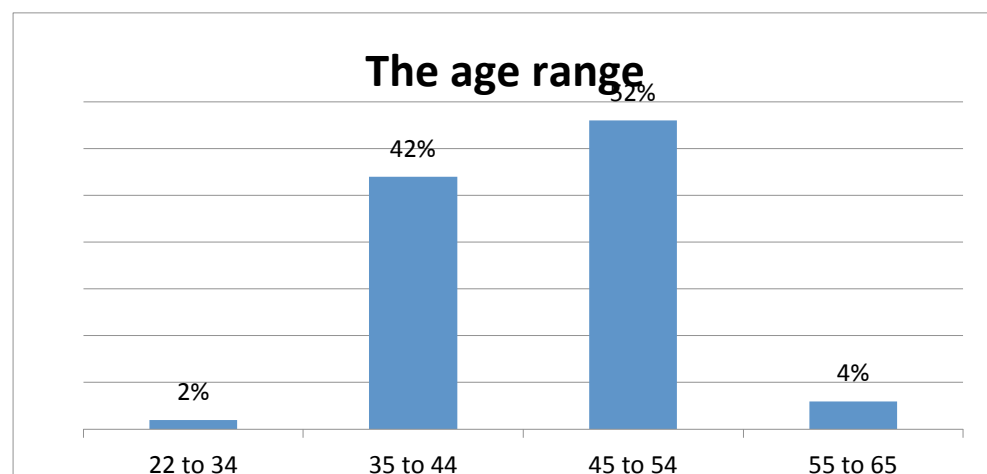
Figure 4.1: The age range of respondents (n=64).

The majority of the respondents (52%) say that they were aged between 45 and 54. The age range of the respondents is significant in respect of the policy that teachers must have 15 years of experience in order to apply for a principal's position. The great majority of respondents are mature enough to meet this requirement but one is under 35 and could not have achieved 15 years' experience.

Educational background

Figure 4.2 relates to respondents' educational experience.
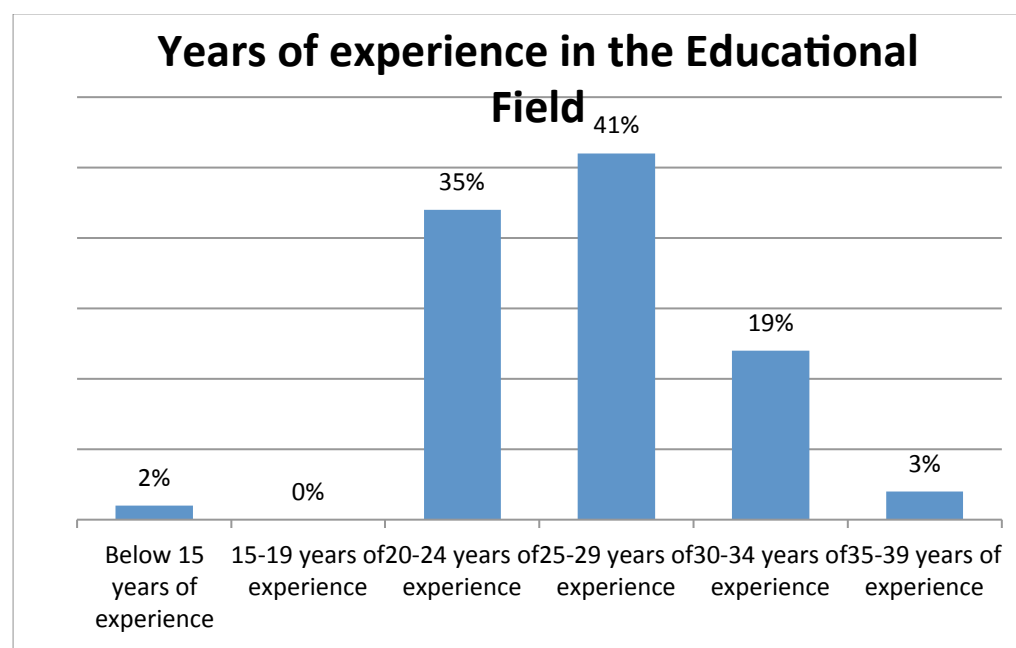
Figure 4.2: Respondents' educational experience (n=63).

Figure 4.2 shows that most, but not all, of the women principals have been working in the educational field for more than 15 years, fulfilling the legislative requirement. The largest group of respondents (41%) have between 25 and 29 years professional experience.

Figure 4.3 gives information about respondents' experience as principals.
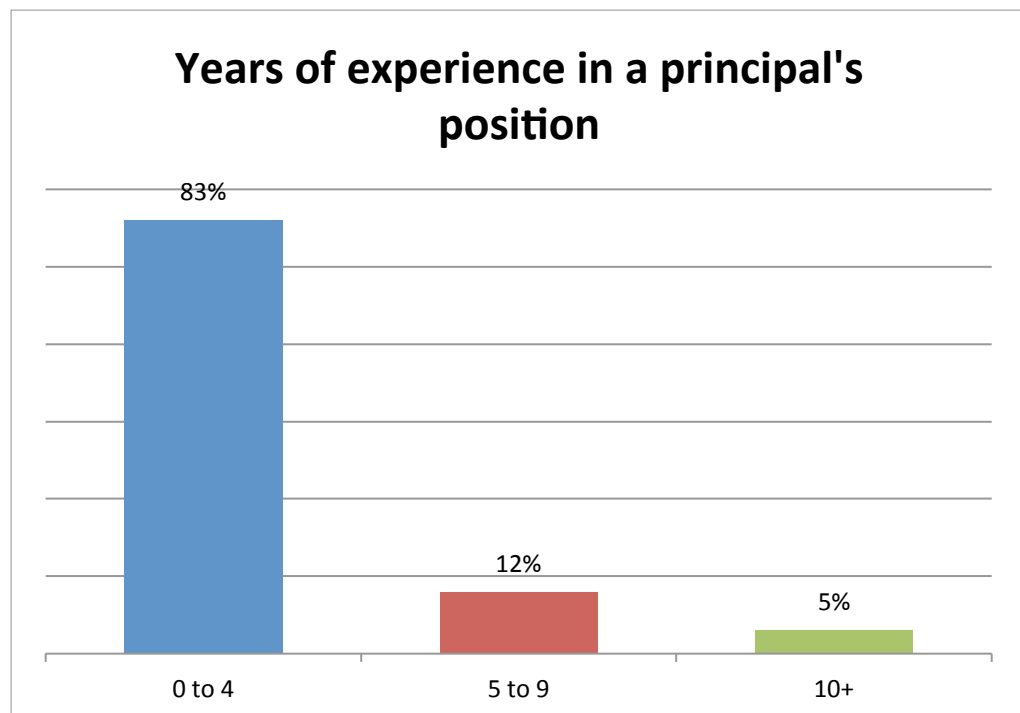
Figure 4.3: Respondents' experience as principal (n=67).

Figure 4.3 shows that most respondents are relatively inexperienced, with less than five years' experience as principals. Only three (5%) have more than ten years in post.

Figure 4.4 provides data about the location of respondents' schools.
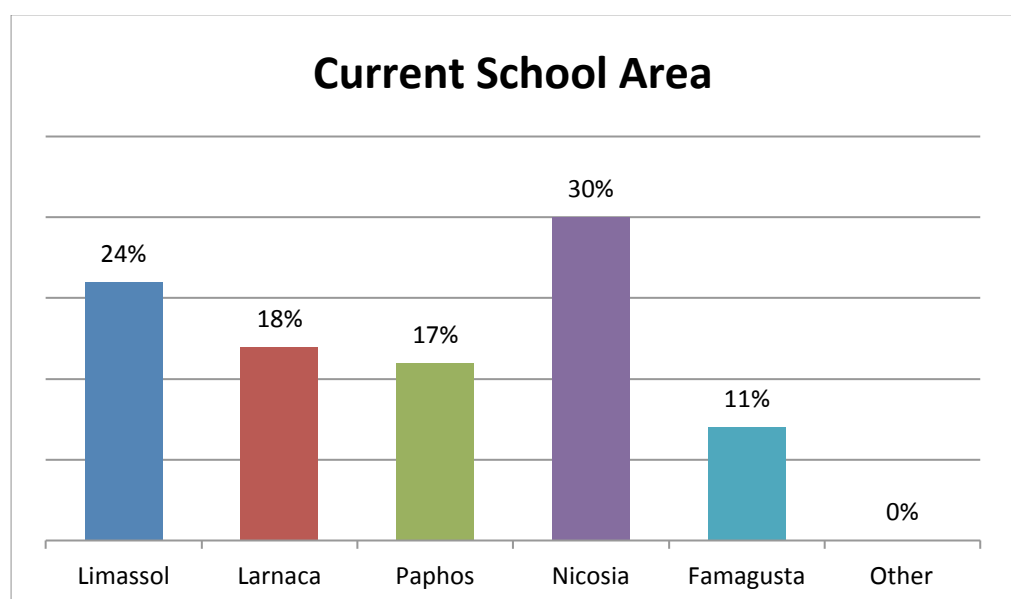
Figure 4.4: Location of respondents' schools (n=66).

The researcher identified the five main towns in Cyprus and added a sixth option: 'Other (state the area)'. All the principals were located in the five identified towns. Famagusta and Paphos are regarded as rural parts of Cyprus while Limassol, Larnaca and Nicosia are urban centres. The largest group of principals are those working in Nicosia (30%) and Limassol (24%), with twelve respondents (18%) in Larnaca and 11 in Paphos (17%). Only seven (11%) respondents are principals in Famagusta.

Childhood and Family Background

The researcher wanted to establish whether there is a family history of principalship. Figure 4.5 shows the responses to this question.
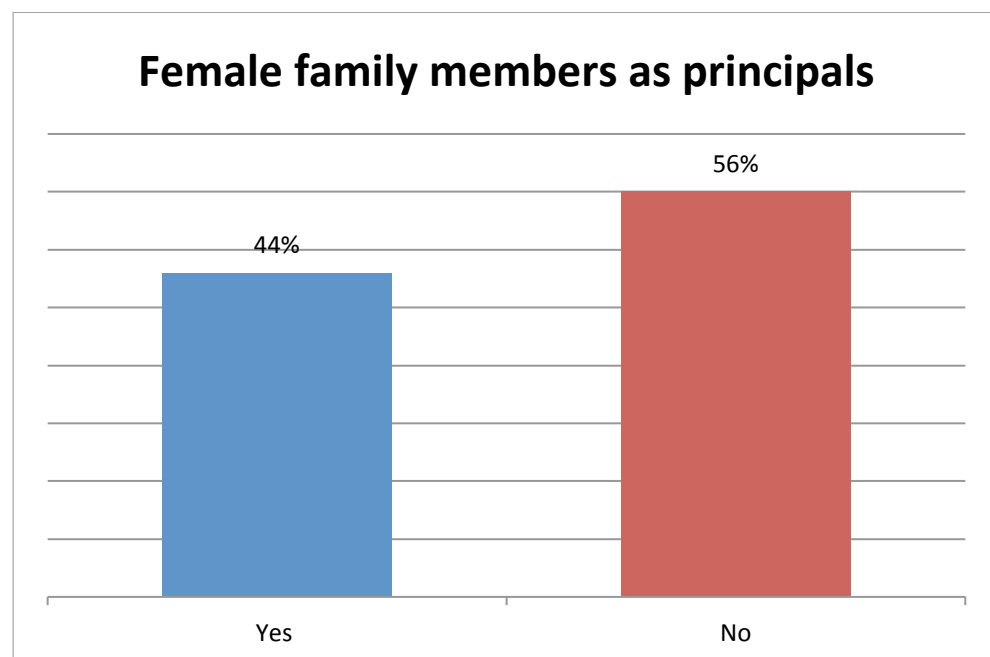
Figure 4.5: Female family members as principals (n=63).

A significant minority (44%) of respondents have female family members who are, or have been, principals. This suggests that family background may be an important influence for many women principals. Figures 4.5.1, 4.5.2, 4.5.3 and 4.5.4 show the relationship between the findings identified in figure 4.5 and the biographical data of respondents. In Figure 4.5.2, 'educational experience', 'yes' adds up to 101% as a result of rounding.

Age Range

Figure 4.5.1: Age range

Experience in the Educational Field

Figure 4.5.2: Educational experience

Years of experience in a principal's position
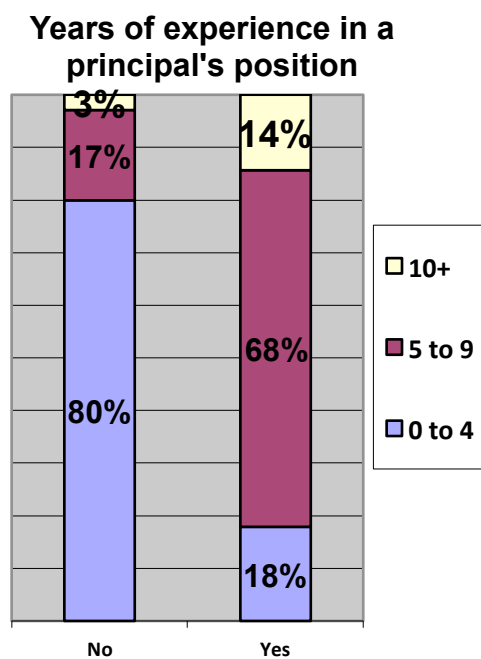
Figure 4.5.3: Principal's experience

School area

Figure 4.5.4: School Area

Figure 4.5.1. shows that a great number (29%) of the women respondents who stated that they had female family members in their family were under 45. These data suggest that there are significance differences in relation to age, as more mature principals were less likely to have female family members in their families.

Figure 4.5.2 shows that those principals who stated that they had female family members as principals were, on average, less experienced than those without such family members. However, these differences are not statistically significant.

The data in figure 4.5.3 show that most of the respondents with female family members as principals were in their early stages of their career as principals, with less than ten years' experience.

The data in figure 4.5.4 show that more than half the principals with female family members as principals come from the urban setting of Limassol. Only five such principals are leading schools in the more traditional areas of Paphos and Larnaca, where professional careers for women are less likely to be encouraged. The 'no' response in this figure adds up to 99% as a result of rounding.

Figure 4.6 shows that the majority (54%) of the 28 family members were mothers, five (18%) were aunts, three (10%) were sisters and five (18%) were grandmothers.

Relation to principals in the family

Mother	54%
Aunt	18%
Sister	10%
Grandmother	18%
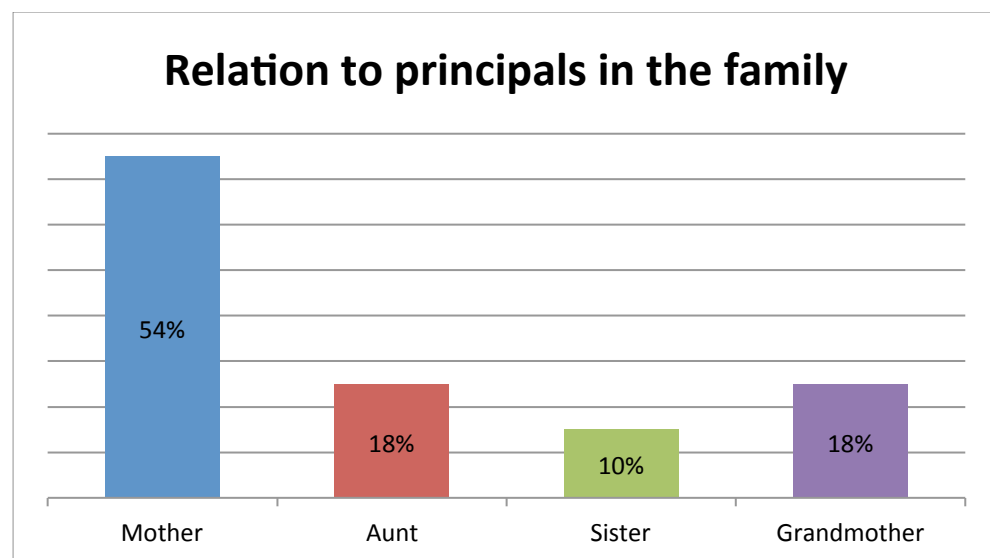
Figure 4.6: Relationship of principals in the family (n=28).

The women principals were also asked if they had a female role model during their childhood years (see figure 4.7).

Childhood female role models
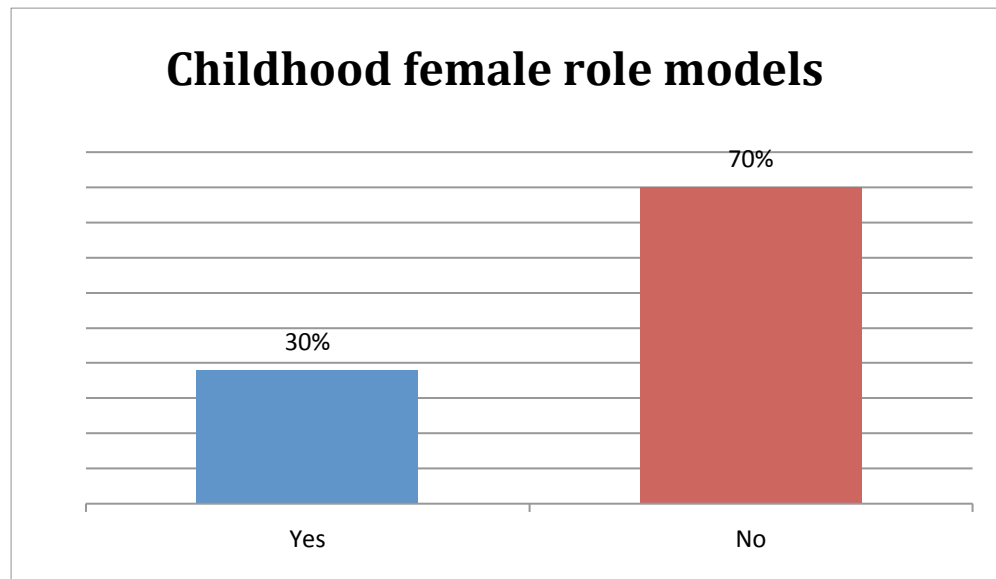
Figure 4.7: Childhood female role models (n=64)

The majority of respondents (70%) did not have a female role model, but a significant minority (30%) were able to identify such an influence. Figures 4.7.1, 4.7.2, 4.7.3 and 4.7.4 show how these findings relate to the biographical data.
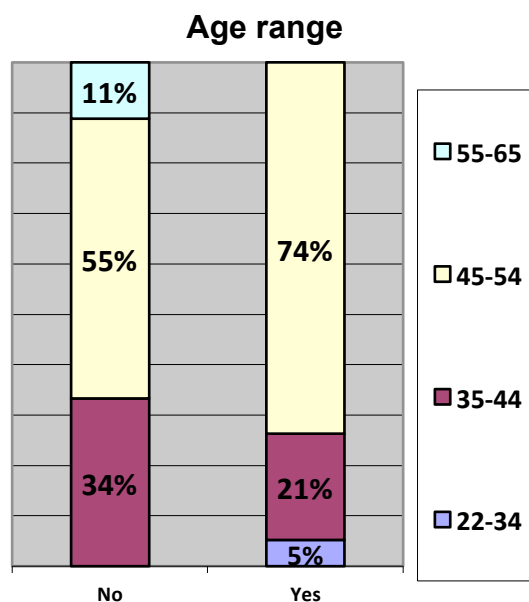
Figure 4.7.1: Age range
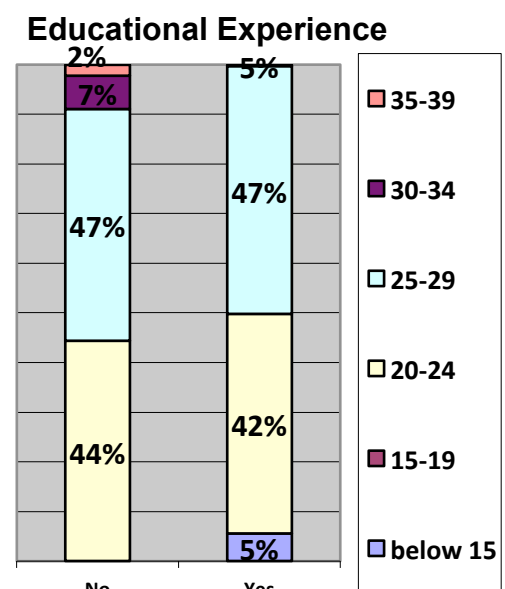
Figure 4.7.2: Educational Experience

Principals Experience
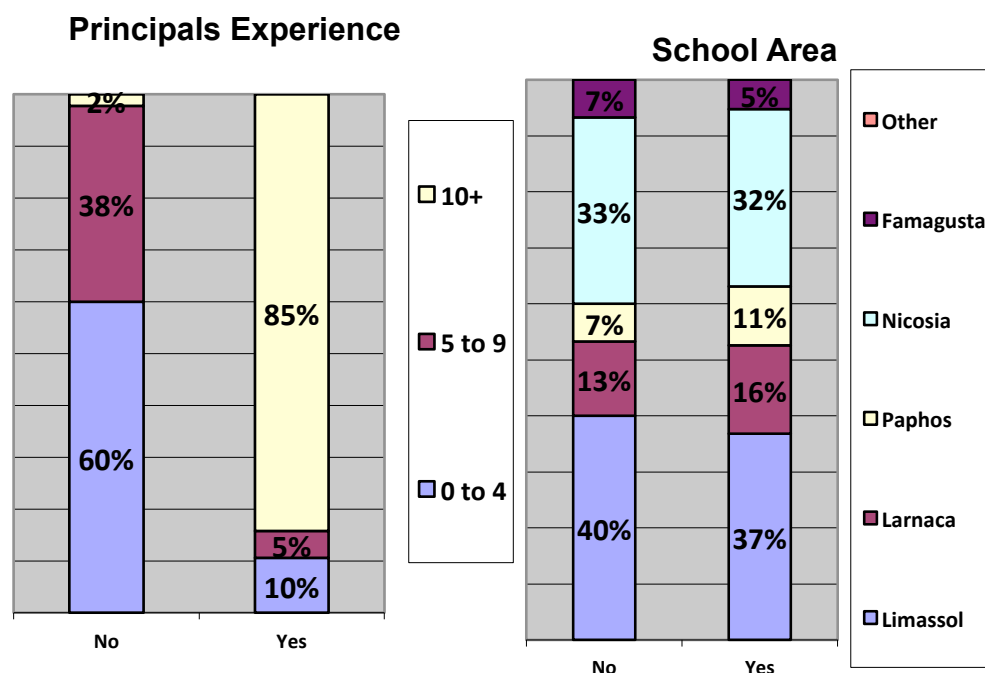
Figure 4.7.3: Principals experience

School Area

Figure 4.7.4: School Area

The data in figures 4.7.1 and 4.7.2 do not show statistically significant differences between respondents with or without female role models. The 'yes' response in figure 4.7.2 adds up to 99% as a result of rounding. Figure 4.7.3 shows that the great majority of respondents with female role models were highly experienced principals, with more than ten years' in post. There do not appear to be significant differences by school location.

The questionnaire also included open-ended questions, which gave the respondents the opportunity to give a fuller reply to questions. They were asked if they experienced the patriarchal family during their childhood and, if yes, to explain how, if at all, this model influenced their decisions to seek promotion as a principal. In order to ensure that all respondents perceived the patriarchal family model in the same way, the researcher provided an explanation in the questionnaire. This explanation stated that the patriarchal family is a family model in which males are the primary authority figures and fathers hold authority over women and children (see figure 4.8).

Principals experiencing the patriarchal model

Yes 53%
No 47%
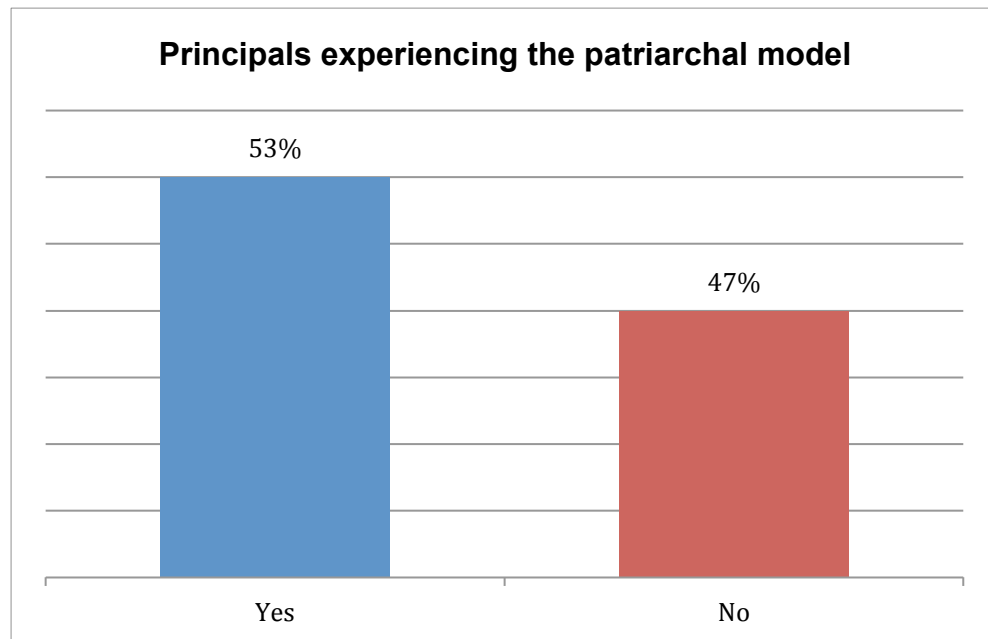
Figure 4.8: Principals experiencing the patriarchal family (n=57).

Figure 4.8 shows the responses to this question. It shows that a slight majority of principals (53%) experienced the patriarchal family while the other 27 (47%) did not. Figures 4.8.1, 4.8.2, 4.8.3 and 4.8.4 show how these findings relate to the biographical data.

Age range

55-65
45-54
35-44

No: 60%, 40%
Yes: 50%, 33%, 17%

Figure 4.8.1 Age range

Principals experience

35-39
30-34
25-29
20-24
15-19

No: 15%, 11%, 30%, 44%
Yes: 39%, 34%, 10%, 7%, 10%
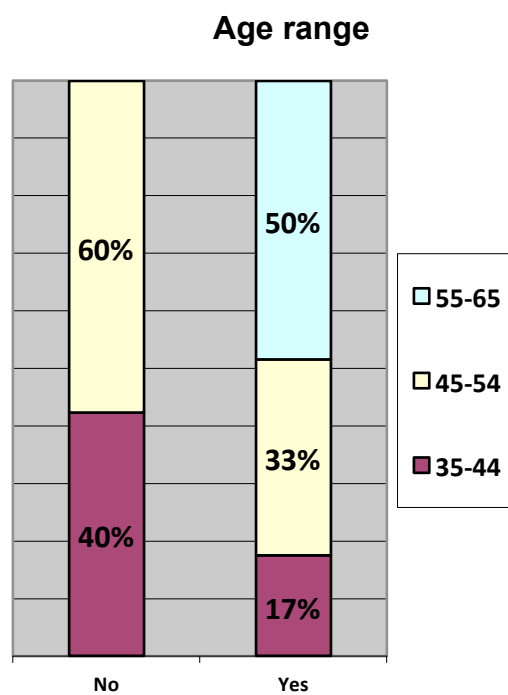
Figure 4.8.2 Principals experience

Principals experience
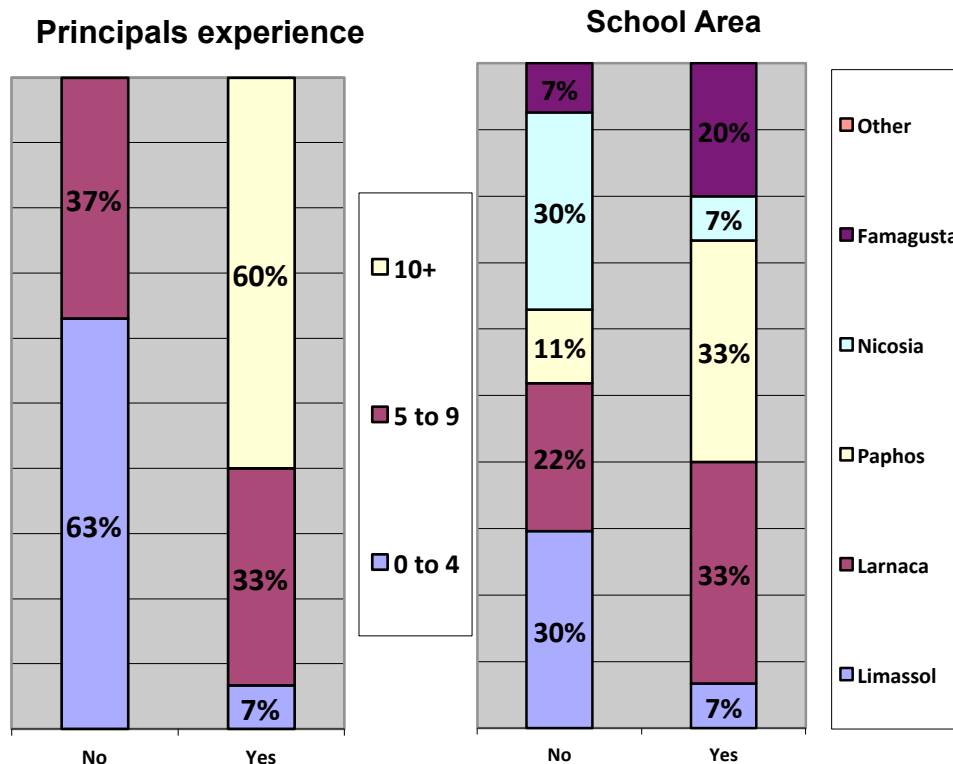
School Area

Figure 4.8.3 Principals Experience

Figure 4.8.4 School Area

Figure 4.8.1 shows that most (60%) of the women who experienced the patriarchal family model are mature principals, aged over 45. Almost all the younger principals did not report experiencing the patriarchal family model. Similarly, figures 4.8.2 and 4.8.3 show that the more experienced professionals were more likely to have experienced this model. School area data provide a mixed picture but the patriarchal model was more common in the traditional towns of Paphos, Larnaca and Famagusta than in more urban locations. The researcher used an open-ended question to ask the respondents to give a full explanation of their experience of the patriarchal family.

Five of the 30 respondents offered a full explanation about this family model.

❖ Principal 44: 'After, and a few years before, the Turkish invasion in 1974, families in Cyprus were mainly patriarchal. However my mother, since she was a child, used to work. After the war she stopped working and therefore I was raised with the view that, if the men and women don't have equal opportunities, they will not have equal chances for promotion in their careers'.

- ❖ Principal 41: 'I come from a big family where males always had the first say in every decision, especially from my dad's family'.
- ❖ Principal 39: 'The patriarchal family influenced me to become a teacher. I would rather say that my decision to apply for a principal's position was influenced by my children and husband'.
- ❖ Principal 20: 'Living in a patriarchal family left me the chance not to be able to really decide what I really wanted to study. During my childhood years, when someone was a teacher or a doctor, she was the 'clever' one'. Maybe that was the reason for me to follow the principal's pathway'.
- ❖ Principal 31: 'The patriarchal family model influenced my decision to become a teacher. Therefore, being a principal was my decision even though at the back of my head I had my father's opinion about men leading the family.'

A significant number of respondents (n=27) did not experience the patriarchal family and two of these commented on this:

> Principal 40: 'I come from a big family, where women always had the first say (grandmother and mother), especially from my mother's family'.

> Principal 23: 'My childhood family was rather matriarchal than patriarchal'.

The researcher also used a Likert scale to establish respondents' views on the importance of the patriarchal family for their leadership aspirations (see figure 4.9).

The importance of the patriarchal family
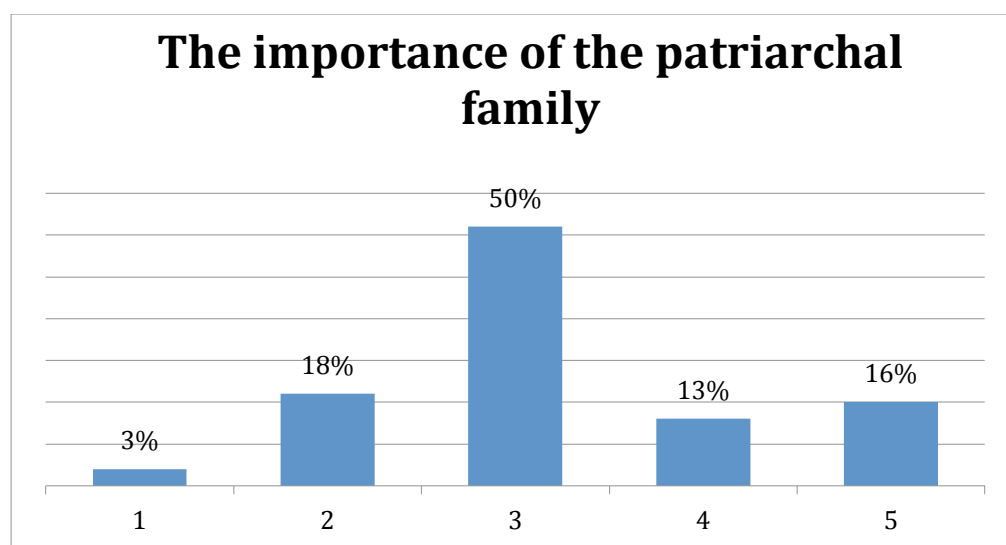
Figure 4.9: The importance of the patriarchal family (n=62) (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean=3.21; standard deviation = 1.02).

Figure 4.9 shows that only thirteen (21%) of the sixty four principals stated that the patriarchal family was unimportant in their decision to aspire to leadership positions while a larger number (29%) regard this factor as important for their future decisions. Figures 4.9.1, 4.9.2, 4.9.3 and 4.9.4 show the links between these responses and biographical factors.
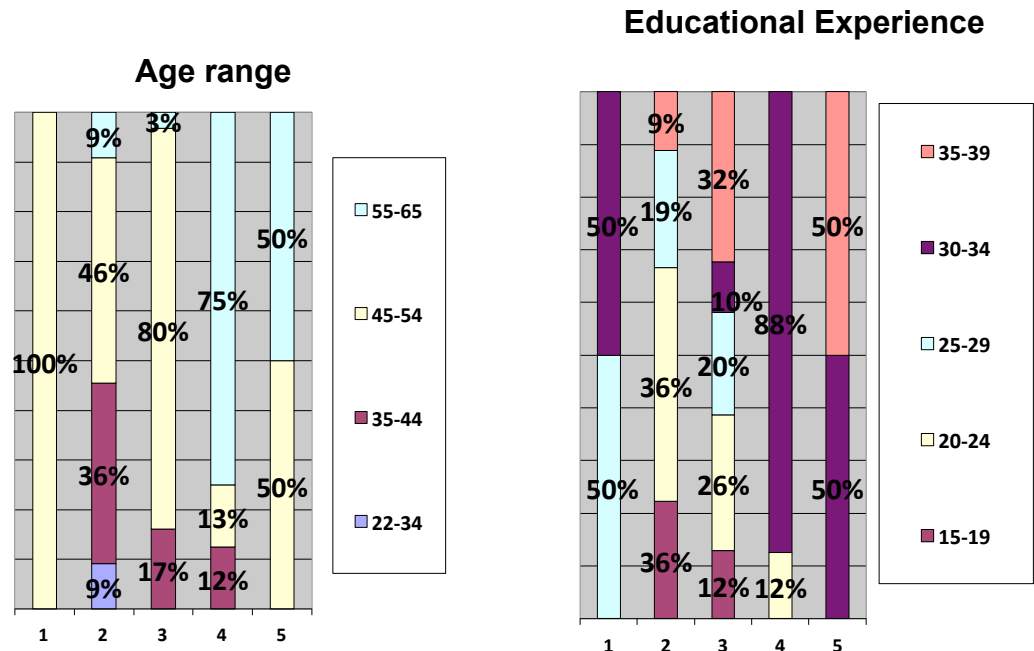
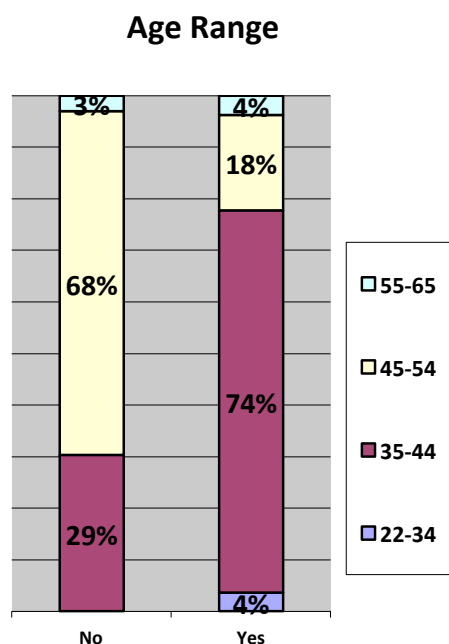Figure 4.9.1 Age range
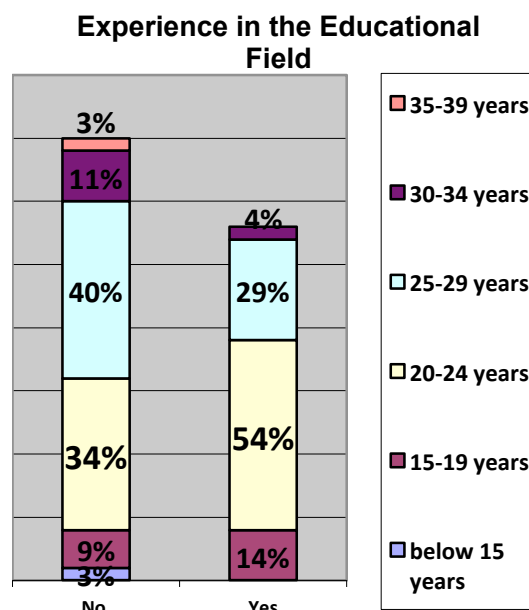

Figure 4.9.2 Educational experience
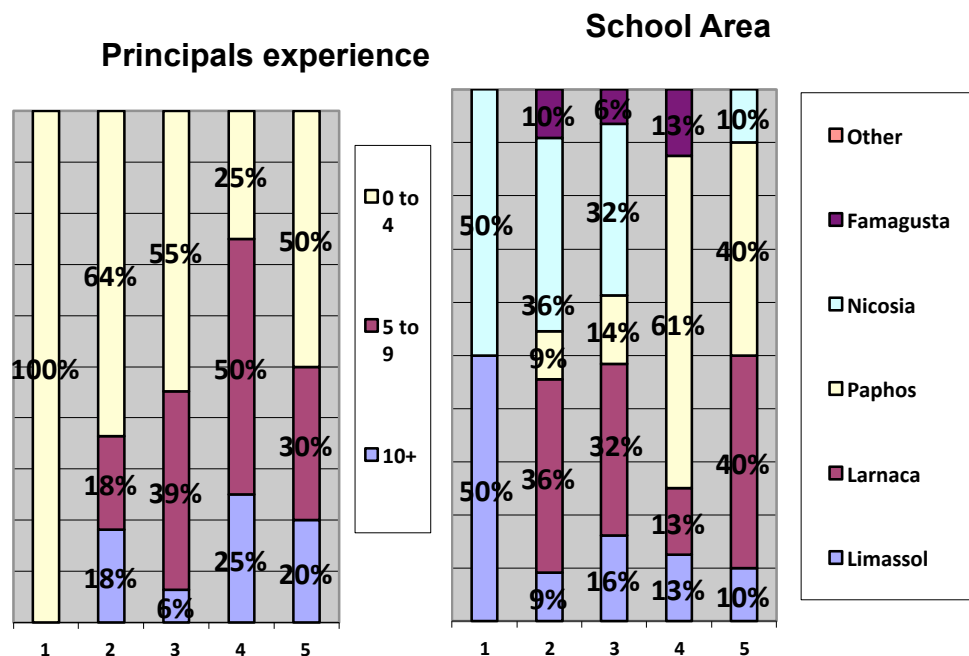
Figure 4.9.3 Principals Experience

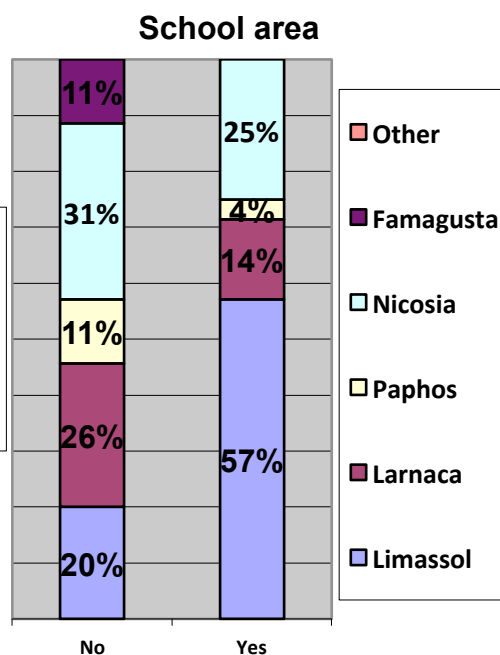Figure 4.9.4 School Area

Figure 4.9.1 shows that almost all (88%) of those principals who regard the patriarchal family as an important influence are over 45. The same numbers of principals have more than 30 years' experience, suggesting that younger and less experienced professionals are much less likely to be influenced in this way. The data on principalship experience point in the same direction but less convincingly. Principals working in more traditional areas, notably Paphos and Larnaca, are more likely to regard the patriarchal family as a significant influence.

The researcher also asked whether the patriarchal family model was an inhibitor to the respondents' leadership aspirations.
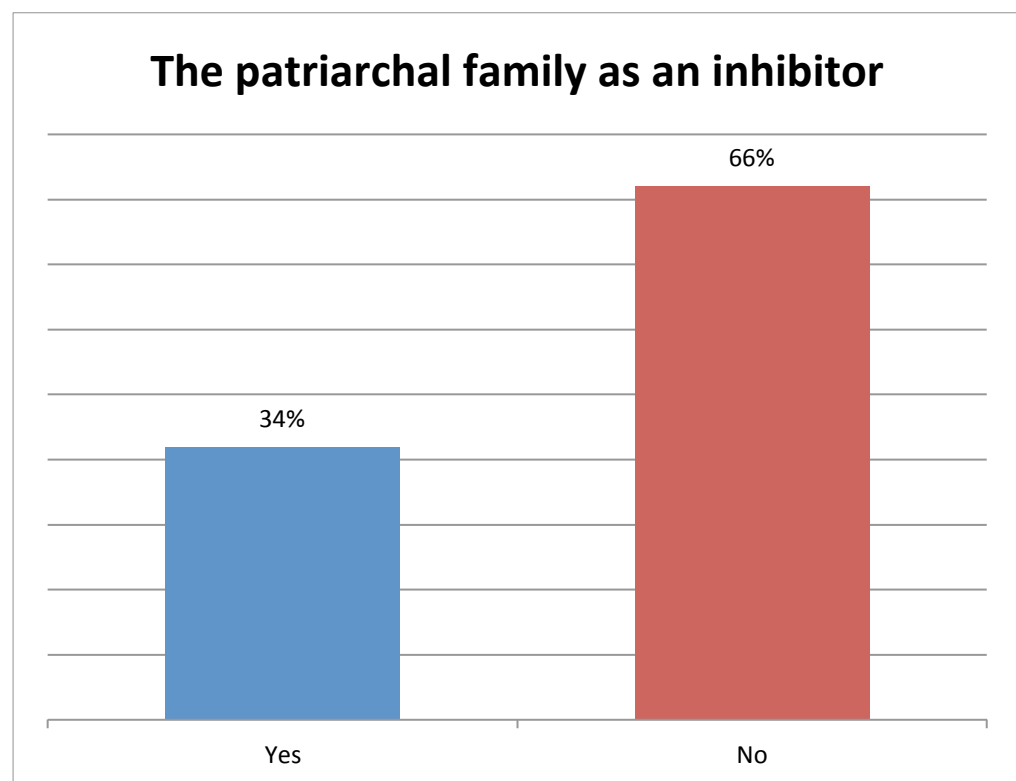
Figure 4.10: The patriarchal family as an inhibitor (n=62).

The majority (66%) of respondents said 'no', with only twenty one (34%) respondents giving a positive answer (see figure 4.10). Figures 4.10.1, 4.10.2, 4.10.3 and 4.10.4 link these findings to the biographical data.

Age range

Figure 4.10.1 Age range
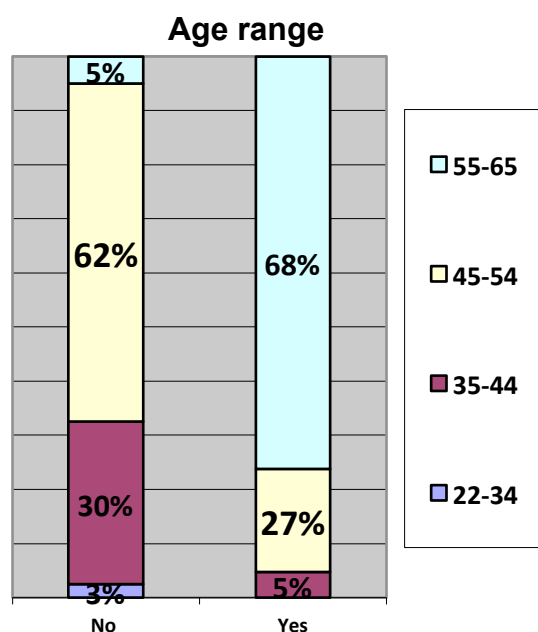
Educational experience
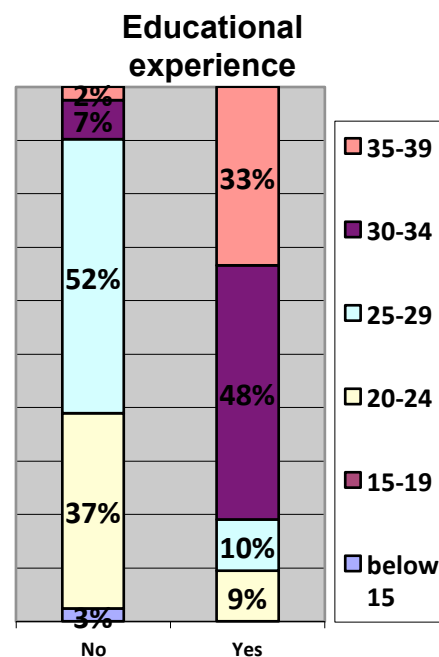
Figure 4.10.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
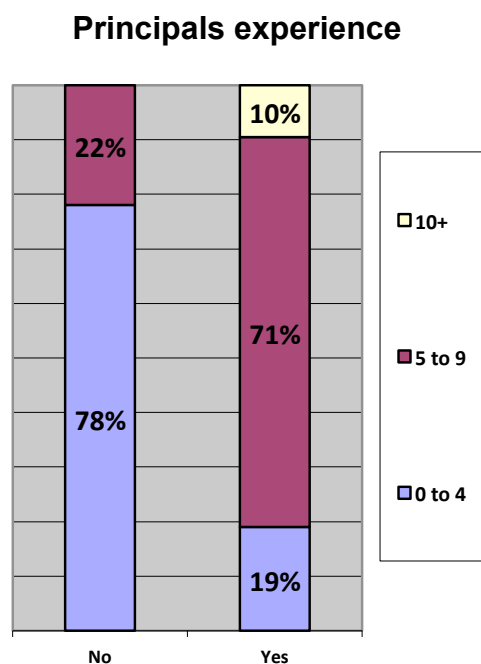
Figure 4.10.3 Principals experience
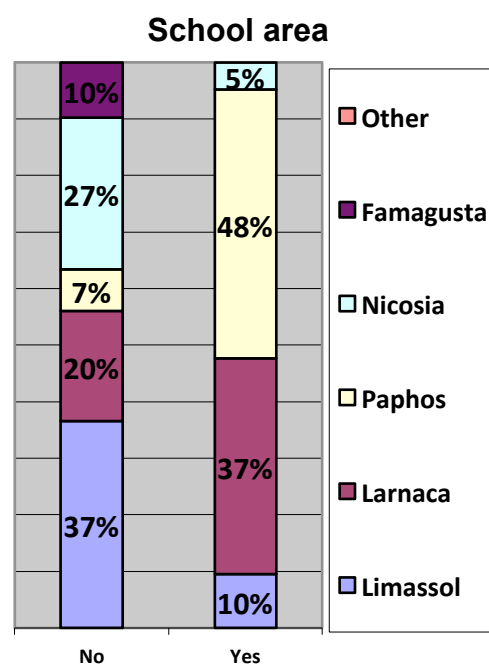
School area

Figure 4.10.4 School area

In figures 4.10.2 and 4.10.4 the 'no' total is 101% due to rounding.

Figure 4.10.1 shows the significance of age for this issue, with almost all of those who regarded the patriarchal family as an inhibitor being over 45, with most of these (68%) aged over 55. Similarly, these

principals are also very experienced education professionals and more likely to be experienced principals. Principals who lead schools in bigger cities, such as Limassol or Nicosia, said that the patriarchal family is not an inhibitor on their decisions. Principals working in smaller cities, which have a more traditional culture, consider the patriarchal family to work as an inhibitor towards their decisions.

Of the majority who said that the patriarchal family is not an inhibitor, one respondent added that 'usually a teacher's decision to aspire to leadership positions is more or less based on her everyday experiences inside the school. Sometimes the real inhibitor is not the childhood years but her children and her family. Her role as a mother, then as a school leader' (P23). Another who replied 'no' added that 'the patriarchal family did not work as an inhibitor for me but, in general, women lack role models in leadership positions'.

The 21 principals (34%) who perceived that the patriarchal family inhibited their leadership were asked how it did so. Two of the respondents gave full answers to this question:

> I can easily state that the patriarchal family role model was an inhibitor on my decision to aspire to a principal's position, since women for years now don't have any female role models in leadership positions. Therefore, this family model seemed to inhibit my personal decisions, in relation to the male holding leading positions (P44).

> I conceived myself thinking that maybe promoting myself to a leadership position may affect my mother duties (P23).

Two other principals (P10 and P53) also identified the importance of being a mother and a principal at the same. Both of the respondents said that sometimes being a principal you might think that this position will limit your dedication to your mother duties.

Another principal (P46) also highlighted the importance of the patriarchal family on her decisions to aspire to leadership positions:

> When I was still young, my aunt wanted me to become a teacher, whereas my father wanted me to be a housewife. After long talks, I eventually decided to do both. I became a teacher and then, when I started aiming for a principal's position, I found it really difficult to combine family and profession at the same time.

Principal 34's experience of the patriarchal family was mixed:

> Even though my family was a patriarchal one, my father wanted all his children to be educated. However, he only wanted me to be a teacher. That was the woman's profession if she was educated. As a result, when I was given the right to apply for a leadership position, I perceived this option as a bit difficult for me, as most of the principals were males, and I didn't have a female role model in a similar position.

The data in this section show the value of having female role models in leadership positions as a motivator for women teachers to apply for the principalship. In contrast, the patriarchal family role model, and the absence of female role models in leadership positions, may lead women not to aspire to such positions.

Forms of Support for Women Leaders

Another significant factor to explore was the forms of support that are provided to the women principals and if they are helpful for their future career. One example of support might be seminars related to principals' career development. The researcher asked if the principals had ever attended seminars related to training for women principals. Figure 4.11 presents the answers to this question.
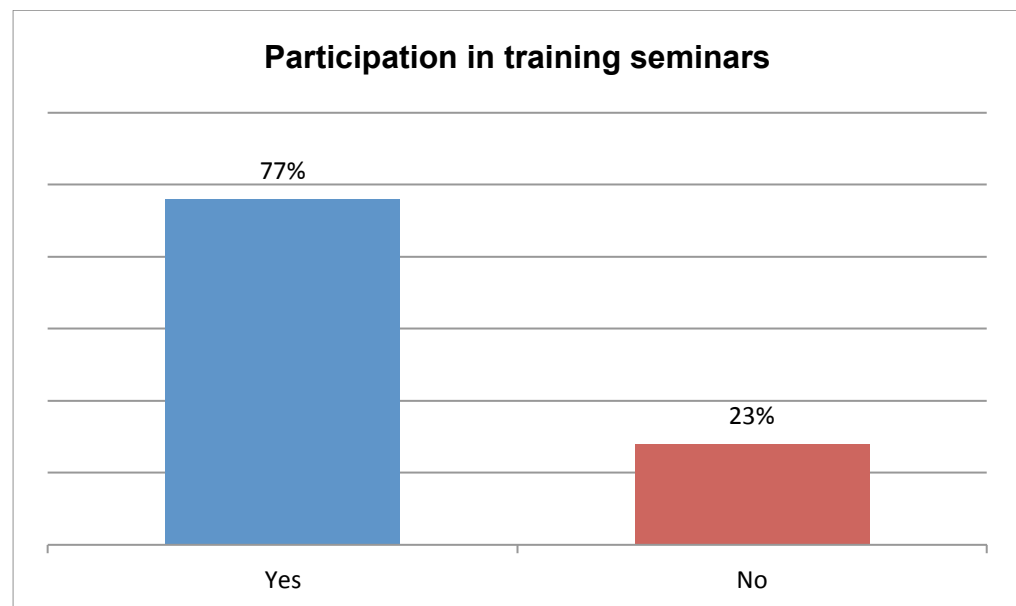
Figure 4.11: Participation in training seminars (n=62).

A large majority (77%) of respondents said that they have attended such training seminars, whereas fewer than a quarter (23%) said that they had not done so. Figures 4.11.1, 4.11.2, 4.11,3, and 4.11.4 show how these findings link to the biographical data. Younger principals are more likely to participate in these seminars than older principals but the figures for experience are less clear-cut. Almost all principals in Larnaca have participated in the seminars but the differences for other towns are less significant.
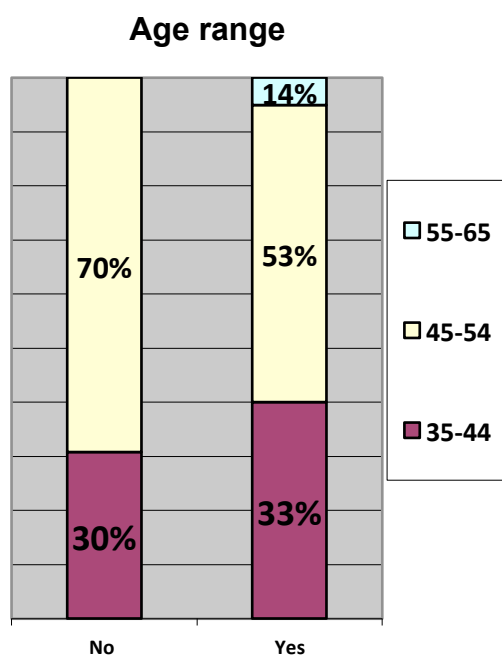
Figure 4.11.1 Age range
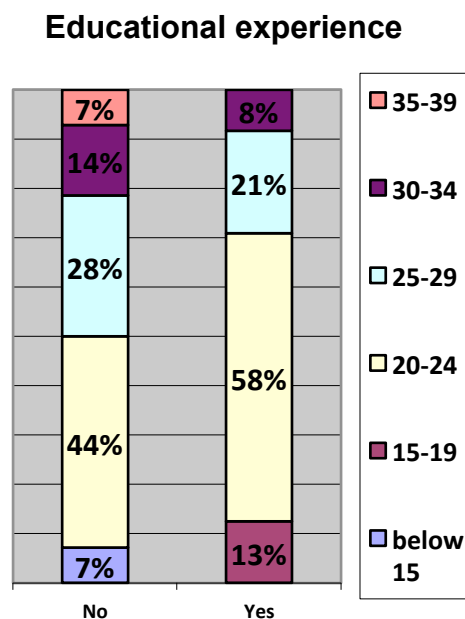
Figure 4.11.2 Educational experience
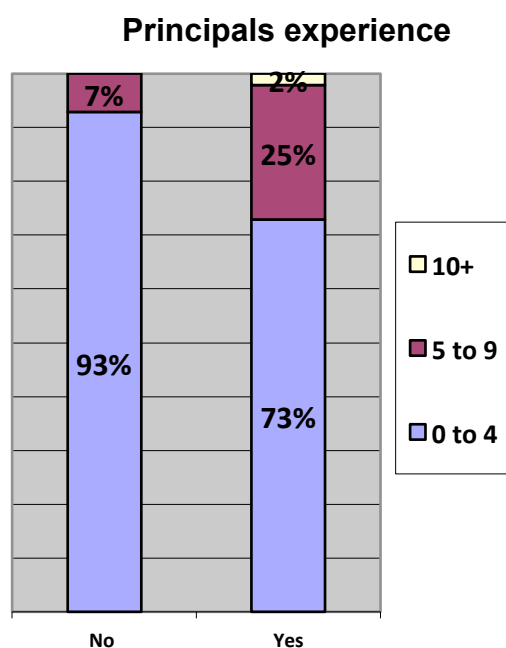
Figure 4.11.3 Principals experience
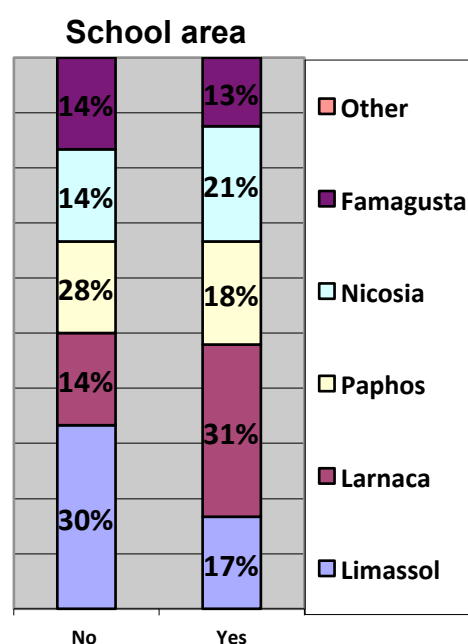
Figure 4.11.4 School area

The researcher also asked the women principals if they had found such seminars helpful, using a Likert scale. Figure 4.12 presents the results of this question.

Importance of the training seminars for the career path

- Very important: 34%
- Important: 47%
- Neither important nor unimportant: 16%
- Unimportant: 0%
- Very unimportant: 3%
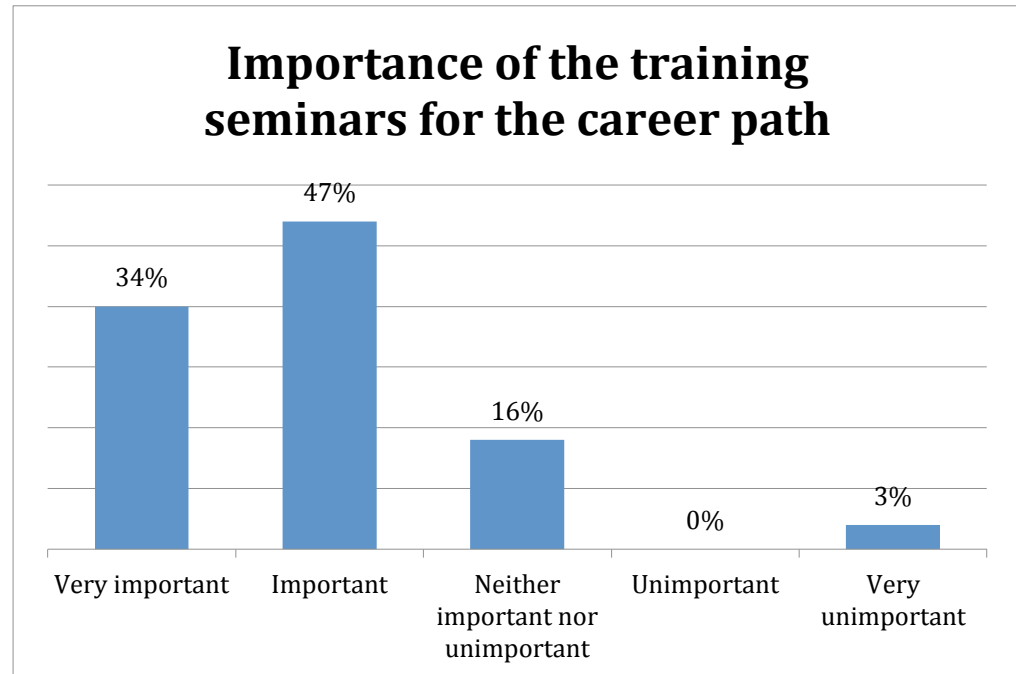
Figure 4.12: Importance of the training seminars for principals' career path (n=58) (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean= 4.09= standard deviation= 0.9).

The great majority (81%) of the respondents agree that such seminars were important or very important Only two (3%) disagreed with this proposition. Figures 4.12.1, 4.12.2, 4.12.3 and 4.12.4 shows how these figures link to the biographical data. Given the overwhelming support for the importance of these seminars, the biographical factors offer little additional insight.

Age range

Figure 4.12.1 Age range
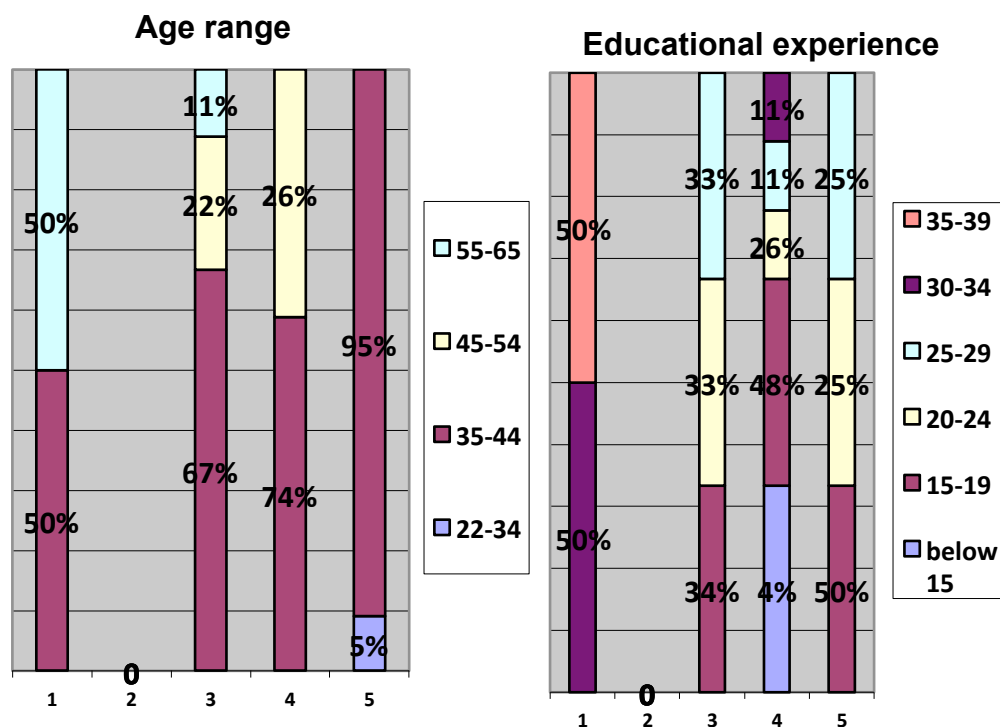
Educational experience

Figure 4.12.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
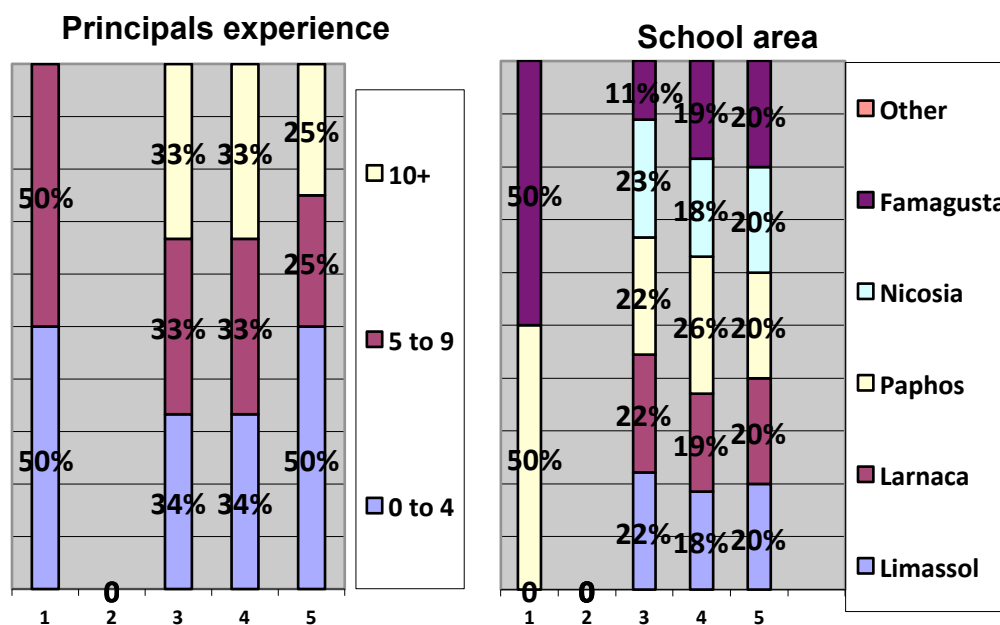
Figure 4.12.3 Principals experience

School area

Figure 4.12.4 School area

Principals were also asked about the significance of family support, using a Likert scale. Figure 4.13 shows the results for this question.

Importance of family support
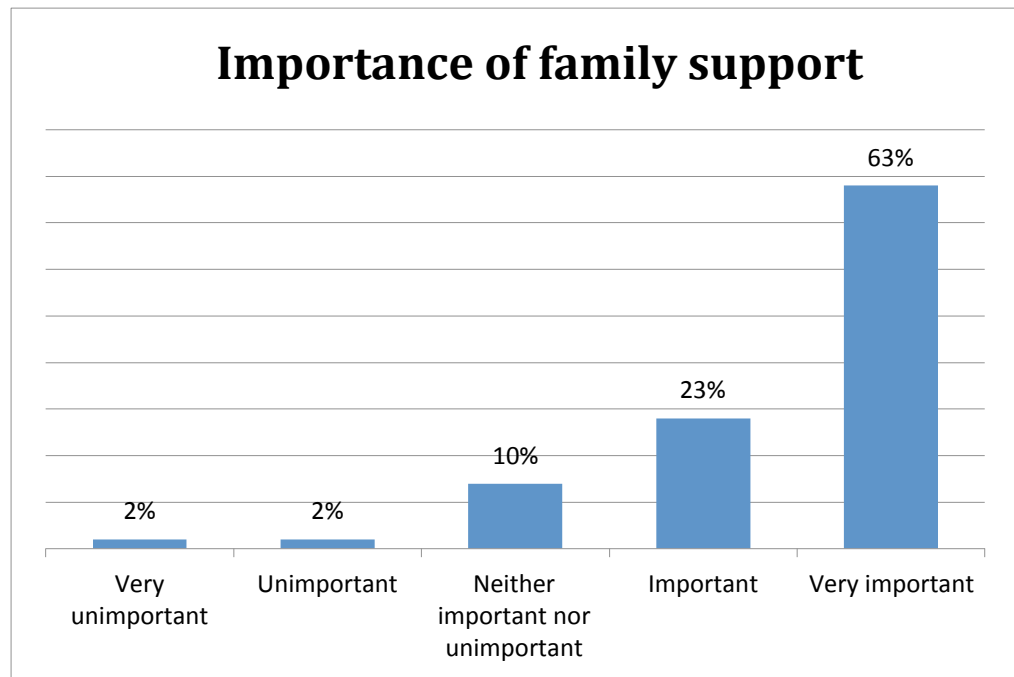
Figure 4.13: Importance of family support (n=62) (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean=4.45; standard deviation=0.87)).

A large majority (86%) of respondents stated that family support was unimportant or very unimportant for their career development. Only two (4%) said that this factor was unimportant. This confirms the researcher's assumption that family is one of the most important supporting factors for women principals during their career.

Figures 4.13.1, 4.13.2, 4.13.3 and 4.13.4 show how these findings link to the biographical data. Given the overwhelming support for the importance of family support, the biographical factors offer little additional insight.

Age range

Figure 4.13.1 Age range

Principals experience
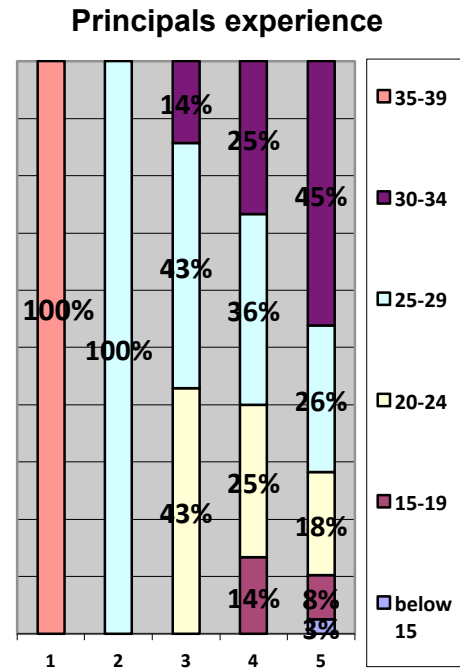
Figure 4.13.2 Principals experience

Principals experience
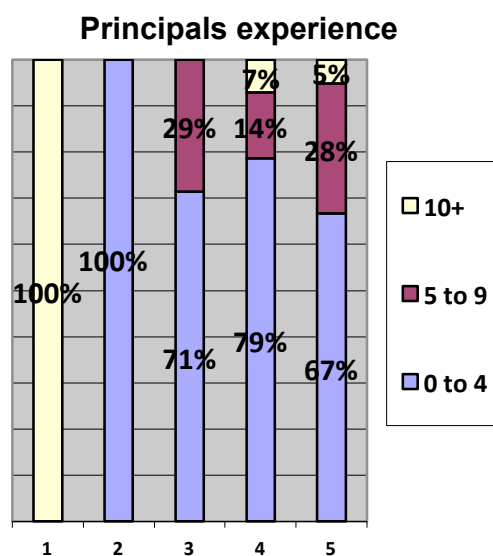
Figure 4.13.3 Principals experience
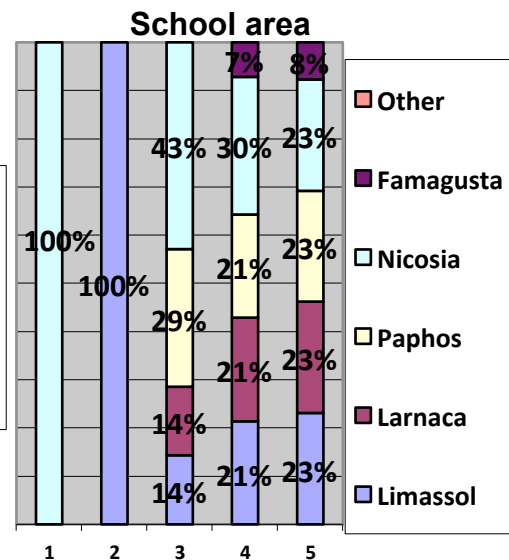
School area

Figure 4.13.4 School area

Facilitators for Women's Career Progression

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of seven different factors in influencing their decision to aspire to leadership positions, using a Likert scale. The seven factors were the family background, the Cypriot culture, the Cypriot society, the societal stereotypes,

discrimination, their educational experience, and the leadership seminars they might have attended.

Figure 4.14 shows the results for the first question, on the importance of respondents' family background.

Influence factor = Family background
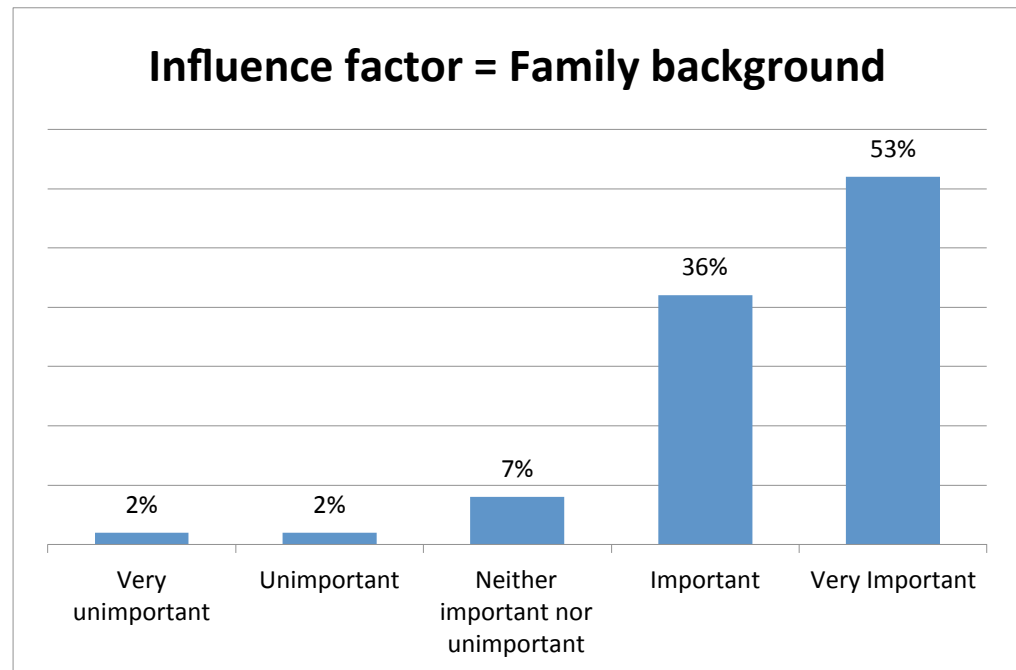
Figure 4.14: Influence factor = Family background (n=58) (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean=4.48=4; standard deviation= 0.83)).

Figure 4.14 indicates the importance of respondents' family background in influencing their decision to aspire to a leadership position. Almost all (89%) principals stated that the family background was an important influence on their aspiration to leadership position. Only two (4%) said this factor was unimportant to them. Figures 4.14.1, 4.14.2, 4.14.3 and 4.14.4 show how these findings connect to the biographical data. Given strong support for the influence of family background, these data offer little additional insight.

Age range

Figure 4.14.1 Age range

Educational experience

Figure 4.14.2 Educational experience

Principals experience

Figure 4.14.3 Principals experience
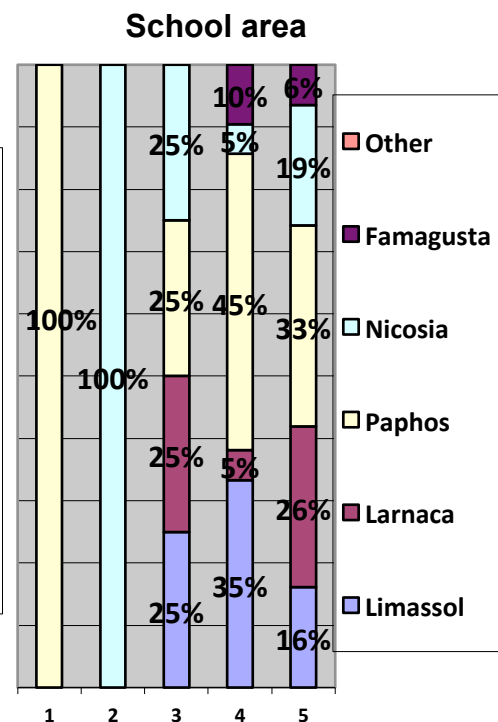
School area

Figure 4.14.4 School area

Figure 4.15 shows the results for the second influential factor, the Cypriot Culture.
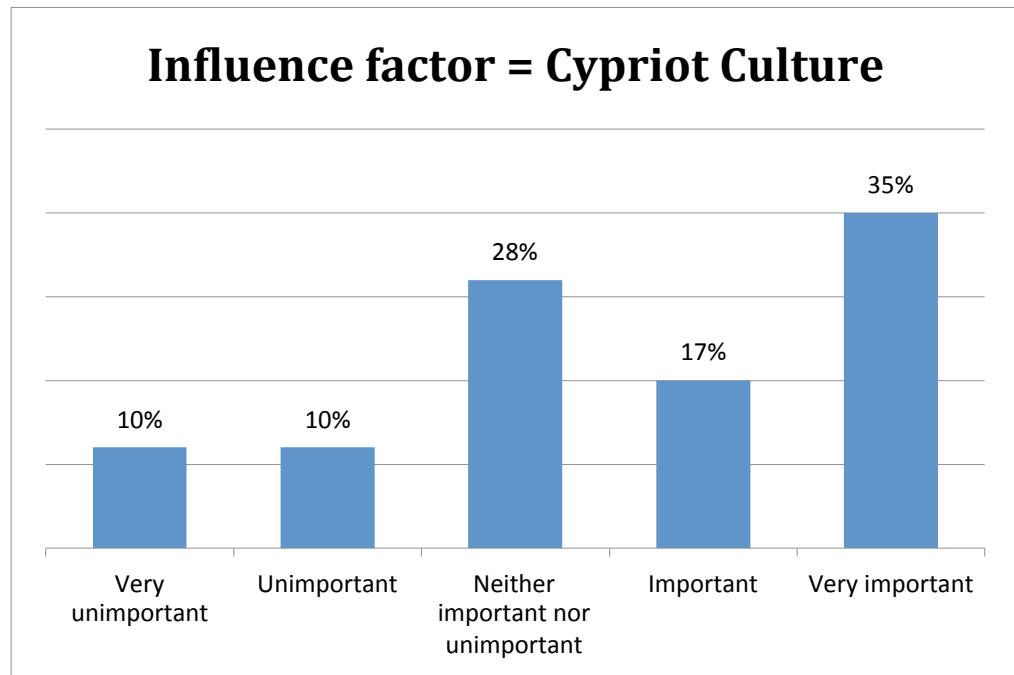
Figure 4.15: Influence factor = Cypriot Culture (n=58) (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean= 3.55 = 4 (1 f.s.) standard deviation= 1.33).

More than half of the respondents (52%) stated that the Cypriot culture was an important or very important influence on their decision to aspire to leadership positions while only twelve (20%) regarded this as unimportant. Figures 4.15.1, 4.15.2, 4.15.3 and 4.15.4 show the links between these findings and the biographical data. Older and more experienced principals were more likely to be influenced by these cultural factors. School location appears to be a less significant variable.

Age range

Figure 4.15.1 Age range
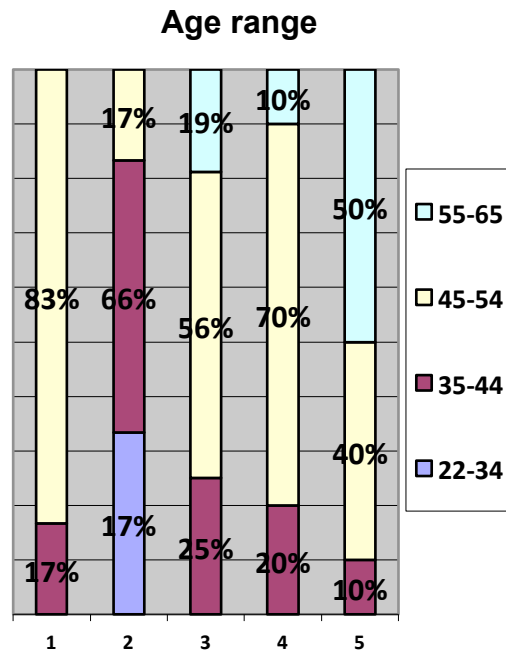
Educational experience
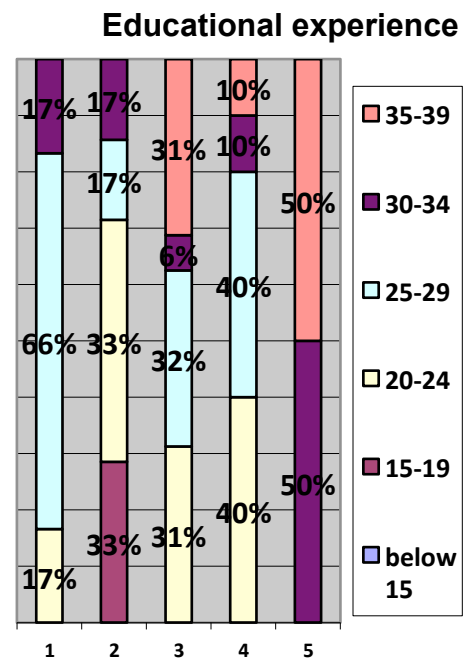
Figure 4.15.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
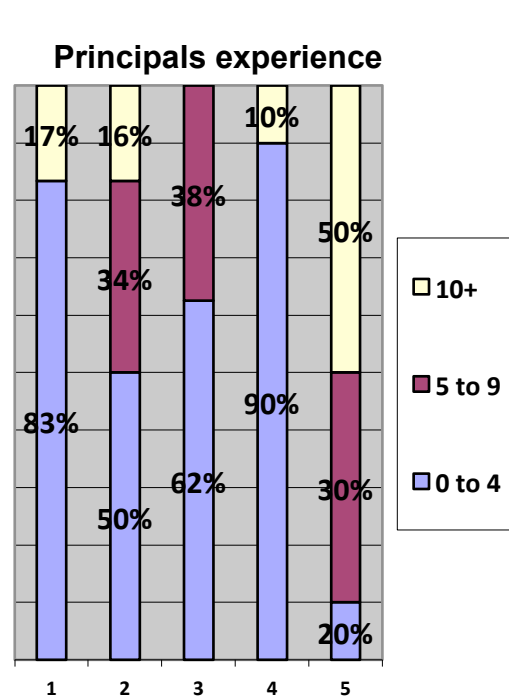
Figure 4.15.3 Principals experience
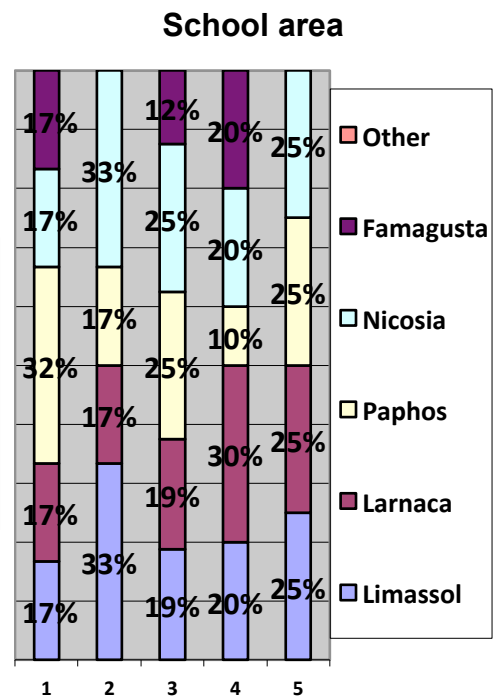
School area

Figure 4.15.4 School area

The women principals were also asked about the influence of Cypriot society. Figure 4.16 shows the results for this third influential factor.
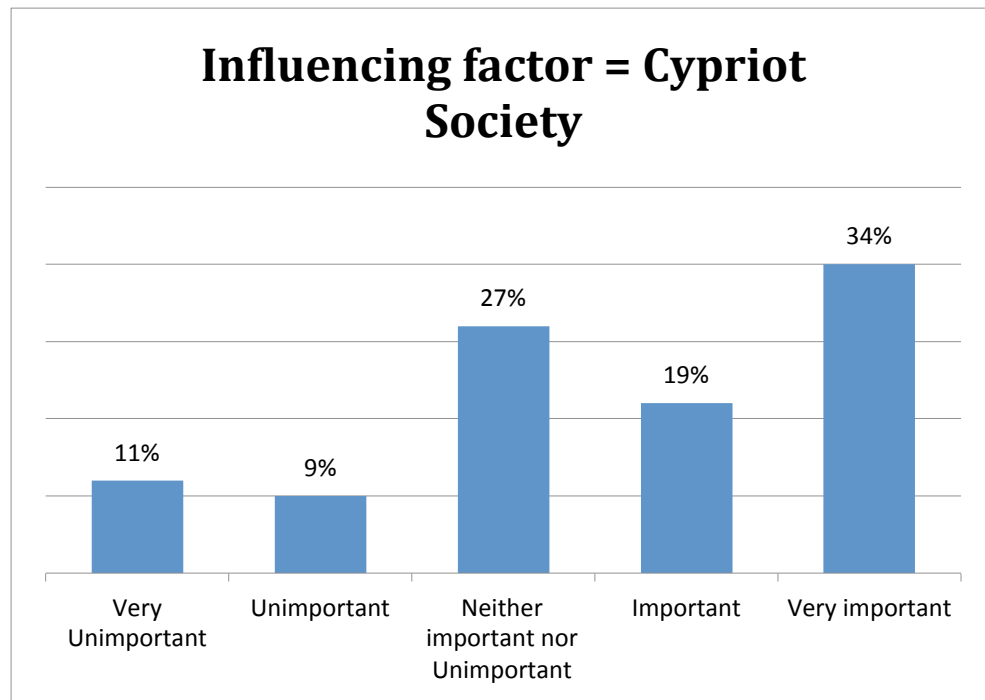
Figure 4.16: Influence factor = Cypriot Society (n=58). (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean= 3.59 = 4 (1 f.s.) standard deviation= 1.31).

More than half of the respondents (53%) stated that the Cypriot society was an important or very important influence on their decision to aspire to leadership positions while only eleven regarded this as unimportant. Figures 4.16.1, 4.16.2, 4.16.3 and 4.16.4 show how these findings relate to the biographical data. Older and more experienced educators are more likely to respond that Cypriot society is a significant influence but experiences as a principal, and the school location, appear to make little difference to the responses.

Age range

Figure 4.16.1 Age range
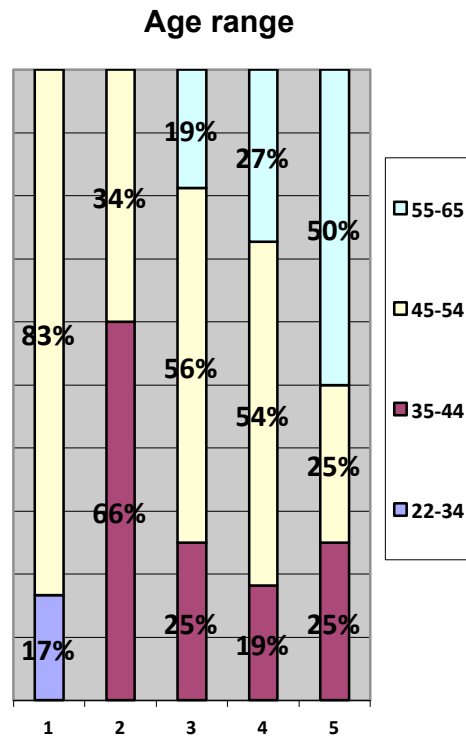
Educational experience
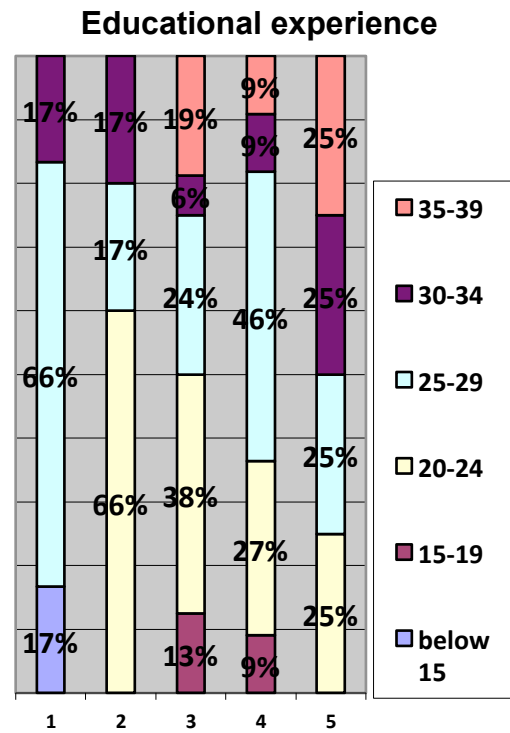
Figure 4.16.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
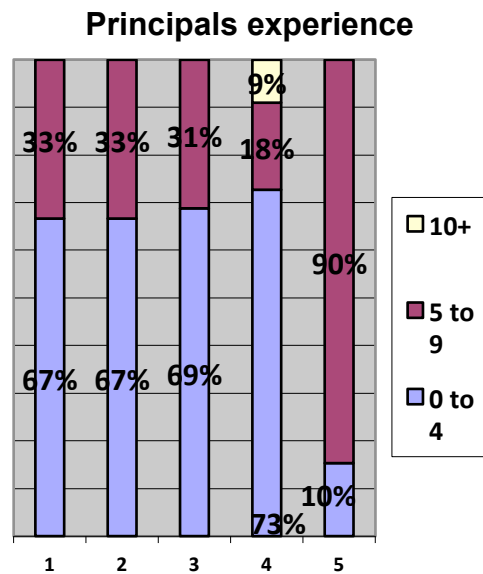
Figure 4.16.3 Principals experience
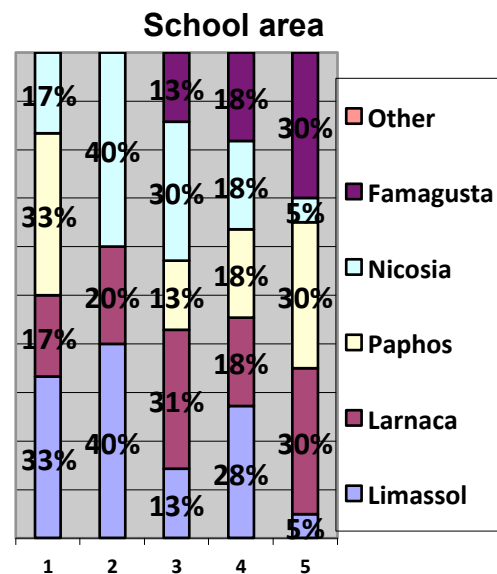
School area

Figure 4.16.4 School area

The answers to the two previous issues are very similar, showing the close links between them. The author's assumption is that the Cypriot culture consists of the beliefs, behaviours, objects, and other characteristics common to the members of the society, and that Cypriot society will use culture to conform to the society's shared values. However, it is possible that respondents may have interpreted this question in a different way.

The fourth influence factor was that of societal stereotypes (Figure 4.17)

Influence factor = Societal stereotypes
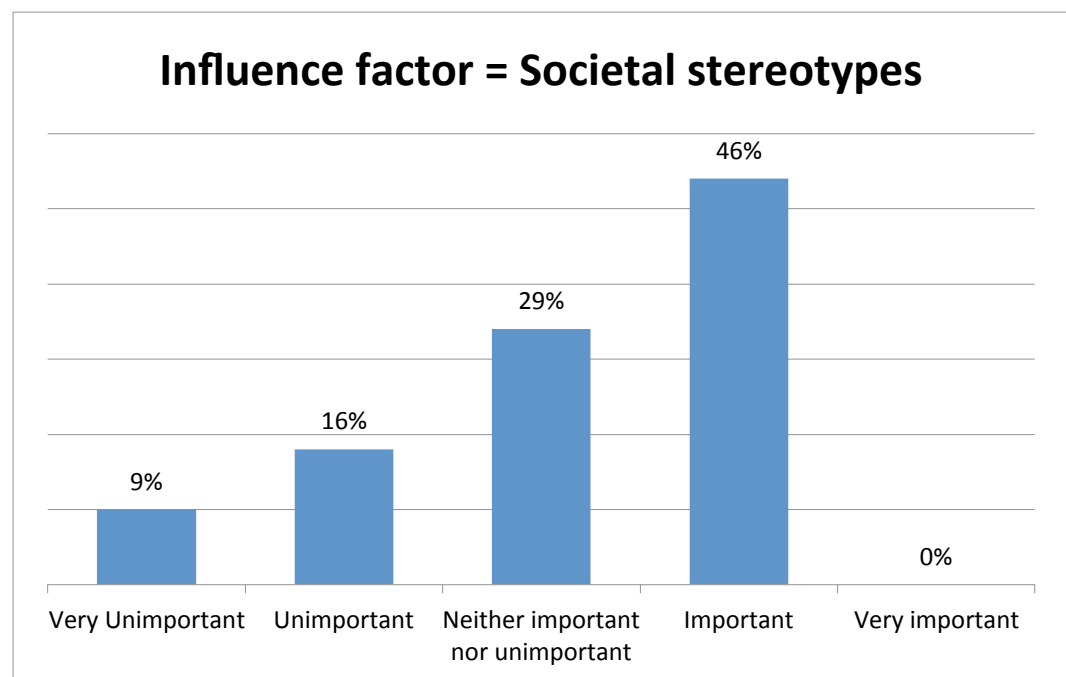
Figure 4.17 Influence factor = Societal stereotypes (n=58). (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean= 3.14= standard deviation= 0.98)).

Figure 4.17 shows that almost half of the respondents (46%) stated that societal stereotypes were an important influence on their decision to aspire to leadership positions. A much smaller number (25%) regarded this as unimportant.

Societal stereotypes arise from cultural and societal attitudes. The findings from table 4.17 largely confirm those for culture and society, although slightly fewer principals regard the former as important. This may be because they have learned to deal with stereotypes, so that they have less significance for them. This issue will be further explored in chapter five.

Figures 4.17.1, 4.17.2, 4.17.3 and 4.17.4 show how these findings link to the biographical data. Older and more experienced educators and principals are much more likely to be influenced by such social stereotypes than younger and less experienced leaders. Principals from two of the smaller and more conservative towns, Paphos and Larnaca, were also more likely to be subject to such influences.

Age range

Figure 4.17.1 Age range
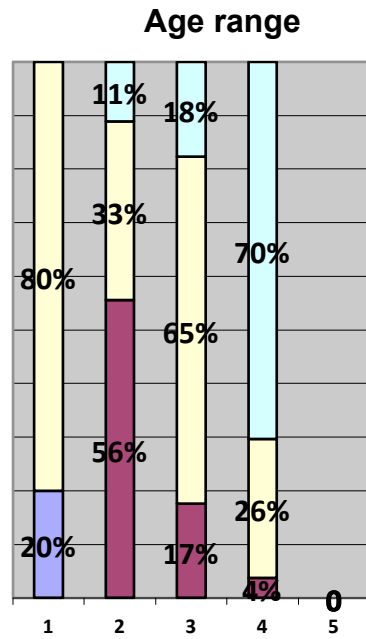
Educational experience
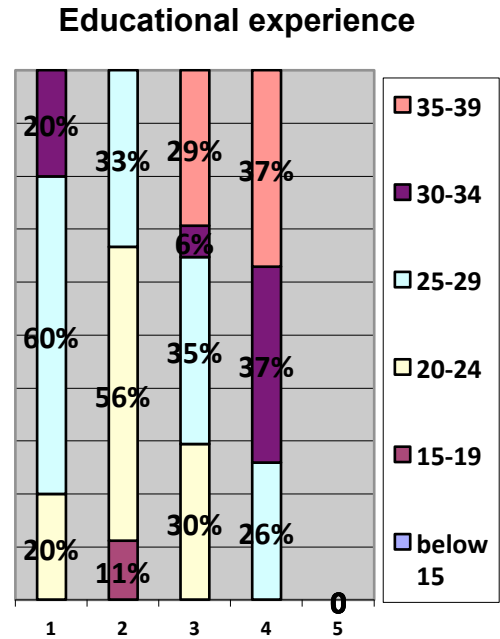
Figure 4.17.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
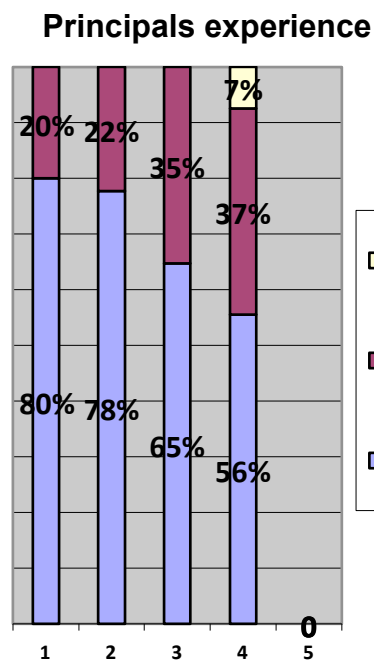
Figure 4.17.3 Principals experience
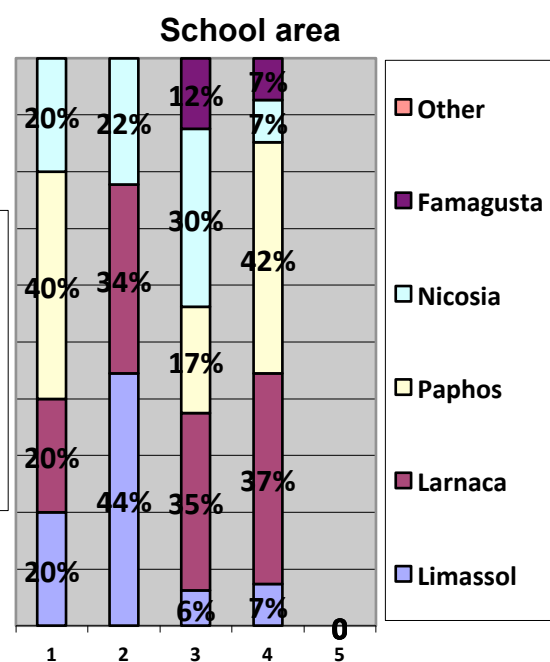
School area

Figure 4.17.4 School area

Figure 4.18 shows the results for the fifth influential factor, that of discrimination.

Influence factor = Discrimination

Bar chart showing:
- Very unimportant: 10%
- Unimportant: 21%
- Neithr important nor unimportant: 24%
- important: 40%
- Very important: 5%
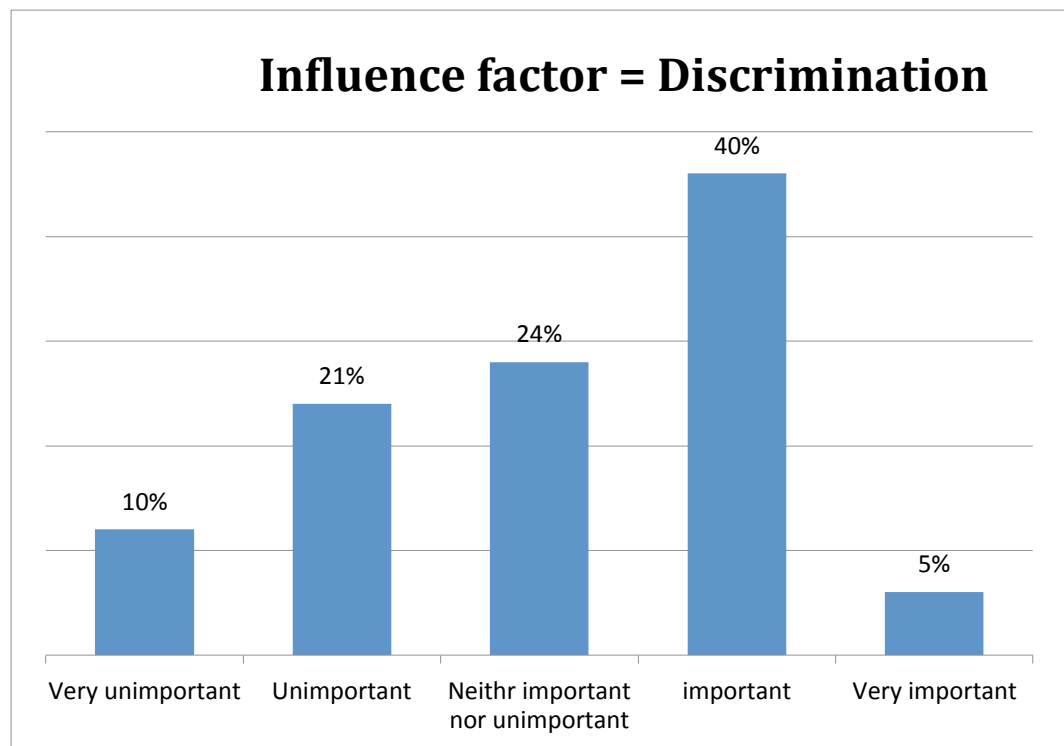
Figure 4.18 Influence factor = Discrimination (n=58). (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean=3.1 standard deviation= 1.1)).

Figure 4.18 shows that almost half of the respondents (45%) stated that discrimination was an important or very important influence on their decision to aspire to leadership positions while eighteen principals regarded this as unimportant. Figures 4.18.1, 4.18.2, 4.18.3 and 4.18.4 shows how these findings connect to the biographical data. Older and more experienced educators and principals were more likely to feel influenced by discrimination. This also seems to be more prevalent for principals in smaller towns such as Paphos and Larnaca.

Age range

Figure 4.18.1 Age range
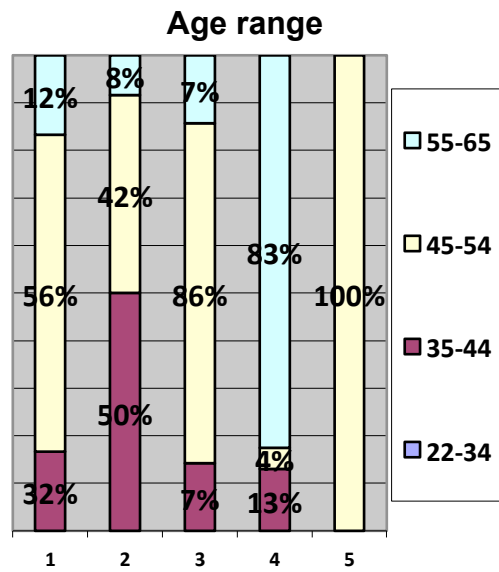
Educational experience
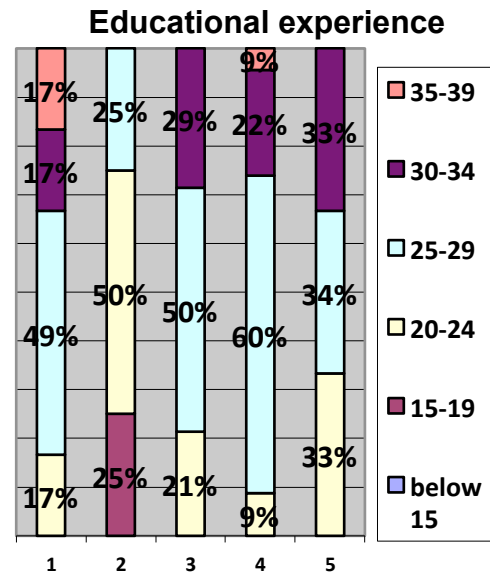
Figure 4.18.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
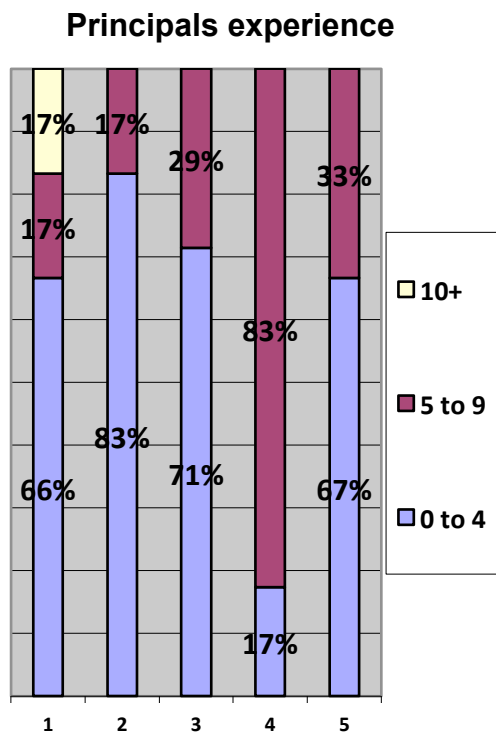
Figure 4.18.3 Principals experience
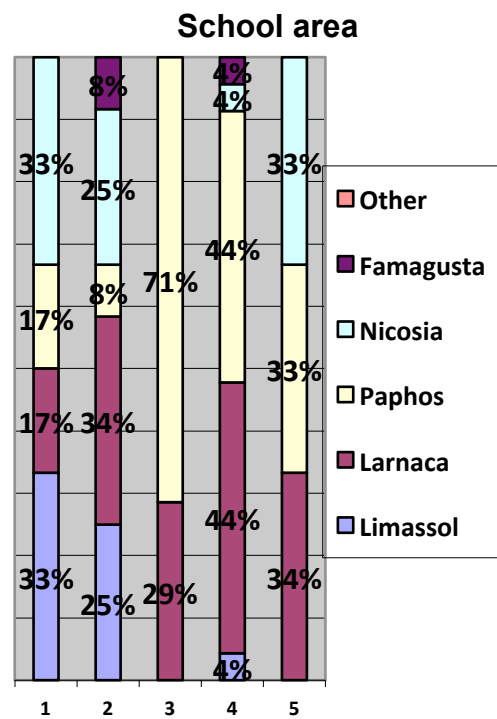
School area

Figure 4.18.4 School area

Figure 4.19 shows the results for a sixth influential factor, that of experience in the educational field.
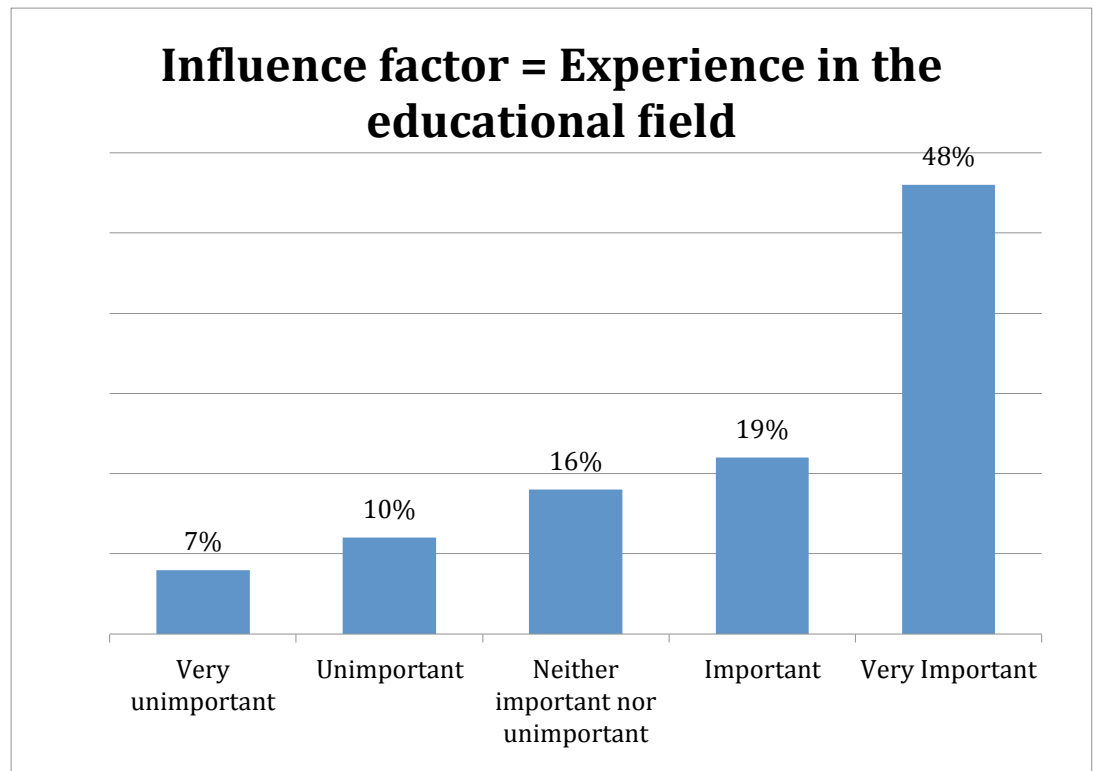
Figure 4.19. Influence factor = Experience in the educational field (n=58). (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean=3.91 = standard deviation= 1.29)).

More than half of the respondents (67%) stated that experience was an important or very important influence on their decision to aspire to leadership positions while only ten principals regarded this as unimportant. Figures 4.19.1, 4.19.2, 4.19.3 and 4.19.4 shows how these findings relate to the biographical data. Perhaps surprisingly, younger and less experienced principals are more likely to value educational experience. This is also highly rated by principals in Paphos in particular.

Age range

Figure 4.19.1 Age range

Educational experience

Figure 4.19.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
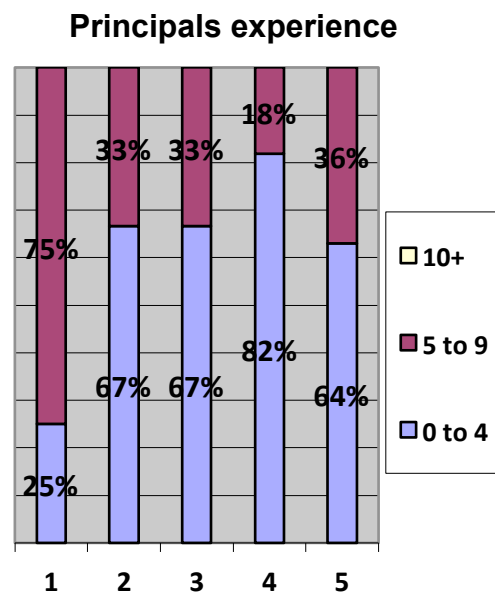
Figure 4.19.3 Principals experience
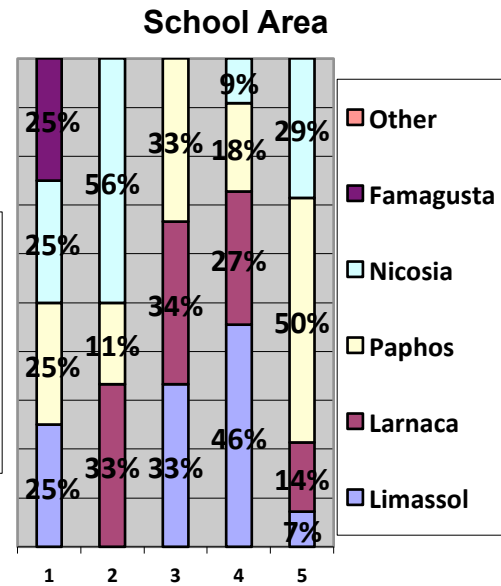
School Area

Figure 4.19.4 School area

Figure 4.20 shows the results for the final factor, that of leadership seminars:

Influence factor = Leadership seminars

Very unimportant	Unimportant	Neither important nor unimportant	Important	Very Important
7%	9%	22%	38%	24%

Figure 4.20 Influence factor = Leadership seminars (n=58). (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean= 3.64 standard deviation=1.14)).

Figure 4.20 shows that more than half of the respondents (62%) stated that leadership seminars were an important or very important influence on their decision to aspire to leadership positions while only nine (16%) principals regarded this as unimportant. Figures 4.20.1, 4.20.2, 4.20.3 and 4.20.4 show how these findings link to the biographical data. More mature principals were more likely to rate these seminars as very important but the youngest principals were the largest group to regard them as important. Understandably, less experienced educators were more likely to find them helpful than very experienced practitioners. Data relating to principals' experience, and to school location, were less clear-cut but principals in Larnaca and Paphos appeared to find the leadership seminars particularly helpful.

Age range

Figure 4.20.1 Age range
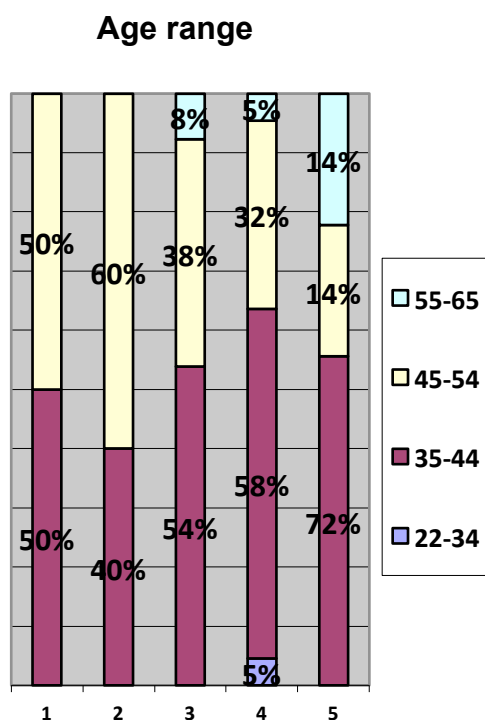
Educational experience
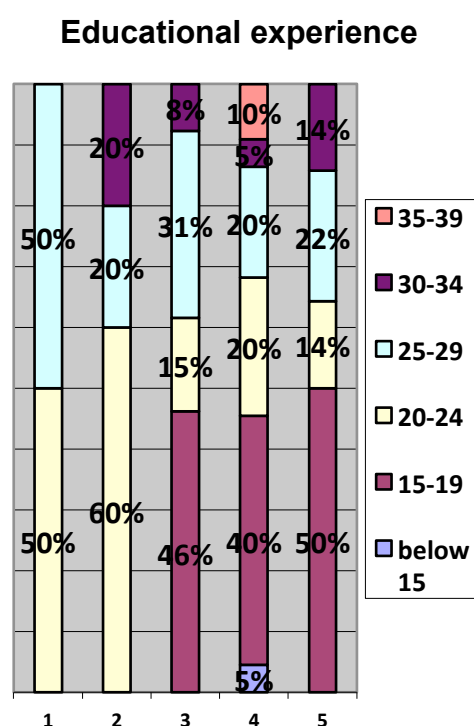
Figure 4.20.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
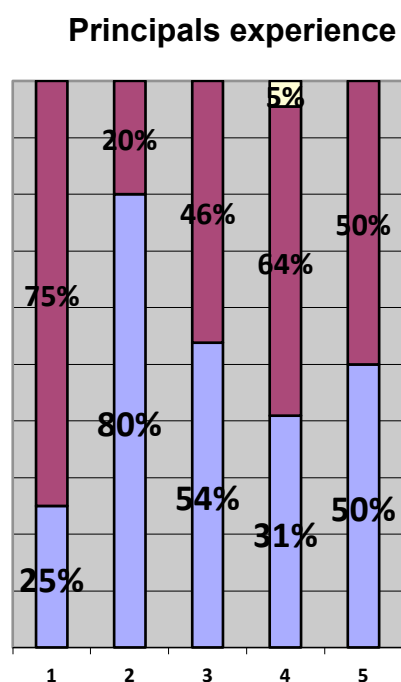
Figure 4.20.3 Principals experience
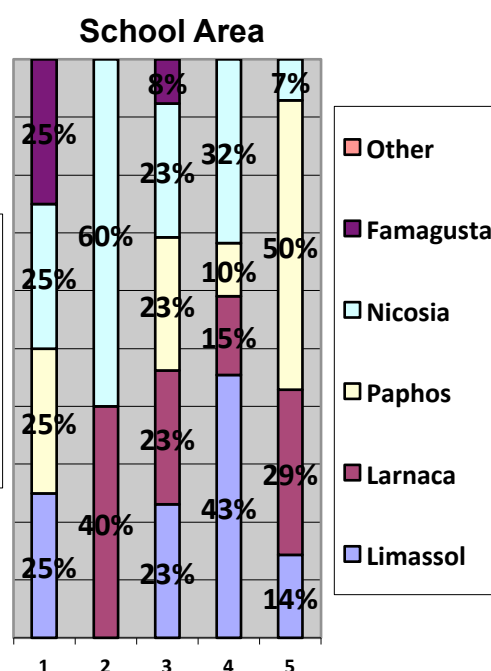
School Area

Figure 4.20.4 School area

The data on influences do not distinguish between positive and negative effects. This will be discussed further in chapters five and six. The next two sections, on barriers and facilitators, also provide helpful distinctions between negative and positive influences.

Barriers to Women's Career Progression

The author also wanted to establish whether, and to what extent, the same seven factors comprised barriers to leadership progression. Figure 4.21 shows the results for the first barrier factor, that of family background.

Barrier factor = Family background
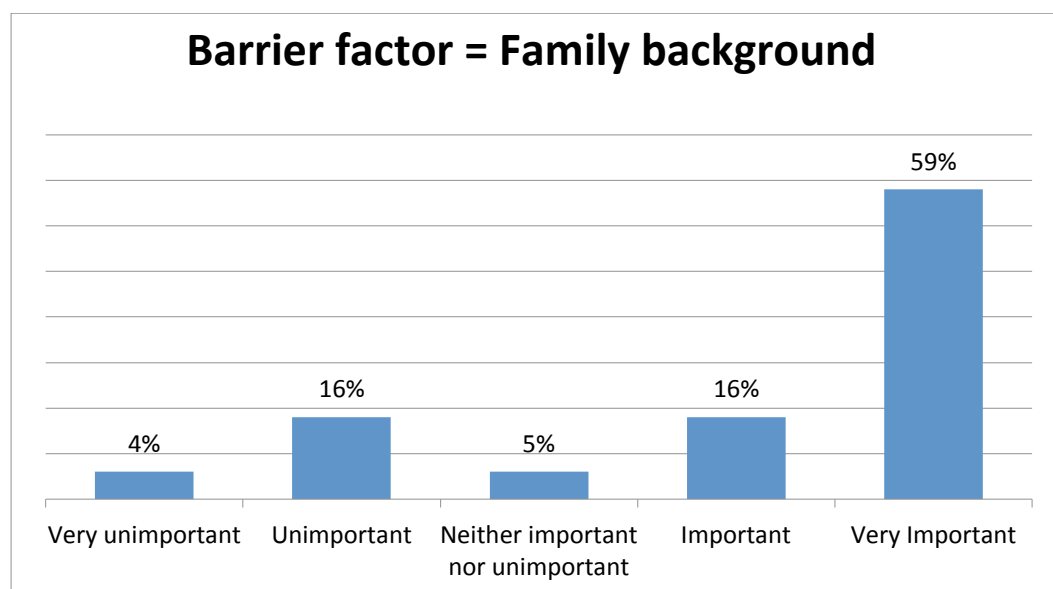
Figure 4.21: Barrier factor = Family background (n=58). (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean= 4.07; standard deviation=1.31)).

Figure 4.21 shows that more than half of respondents (75%) stated that family background constituted a barrier to their career progression, while only twelve said that this was not a barrier.

There is a clear link between lack of support from family (see above) and family as a barrier. One principal commented on this link. 'A barrier to me was the big number of family responsibilities I had when I returned back from school' (P20). Another principal stated that family background could work as a barrier and as a facilitator at the same time. 'For me it worked from both sides. Unfortunately, if you cannot separate your work-life from your personal life, sometimes these two can be a major conflict (P18).

Figures 4.21.1, 4.21.2, 4.21.3 and 4.21.4 show how these findings link to the biographical data. Older and more experienced educators and principals were more likely to perceive their family backgrounds as inhibitors to their career progression, confirming earlier findings (see figures 4.10.1, 4.10.2 and 4.10.3). Principals of schools in more

traditional locations, such as Paphos and Larnaca, were marginally more likely to feel inhibited than those in more urban settings.
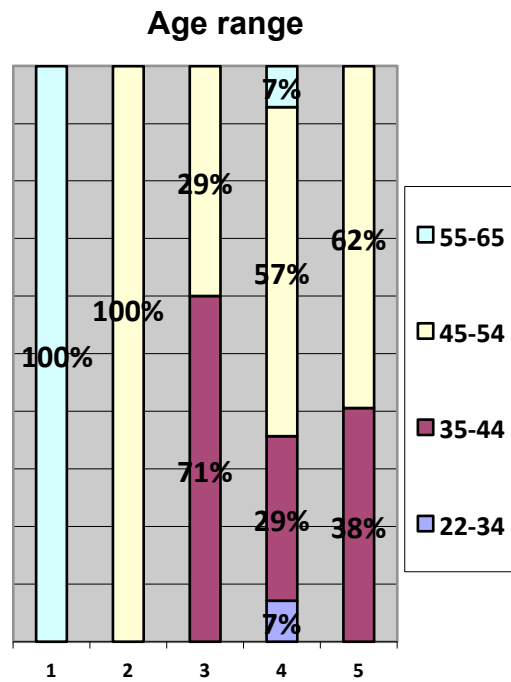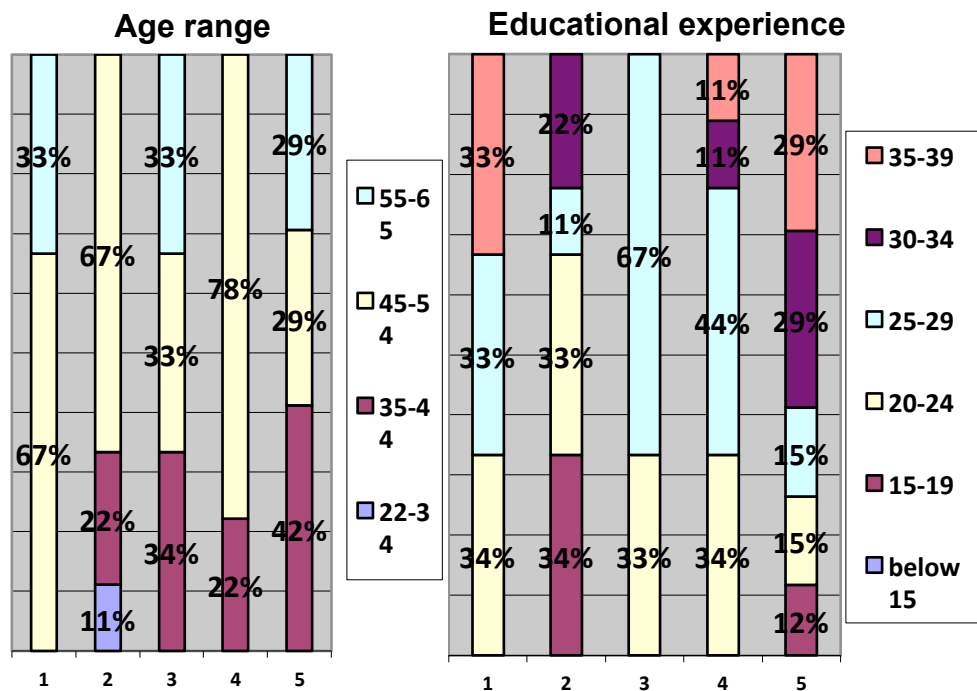

Figure 4.21.1 Age range

Figure 4.21.2 Educational experience
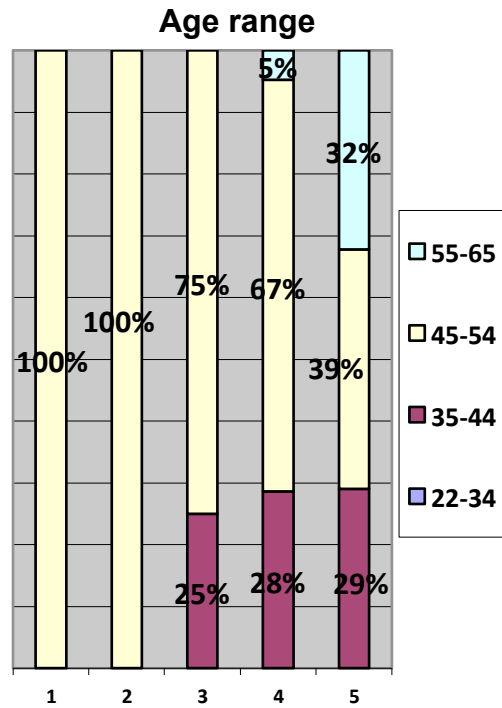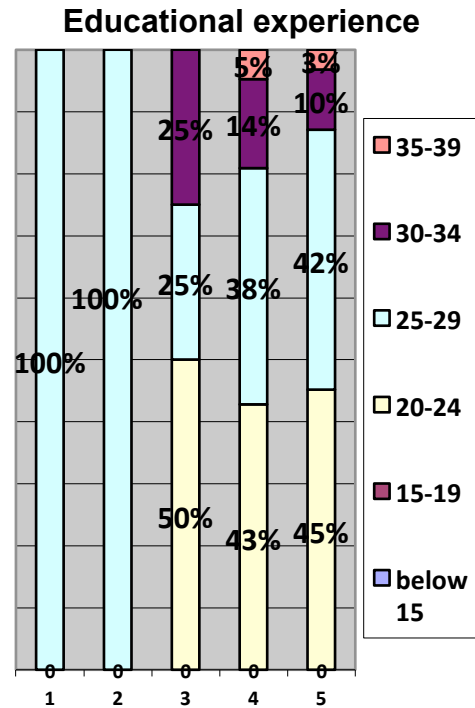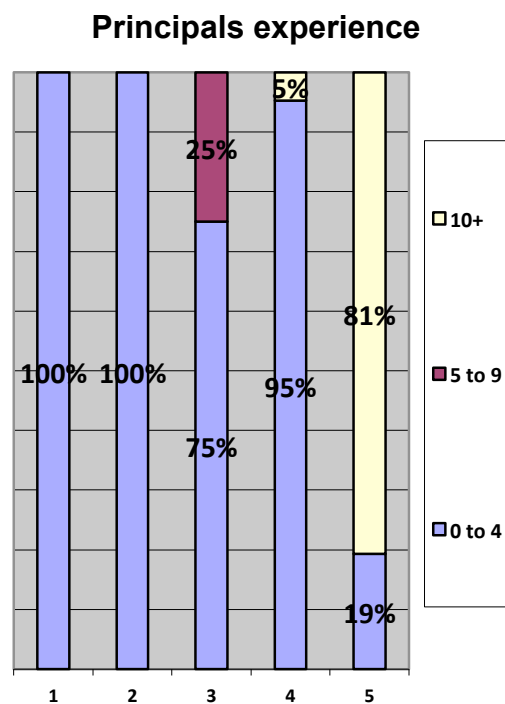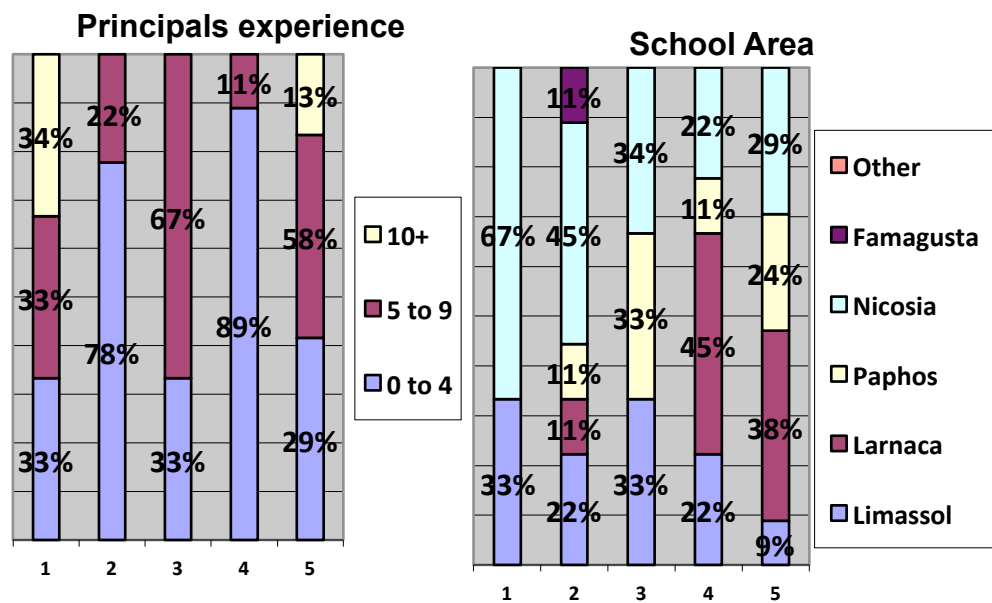

Figure 4.21.3 Principals experience

Figure 4.21.4 School area

Figure 4.22 shows the results for the second barrier factor, that of Cypriot culture.
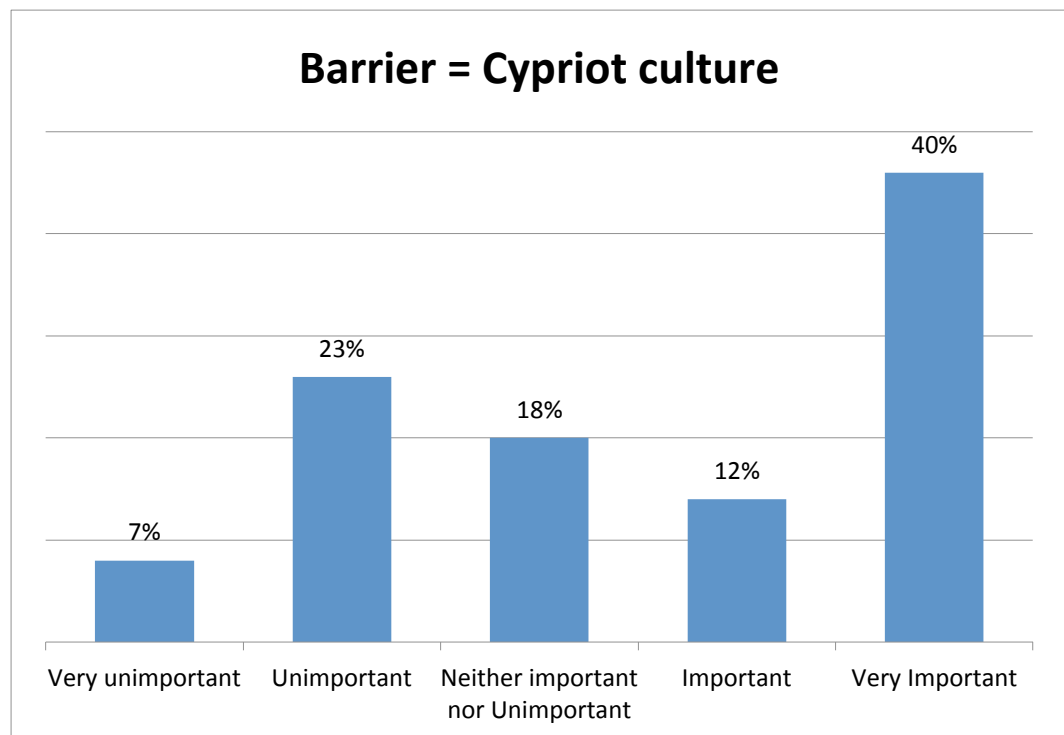
Figures 4.22 Barrier factor = Cypriot culture (n=57). (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean= 3.56: standard deviation=1.39)).

More than half of respondents (52%) stated that Cypriot culture constituted a barrier to their career progression, while almost a third (30%) said that this was not a barrier.

One principal stated that:

> given that the Cypriot society is a small society, and sometimes this links to some stereotypes from the old years, not only in the school areas, but, in general, women cannot be found to hold leadership positions. I consider this to be linked to some cultural issues arising from the past' (P22). Another principal said that 'even though women started to appear in leadership positions, stereotypes about men holding leadership positions still exist (P23).

Figures 4.22.1, 4.22.2, 4.22.3 and 4.22.4 show how these findings relate to the biographical data. Older and more experienced educators are much more likely to regard the Cypriot culture as a barrier to career progression but the data on principalship experience present a more mixed picture. Principals from more conservative areas, such as Paphos and Larnaca, are more likely to regard the culture as a barrier.

Age range

Figure 4.22.1 Age range
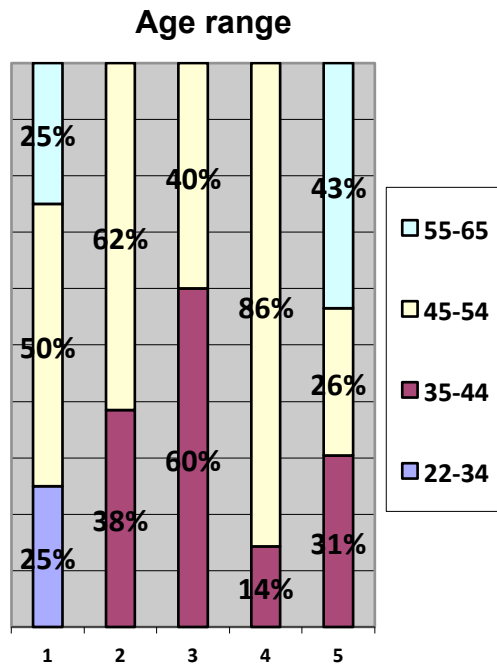
Educational experience
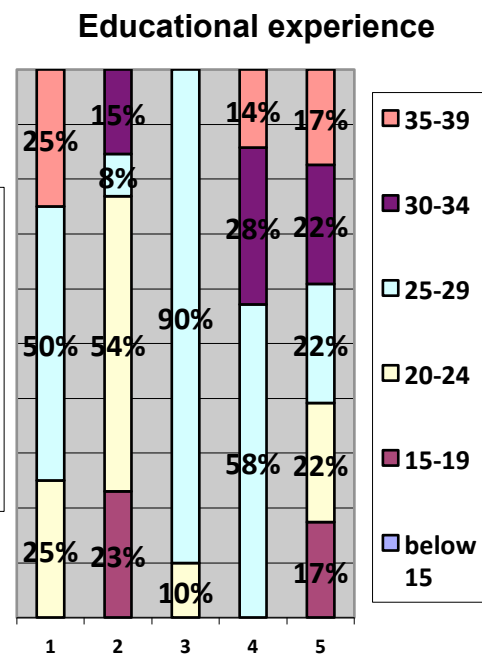
Figure 4.22.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
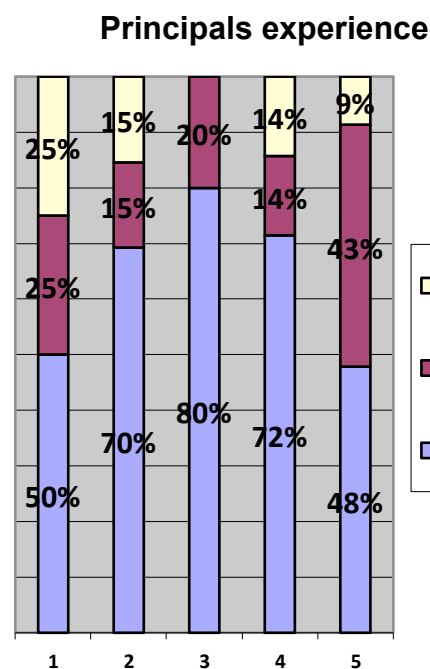
Figure 4.22.3 Principals experience
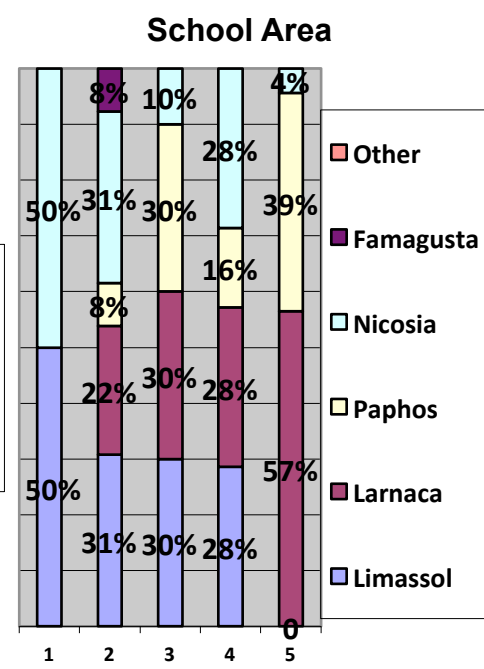
School Area

Figure 4.22.4 School area

Figure 4.23 shows the results for the third barrier factor, that of Cypriot society.

Barrier = Cypriot society
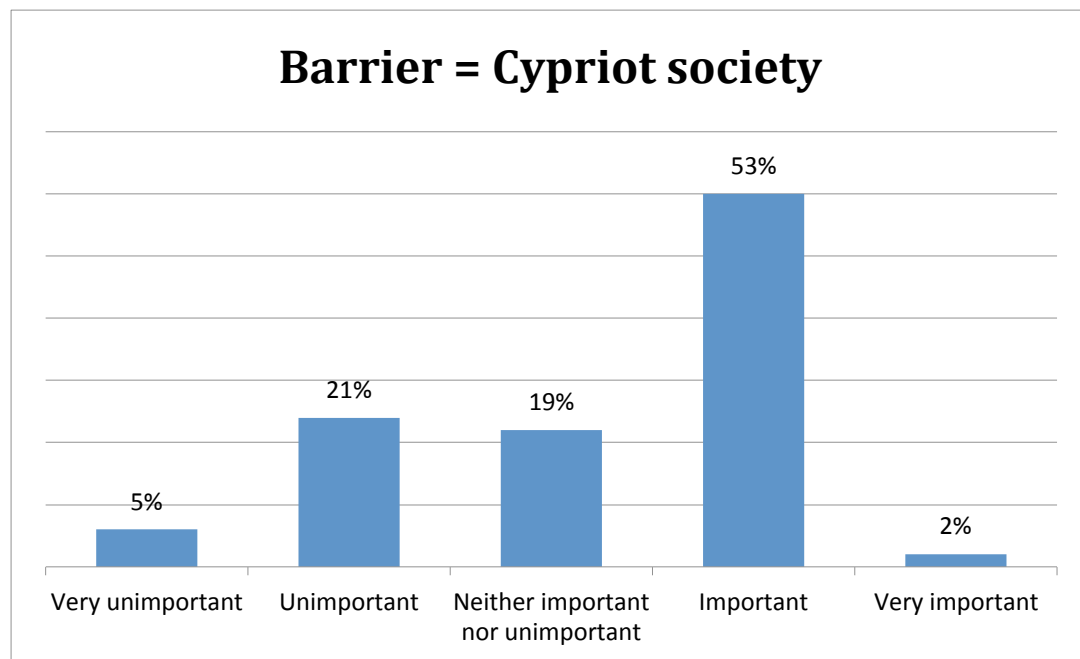
Figures 4.23 Barrier factor = Cypriot society (n=57). (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean= 3.25=3; standard deviation= 0.98).

Figure 4.23 shows that more than half of respondents (55%) stated that Cypriot society constituted a barrier to their career progression, while more than a quarter (26%) said that this was not a barrier. Figures 4.23.1, 4.23.2, 4.23.3 and 4.23.4 show how these findings connect to the biographical data. Older and more experienced principals were much more likely to perceive Cypriot society as a barrier to career progression as were those from traditional locations such as Paphos and Larnaca.
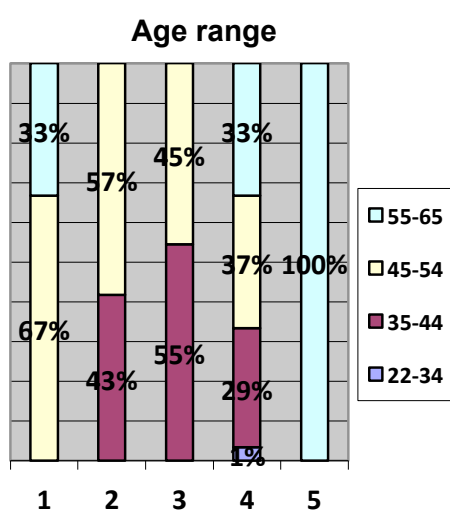
Figure 4.23.1 Age range
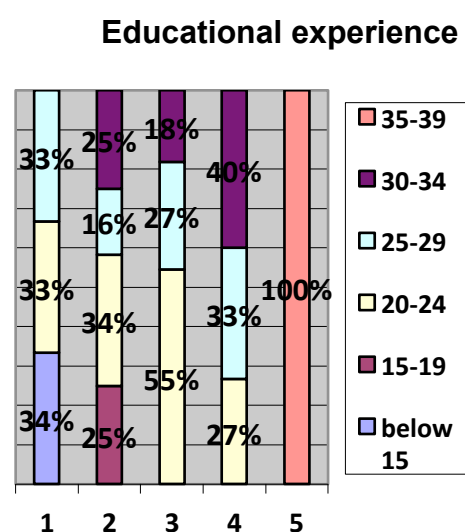
Figure 4.23.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
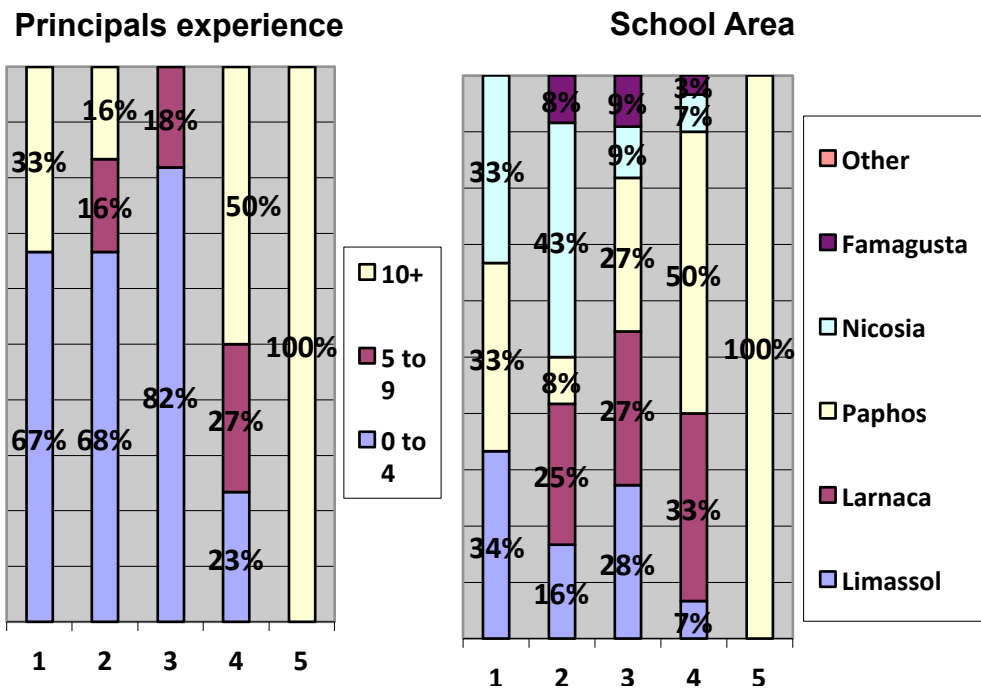
School Area

Figure 4.23.3 Principals experience   Figure 4.23.4 School area

The responses to this question are similar to the responses regarding the influence of Cypriot culture as a barrier to career progression. This is consistent with data presented earlier on these two factors.

Figure 4.24 shows the results for the fourth barrier factor; societal stereotypes.
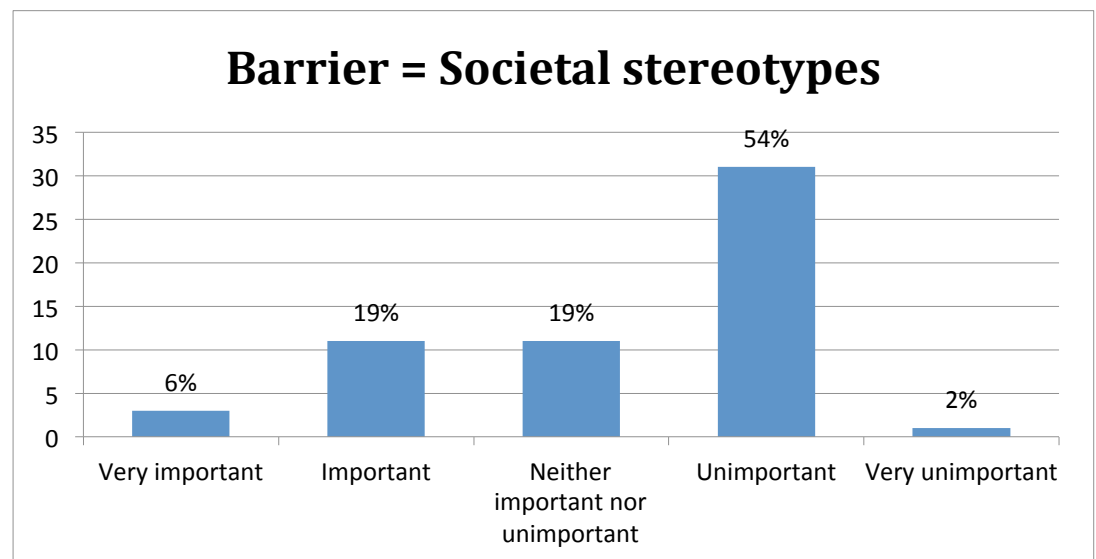
Figure 4.24 Barrier factor = Societal stereotypes (n=57). (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean= 3.28;= standard deviation= 0.97).

Figure 4.24 shows that more than half of respondents (56%) stated that societal stereotypes constituted a barrier to their career progression, while a quarter (25%) said that this was not a barrier. One principal commented that:

> Throughout my own experience I can say that a reason for women not deciding to apply for leadership positions is because the Cypriot society refuses to reject the patriarchal model. To be honest, even though the patriarchal model is not that alive nowadays, you can still find people supporting the statement: you are a woman, you cannot lead. This is a man's job. That's why I believe women keep in their inner thoughts this model (P23).

Figures 4.24.1, 4.24.2, 4.24.3 and 4.24.4 show how these findings relate to the biographical data. Older and more experienced educators are more likely to experience societal stereotypes as a barrier, although data for principalship experience is less clear-cut. Principals working in more traditional locations, such as Paphos and Larnaca, are more likely to regard societal stereotypes as a barrier.
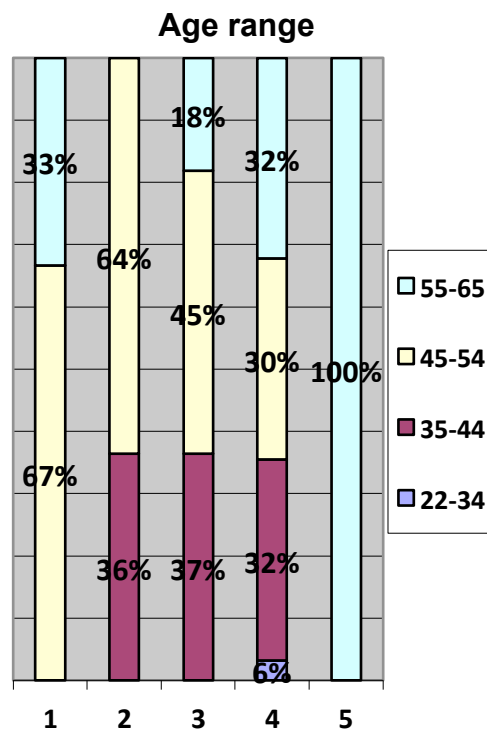
Figure 4.24.1 Age range   Figure 4.24.2 Educational experience
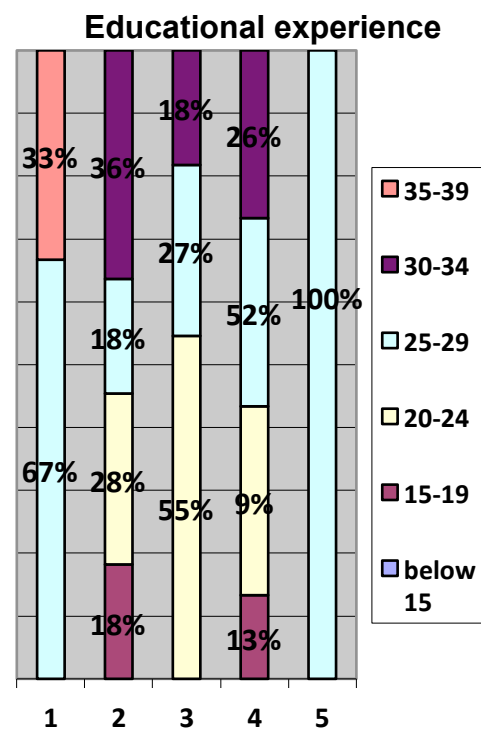
Principals experience
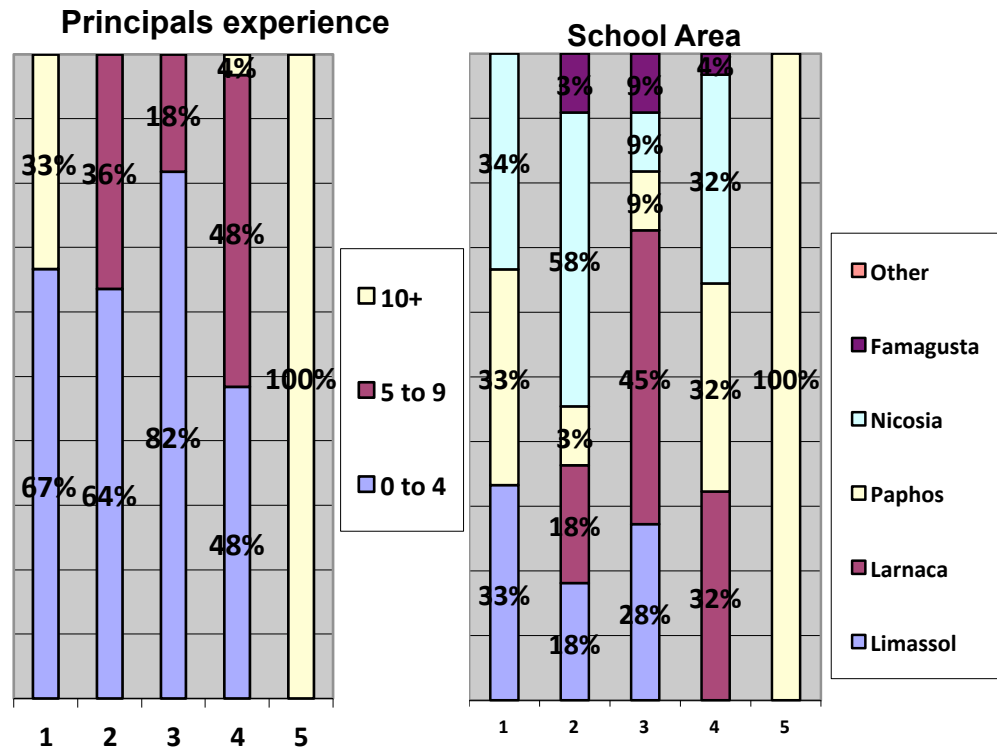
School Area

Figure 4.24.3 Principals experience   Figure 4.24.4 School area

Figure 4.25 shows the results for the fifth barrier factor, that of discrimination.
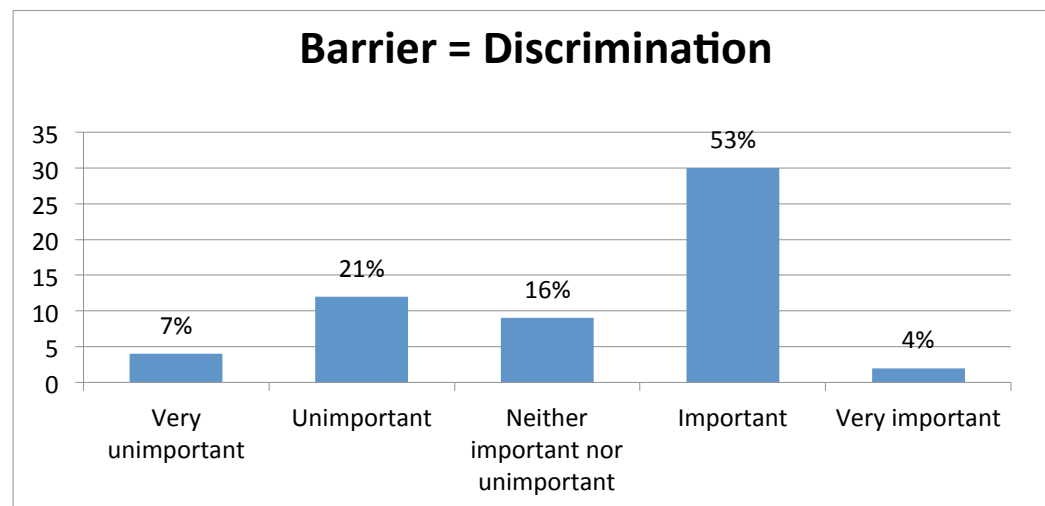
Figure 4.25 Barrier factor = Discrimination (n=57). (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean = 3.25; standard deviation= 1.05).

Figure 4.25 shows that more than half of respondents (57%) stated that discrimination constituted a barrier to their career progression, while more than a quarter (28%) said that this was not a barrier. Figure 4.25 adds up to 101% as a result of rounding.

The societal stereotypes and discrimination data are very similar, suggesting that perceived stereotypical attitudes may be manifested as discrimination. Both factors appear as barriers for accession to leadership positions for a majority of principals.

Figures 4.25.1, 4.25.2, 4.25.3 and 4.25.4 show how the findings relate to the biographical data. These data do not show significant differences by age, experience or school location.
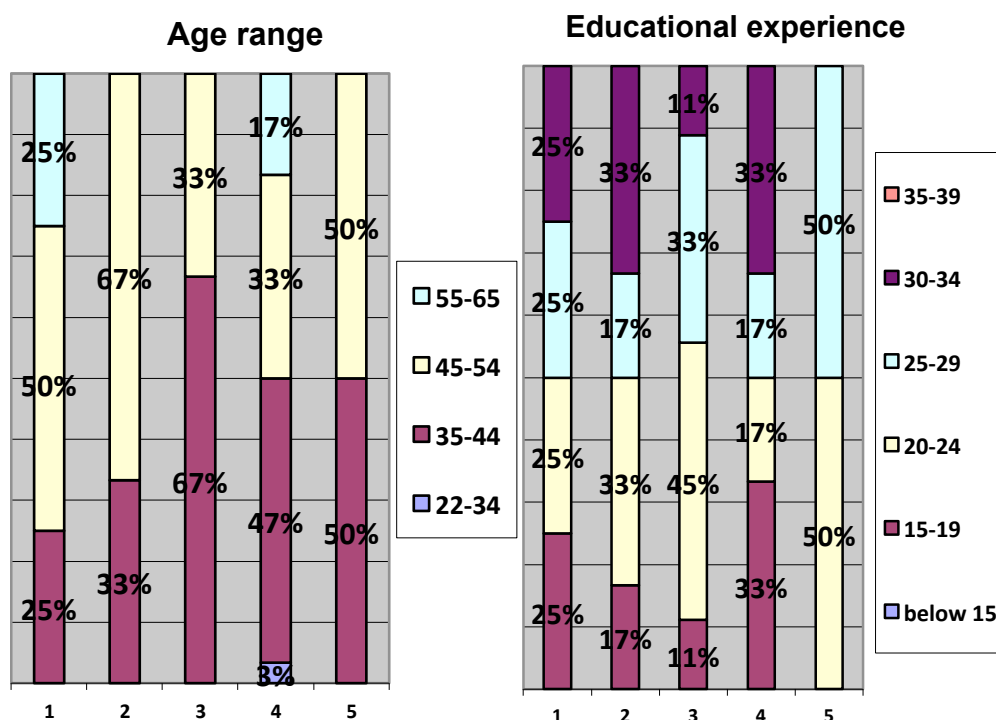
Figure 4.25.1 Age range

Figure 4.25.2 Educational experience

Principals experience — **School Area**
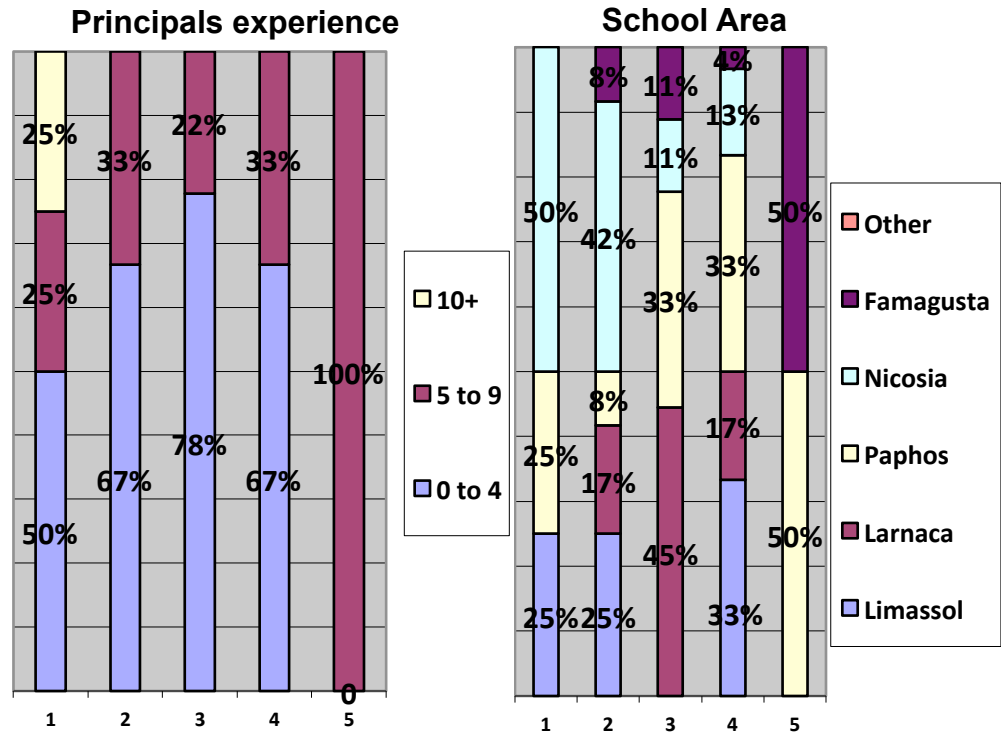
Figure 4.25.3 Principals experience   Figure 4.25.4 School area

Figure 4.26 shows the results for the sixth barrier factor, respondents' experience in the educational field.
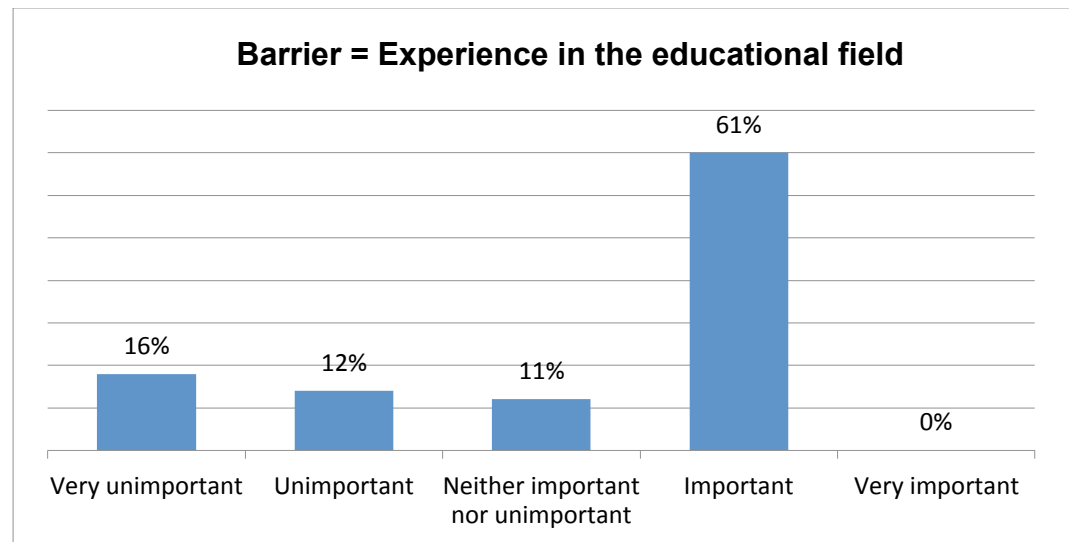
Figure 4.26 Barrier factor = Experience in the educational field (n=57).
(1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean= 3.18 = 3; standard deviation= 1.16).

Figure 4.26 shows that more than half of respondents (61%) stated that their limited experience in the educational field constituted a barrier to their career progression, while more than a quarter (28%) said that this was not a barrier. A significant quote supporting this statement was that of a woman principal saying that:

> In my own career, the previous experience to the educational field was an inhibitor for me. At the beginning of my career, I came across several difficulties in responding to a number of issues arising from being a principal. At least other colleagues more experienced than me were there giving me the equivalent help on how to handle several issues (P31).

Another principal commented that:

> The previous experience in the educational field is a major factor which can sometimes work as a barrier. Especially if a woman, who is usually more sensitive than males, is not experienced enough she will accept the criticism either from parents, or colleagues. A woman principal needs to be ready for these challenges, in order to stand up. She has to have inner strength, which comes throughout her experience in the field. The lack of previous experience could work as a barrier for her (P30).

Figures 4.26.1, 4.26.2, 4.26.3 and 4.26.4 show how these findings relate to the biographical data. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, younger and less experienced educators and principals are more likely to report lack of experience as a barrier. This also appears to be more prominent in traditional areas such as Paphos and Larnaca.

Age range

Figure 4.26.1 Age range
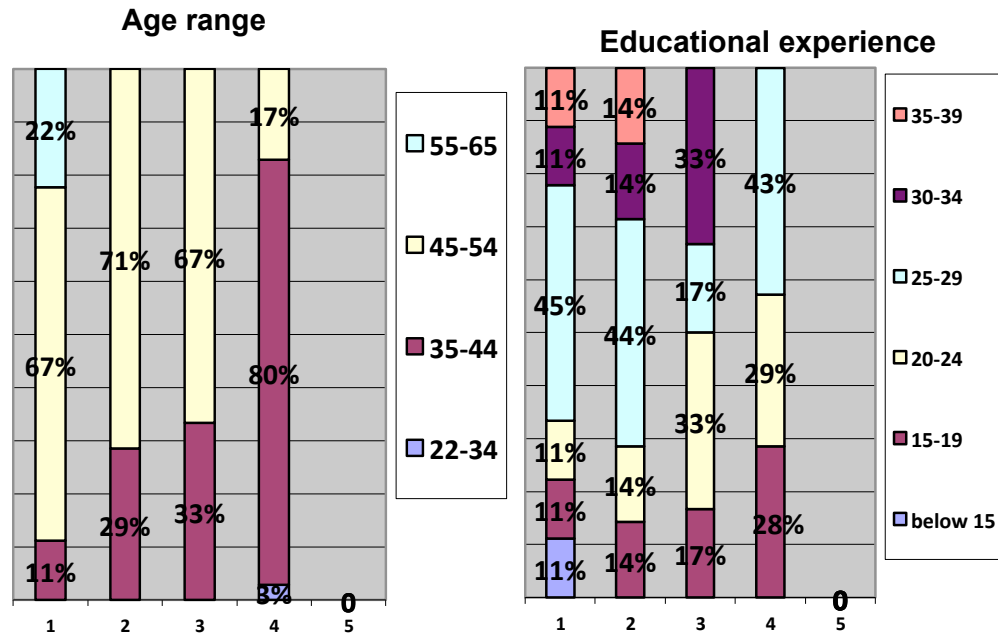
Educational experience

Figure 4.26.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
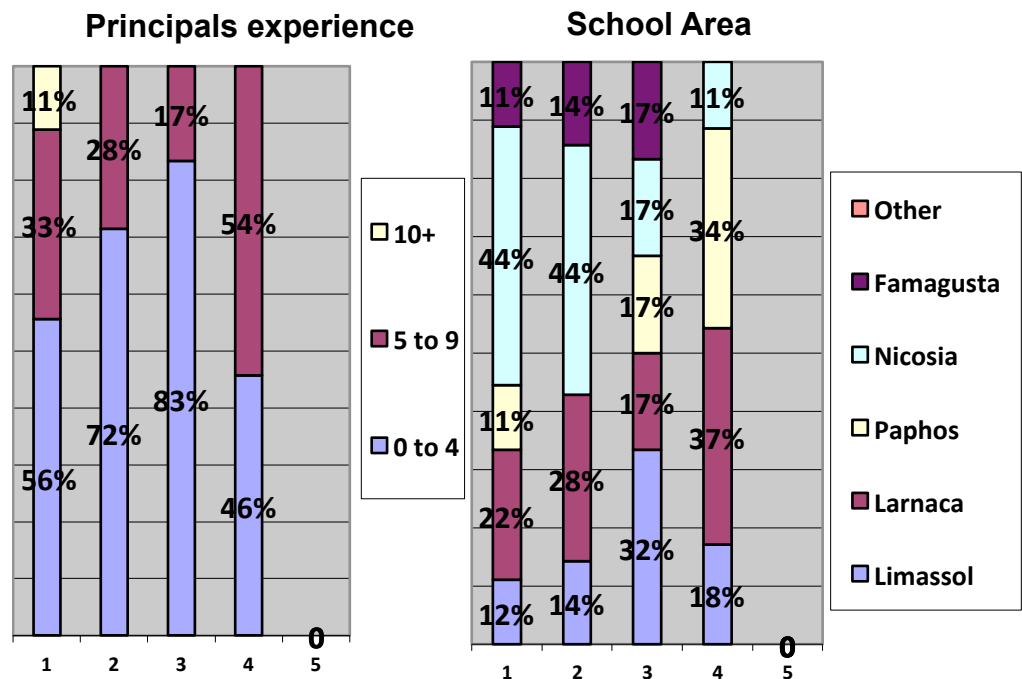
Figure 4.26.3 Principals experience

School Area

Figure 4.26.4 School Area

Figure 4.27 shows the results for the last barrier factor; leadership seminars.

Barrier = Leadership seminars
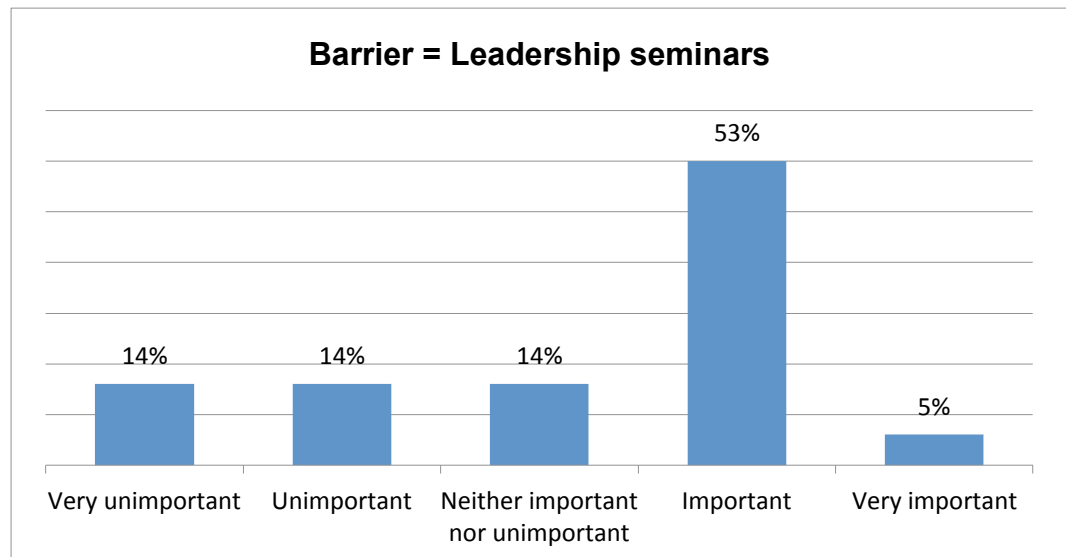
Figure 4.27 Barrier factor = Leadership seminars (n=57). (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean = 3.21= 3; standard deviation= 1.18)).

Figure 4.27 shows that more than half of respondents (58%) stated that the leadership seminars constituted a barrier to their career progression, while more than a quarter (28%) said that this was not a barrier. The researcher's assumption is that this barrier relates either to the absence of relevant seminars or to poor quality provision. There is more evidence on this issue in chapter five.

Figures 4.27.1, 4.27.2, 4.27.3 and 4.27.4 show how these findings link to the biographical data. Younger and less experienced educators and principals, who may have greater need for leadership development, are more likely to report this factor as important. Those in more rural locations, such as Paphos and Larnaca, are more likely to cite this as important. This may be because leadership seminars are less easily accessed from such contexts.

Age range

Figure 4.27.1 Age range
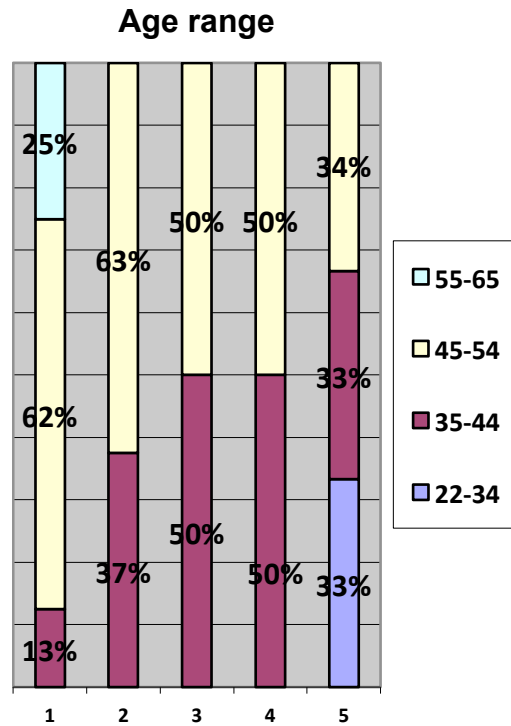
Educational experience
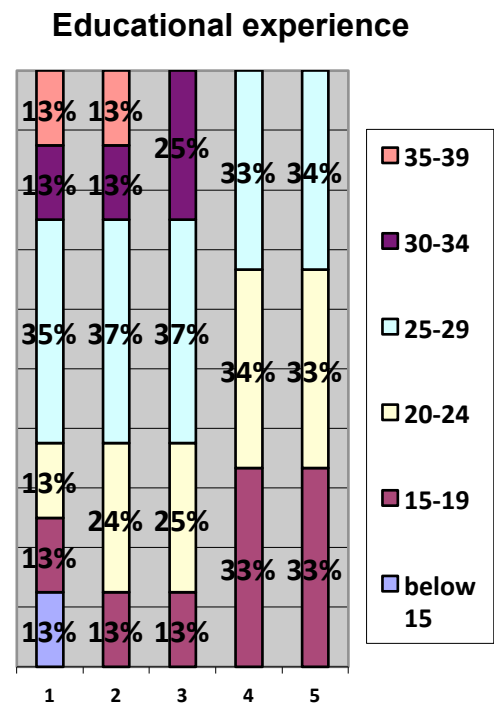
Figure 4.27.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
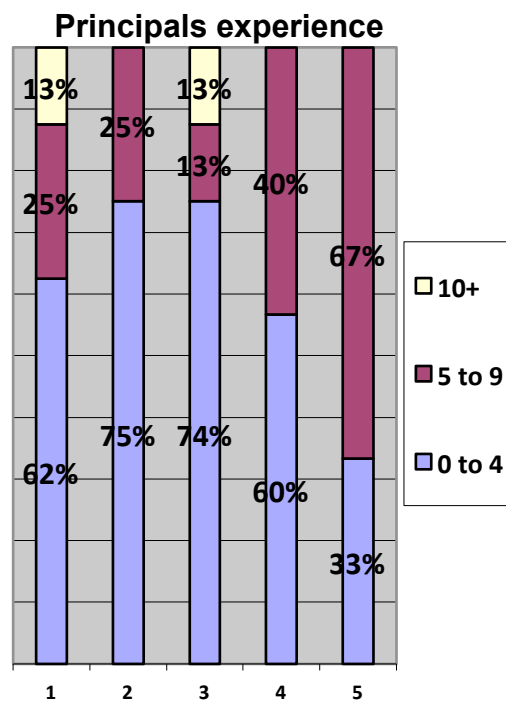
Figure 4.27.3 Principals experience
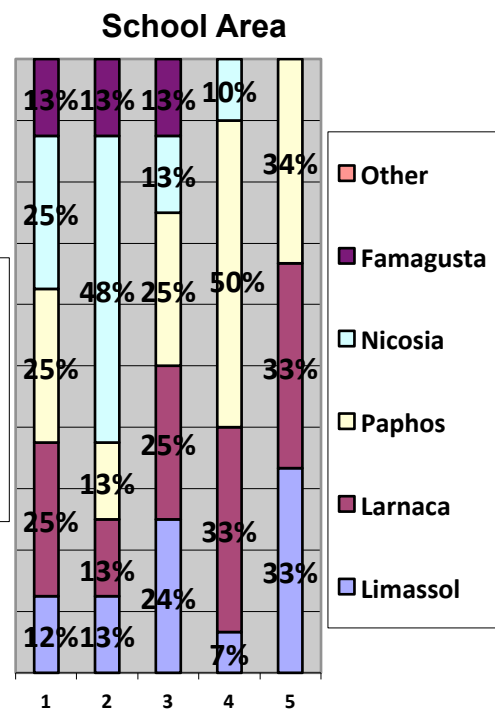
School Area

Figure 4.27.4 School Area

Facilitating Factors for Leadership Progression

In this section, the author aims to establish how the seven factors work as facilitators, and not as barriers, for principals' career progression. Figure 4.28 shows the results for the first facilitator factor, that of family background.
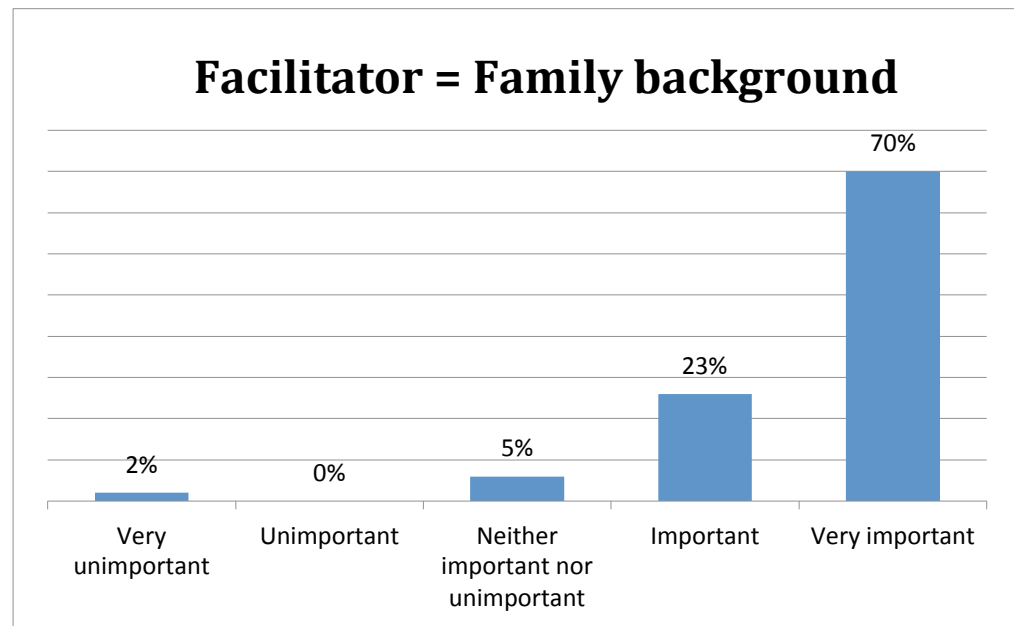
Figure 4.28: Facilitator factor = Family background (n=57) (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean=4.37= 4; standard deviation= 0.78))

The great majority of respondents (93%) stated that family background was an important facilitator for their decision to aspire to leadership positions, while only one (2%) person said that this was unimportant. Figures 4.28.1, 4.28.2, 4.28.3 and 4.28.4 show how the findings relate to the biographical data. Because almost all the respondents regard family background as a facilitating factor, there are no significant differences by age, experience or school location.
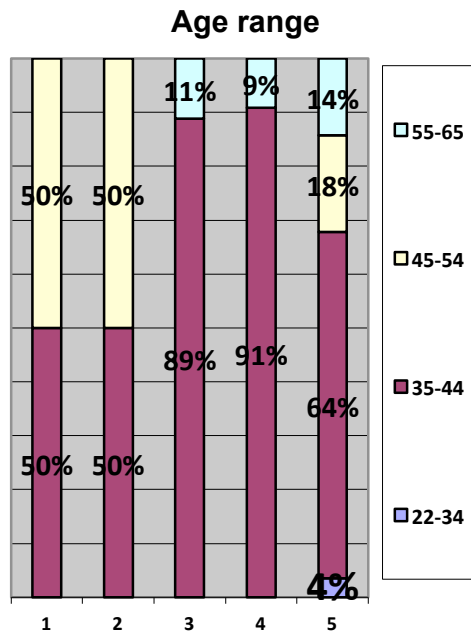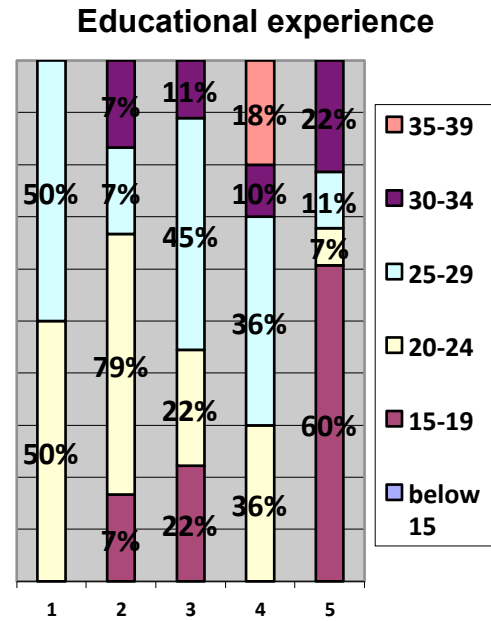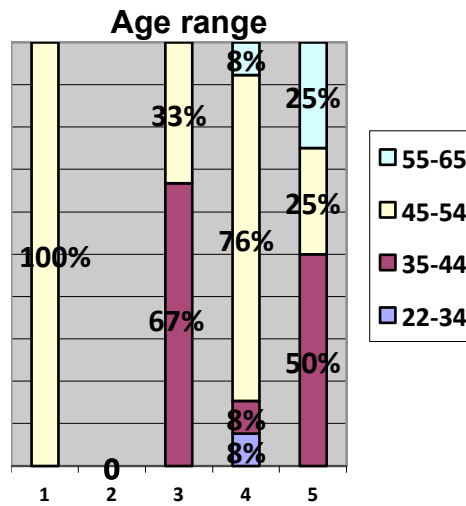
Figure 4.28.1 Age range
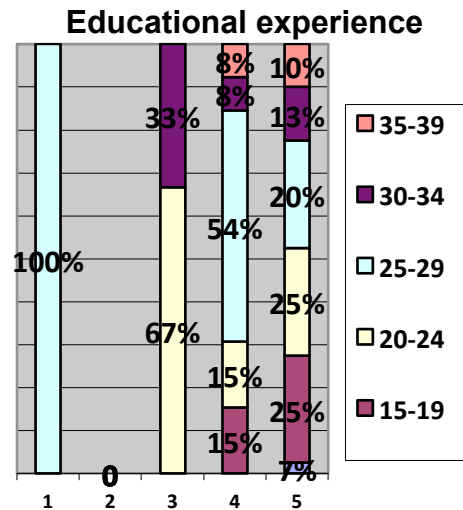
Figure 4.28.2 Educational experience



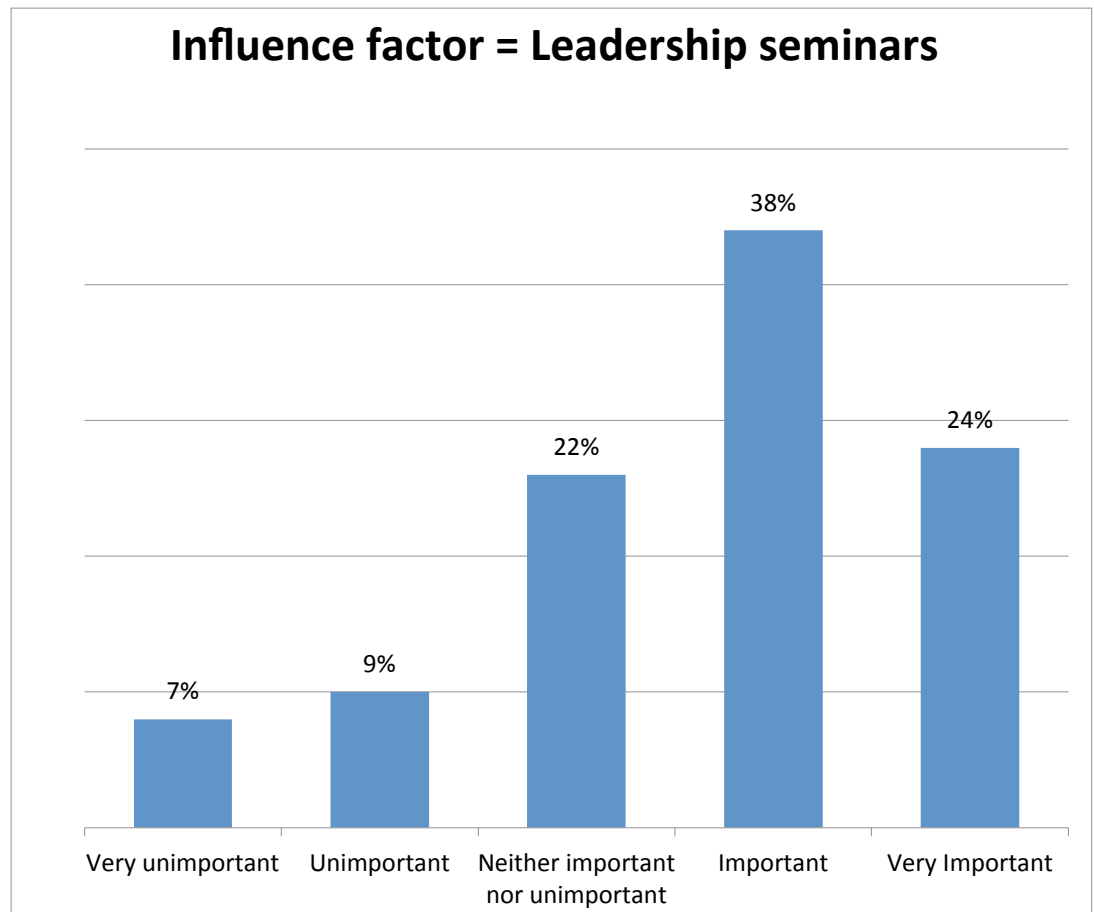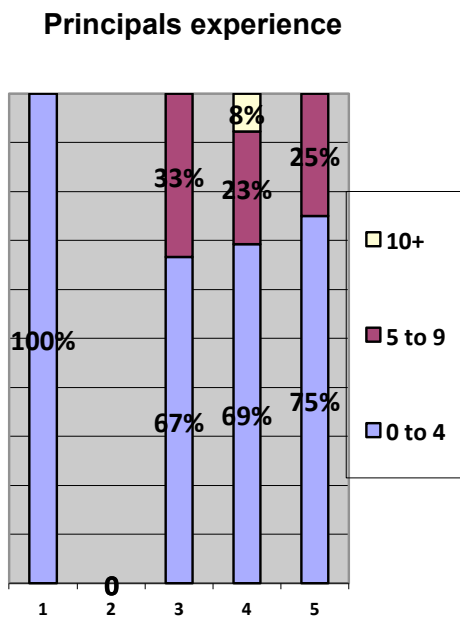Figure 4.28.3 Principals experience
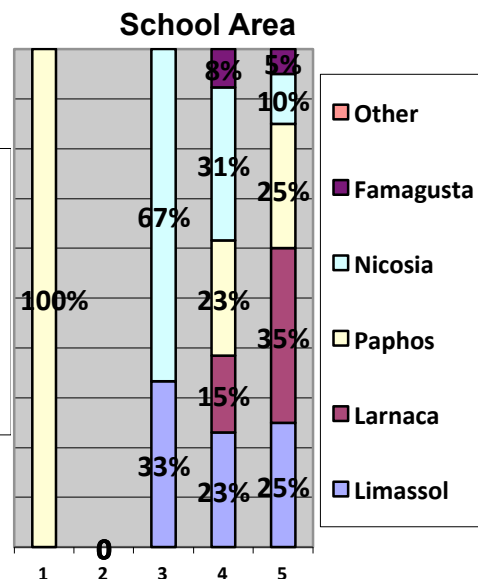
Figure 4.28.4 School Area

Figure 4.29 shows the results for the second facilitator factor, that of Cypriot culture.

Facilitator = Cypriot culture

53%

31%

12%

2%

2%

Very unimportant | Unimportant | Neither important nor unimportant | Important | Very important
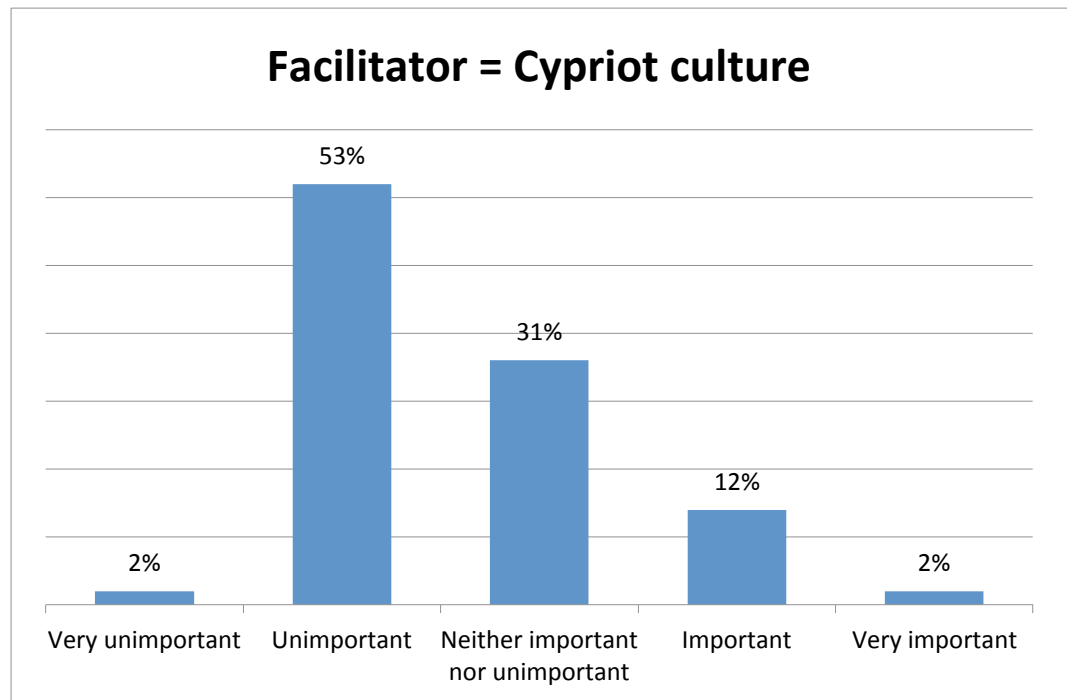
Figure 4.29. Facilitator factor = Cypriot Culture (n=58). (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean= 2.59; standard deviation= 0.79)).

Only a small proportion of respondents (14%) stated that the Cypriot culture was an important facilitator in their decision to aspire to leadership positions, while the majority (55%) stated that this factor was unimportant for them.

As the Cypriot culture can still be considered to be male dominated, and patriarchy to be the social system in which a male is the family head and the primary authority, it is not surprising that most respondents agreed that the Cypriot culture did not facilitate their decision to access leadership positions.

Figures 29.1, 29.2, 29.3 and 29.4 show how these findings connect to the biographical data.

Age range

Figure 4.29.1 Age range
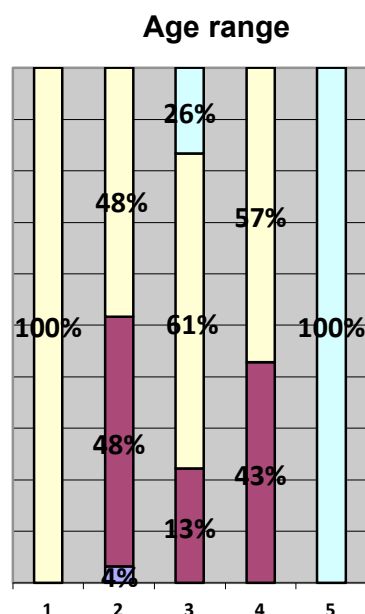
Educational experience
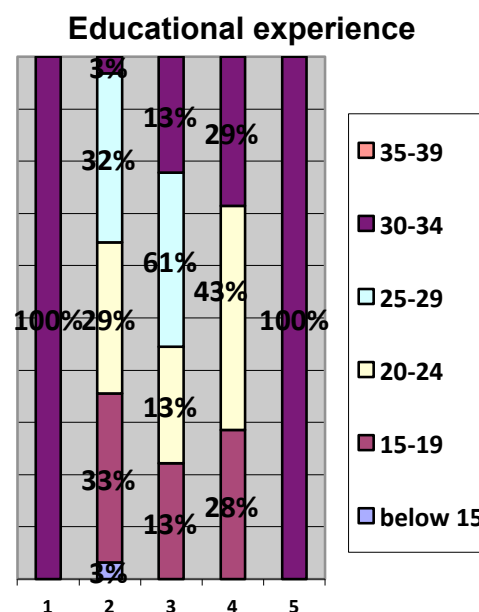
Figure 4.29.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
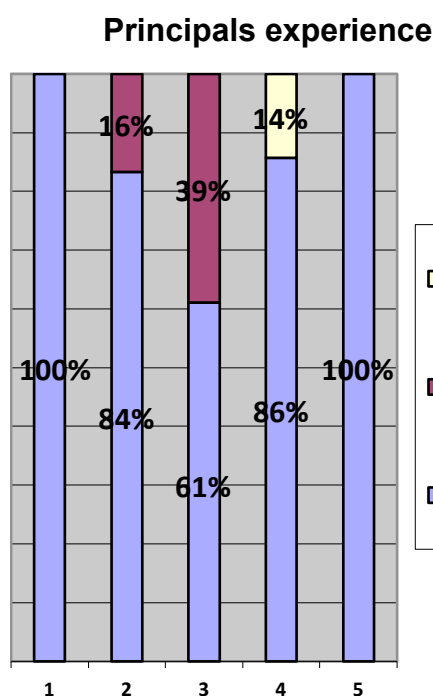
Figure 4.29.3 Principals experience
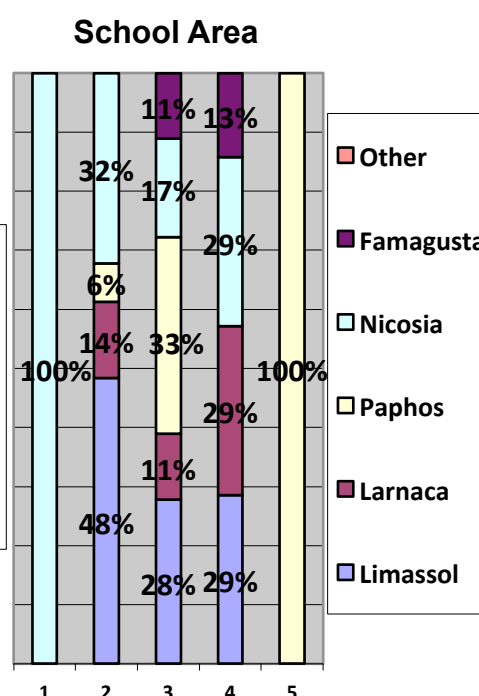
School Area

Figure 4.29.4 School Area

The biographical data add little to the overall position shown in figure 4.29 because the majority of principals agreed that the Cypriot culture was an unimportant consideration in facilitating their career development.

Figure 4.30 shows the results for the third facilitator factor, that of Cypriot society.

Facilitator = Cypriot Society
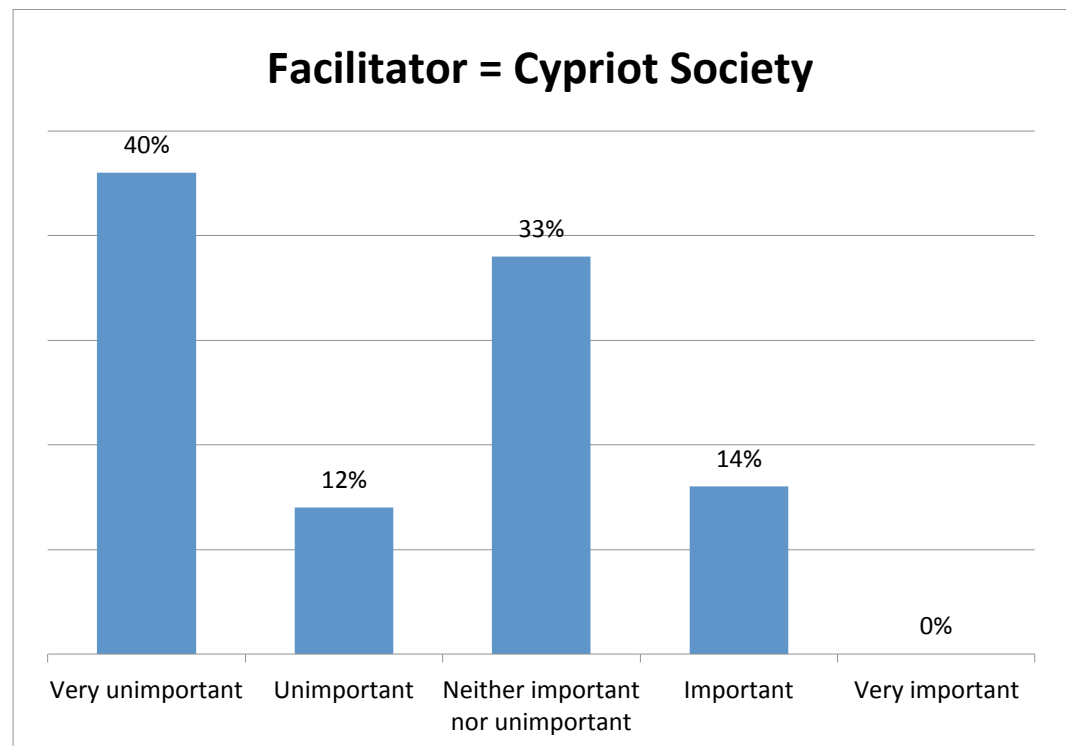
Figure 4.30. Facilitator factor = Cypriot Society (n=57). (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean= 2.21; standard deviation= 1.12)).

Only a small proportion of respondents (14%) stated that the Cypriot society was an important facilitator for their decision to aspire to leadership positions, while the majority of respondents (52%) stated that this factor was unimportant to them. Significantly, almost half of the respondents (40%) say that this aspect was very unimportant. Figure 4.30 adds up to 99% as a result of rounding.

Figures 4.30.1, 4.30.2, 4.30.3 and 4.30.4 show how these findings relate to the biographical data. Significantly, most (75%) of respondents who regard Cypriot society as a facilitating factor are older principals, those aged over 45). There are no significant differences in respect of educational experience but less experienced principals are more likely to see this factor as a facilitator. This appears to contradict the data on age of principals. School location data show no significant differences.

Age range

Figure 4.30.1 Age range
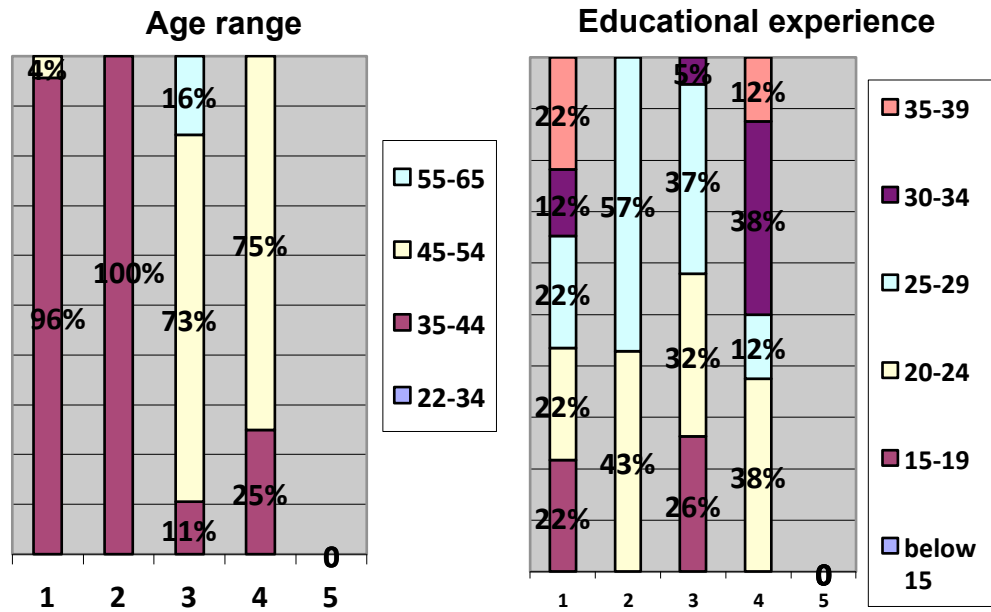
Educational experience

Figure 4.30.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
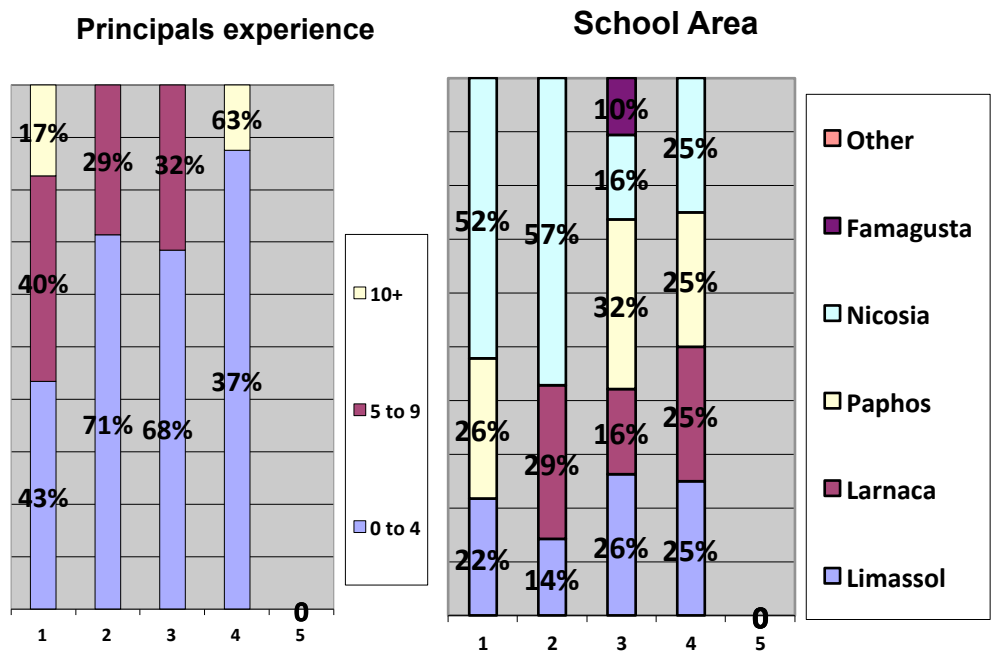
Figure 4.30.3 Principals experience

School Area

Figure 4.30.4 School Area

Figure 4.31 shows the results for the fourth facilitator factor, that of societal stereotypes.

Facilitator = Societal stereotypes

- 43% — Very unimportant
- 18% — Unimportant
- 28% — Neither important nor unimportant
- 11% — Important
- 0% — Very important
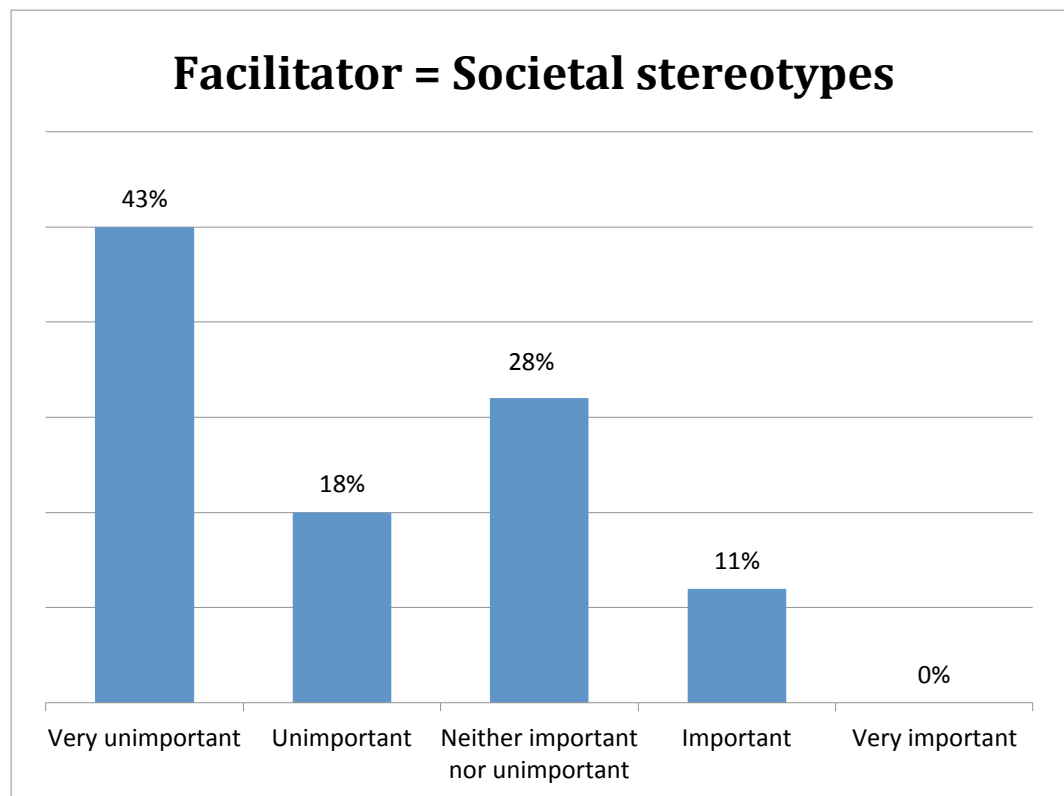
Figure 4.31 Facilitator factor = Societal stereotypes (n=57). (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean= 2.02; standard deviation= 1.06)).

Only a very small proportion of respondents (11%) stated that societal stereotypes were an important facilitator for their decision to aspire to leadership positions, while the majority of respondents (18%) stated that this factor was unimportant to them, of which a significant number (43%) said that this was very unimportant. Societal stereotypes are linked to culture and society, as they arise from these cultural aspects, and the findings for these three questions are unsurprisingly similar.

Figures 4.31.1, 4.31.2, 4.31.3 and 4.31.4 show how these findings connect to the biographical data. The data for age and educational experience do not indicate any significant variations but less experienced principals are more likely to regard this factor as important. Data relating to school location are inconclusive.

Age range

Figure 4.31.1 Age range
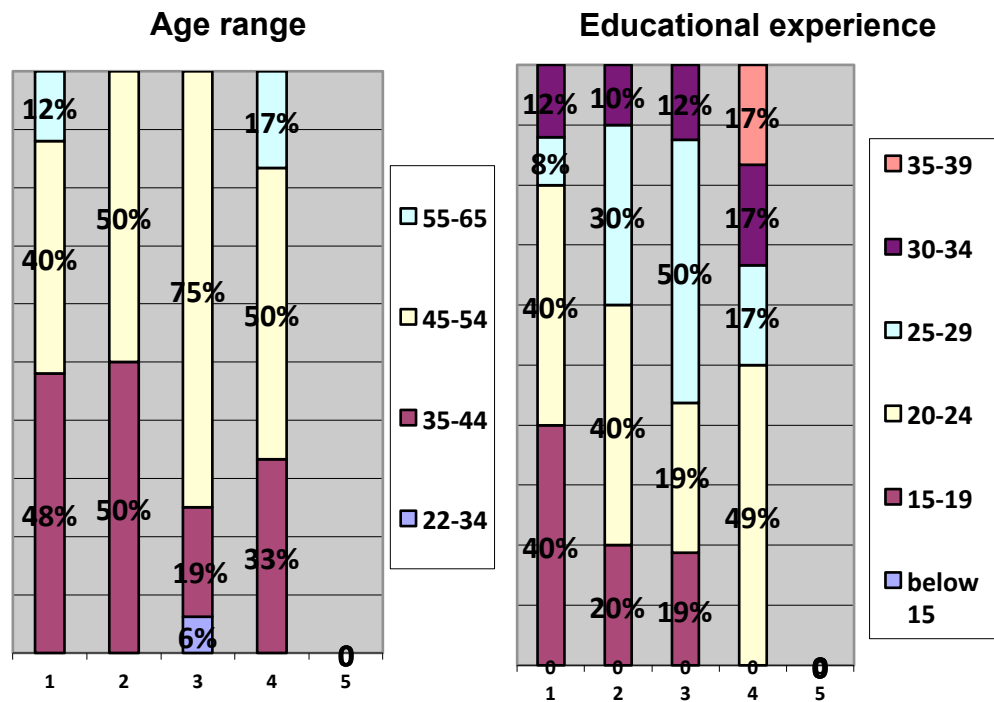
Educational experience

Figure 4.31.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
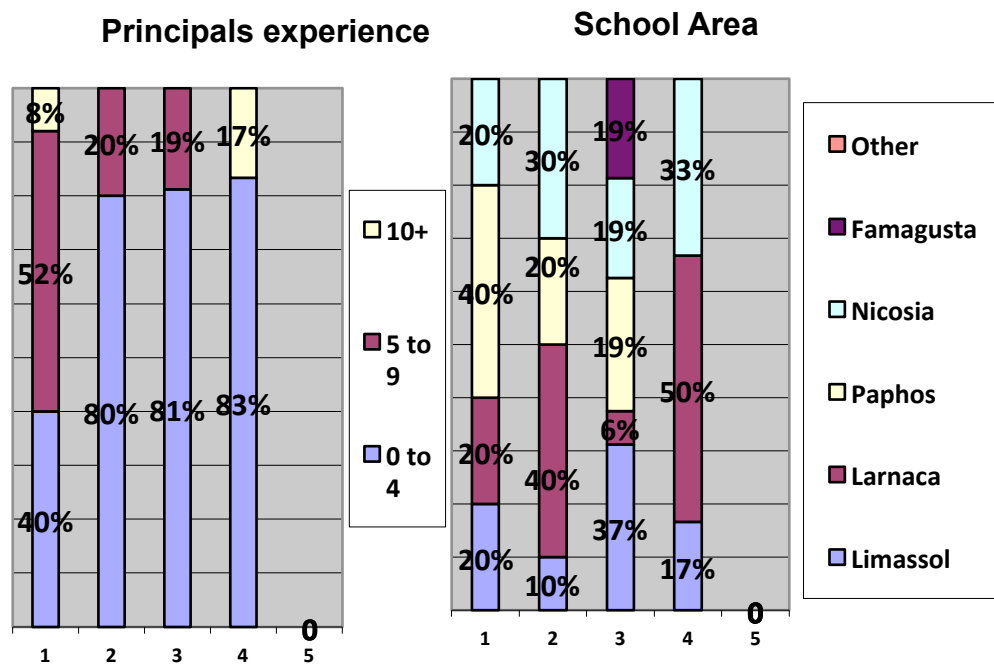
Figure 4.31.3 Principals experience

School Area

Figure 4.31.4 School Area

Figure 4.32 shows the results for the fifth facilitator factor, that of discrimination.
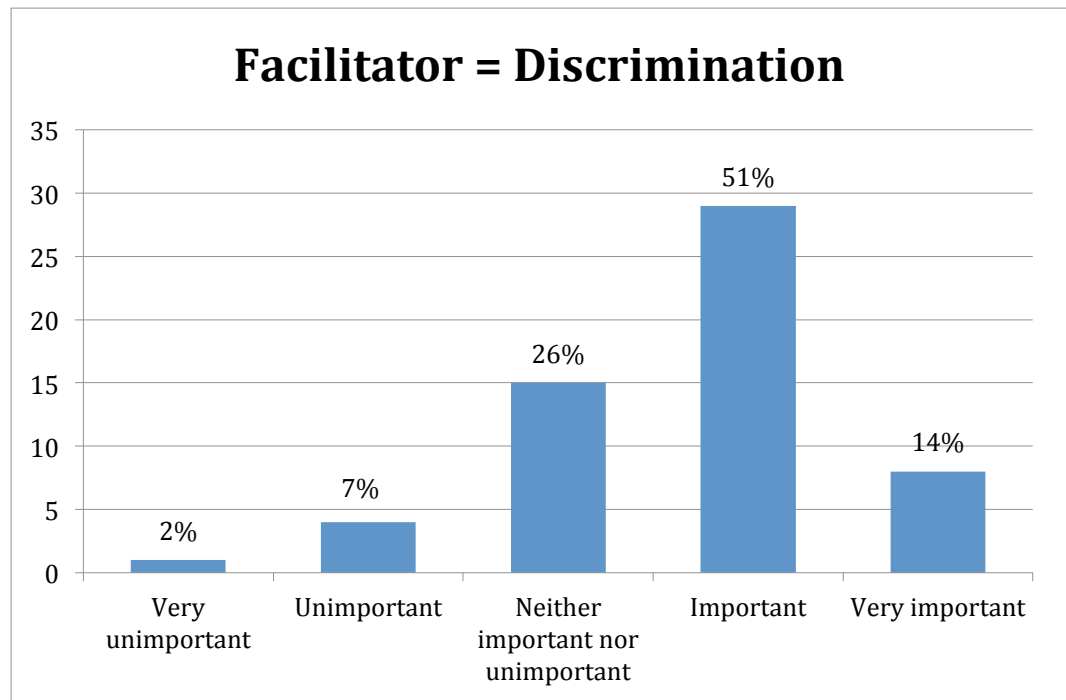
Figure 4.32. Facilitator factor = Discrimination (n=57). (1=very important, 2=important, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= unimportant, 5= very unimportant) (mean= 2.33; standard deviation= 0.86)).

A very small proportion of respondents (9%) stated that discrimination was an unimportant facilitator towards their achievement of leadership, while a significant majority of respondents (65%) stated that this factor was important to them.

Because stereotypes simplify and justify social reality, they have potentially powerful effects on how people perceive and treat one another. As a result, stereotypes can lead to discrimination. This probably explains why the findings from these two questions are very similar.

Figures 4.32.1, 4.32.2, 4.32.3 and 4.32.4 show how these figures relate to the biographical data. Because the data are emphasizing importance, it is difficult to identify significant differences. However, all five respondents who regard discrimination as facilitators have less than five years' experience as principals. The reasons for this finding will be explored in chapter five.

Age range

Figure 4.32.1 Age range
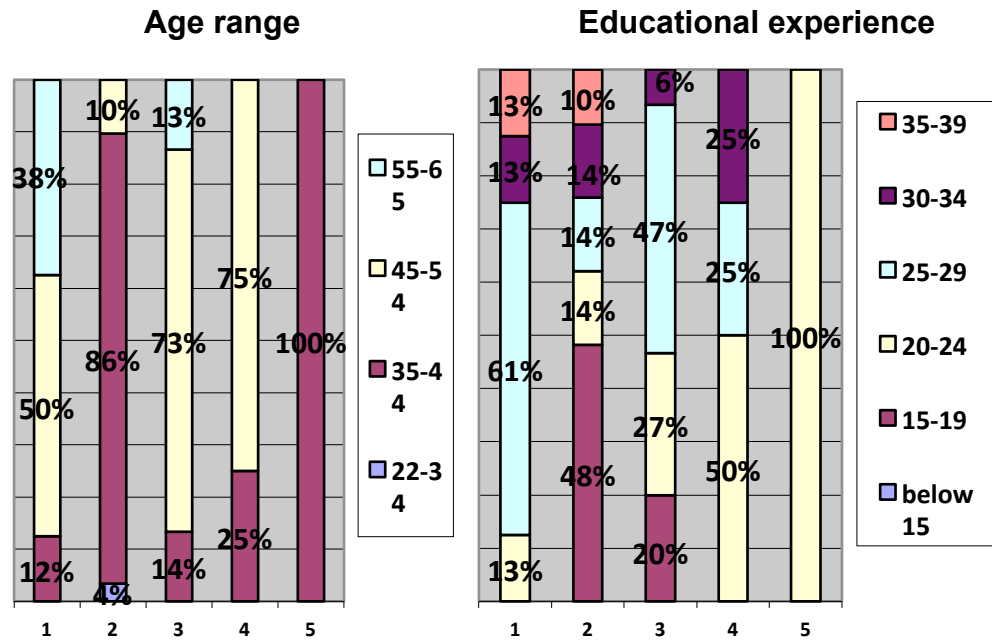
Educational experience

Figure 4.32.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
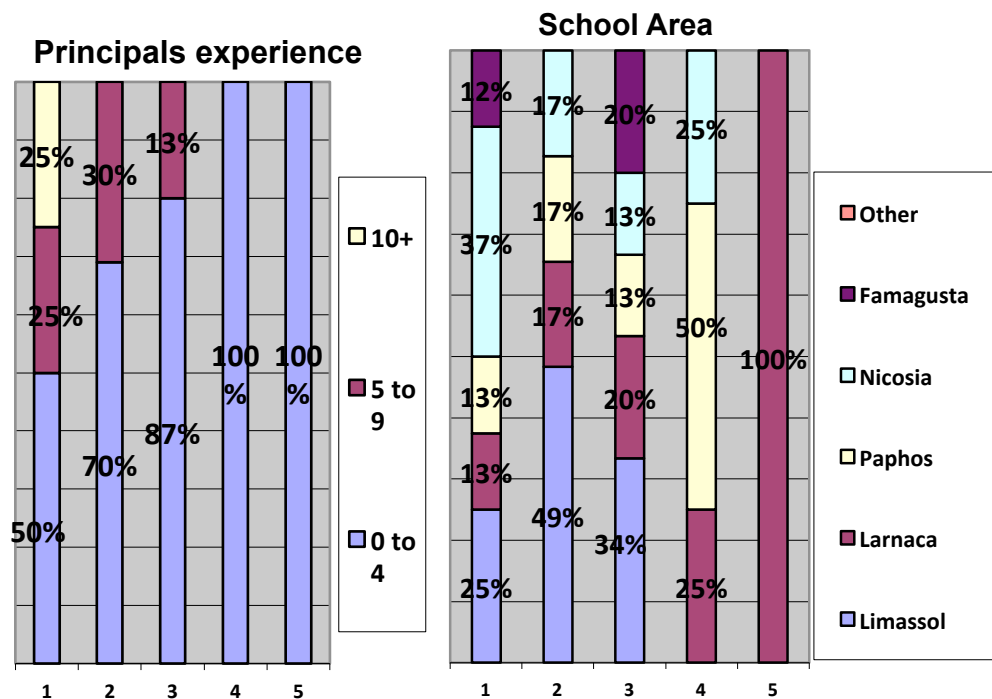
Figure 4.32.3 Principals experience

School Area

Figure 4.32.4 School Area

Figure 4.33 shows the results for the sixth facilitator factor, that of experience in the educational field.

Facilitator = Experience in the educational field
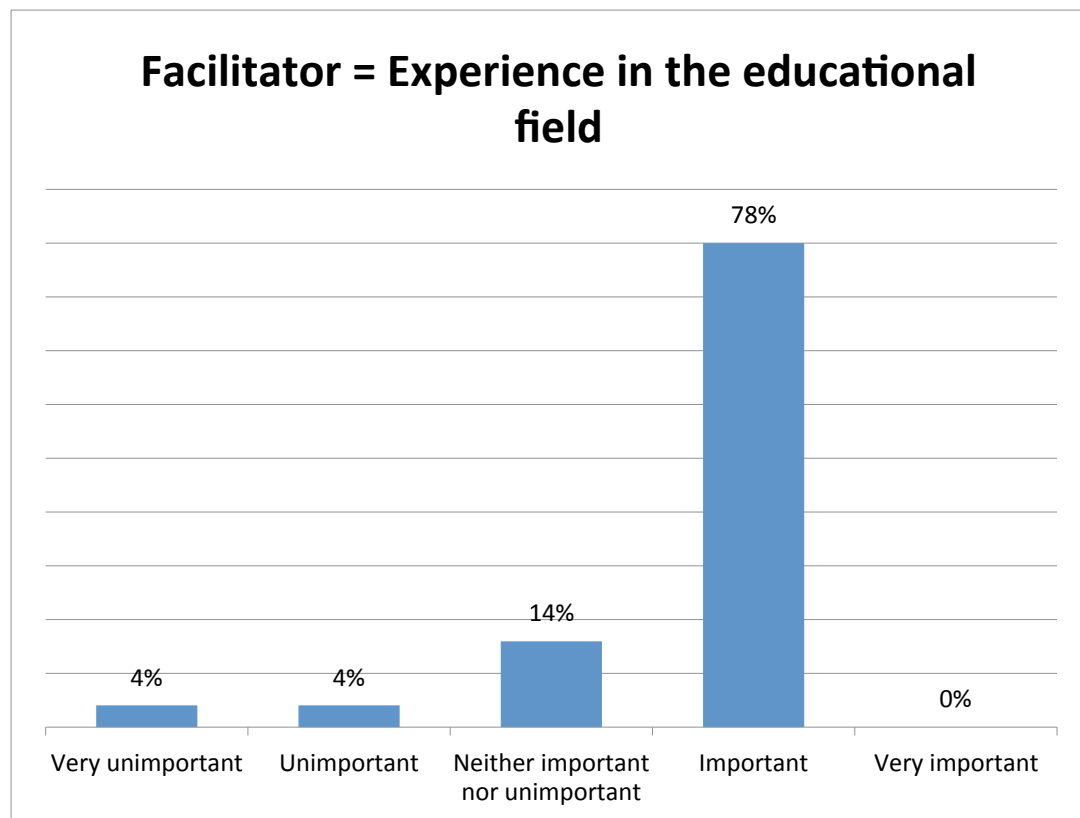
Figure 4.33. Facilitator factor = Experience in the educational field (n=57). (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean= 3.68; standard deviation= 0.7)).

The great majority of respondents (78%) stated that their experience in the educational field was an important facilitator towards their decision to aspire to leadership positions, while only a very small proportion (8%) stated that this factor was unimportant for them. These data show that experience in the educational field is a really important factor, not only for the confidence of the principal candidates, but also in giving them the opportunity, and direct experience, to consider whether to seek accession to leadership positions.

Figures 4.33.1, 4.31.2, 4.31.3 and 4.31.4 show how these findings connect to the biographical data. Because of the largely uniform responses, and a very low standard deviation, there are no significant differences arising from biographical factors.

Age range

Figure 4.33.1 Age range
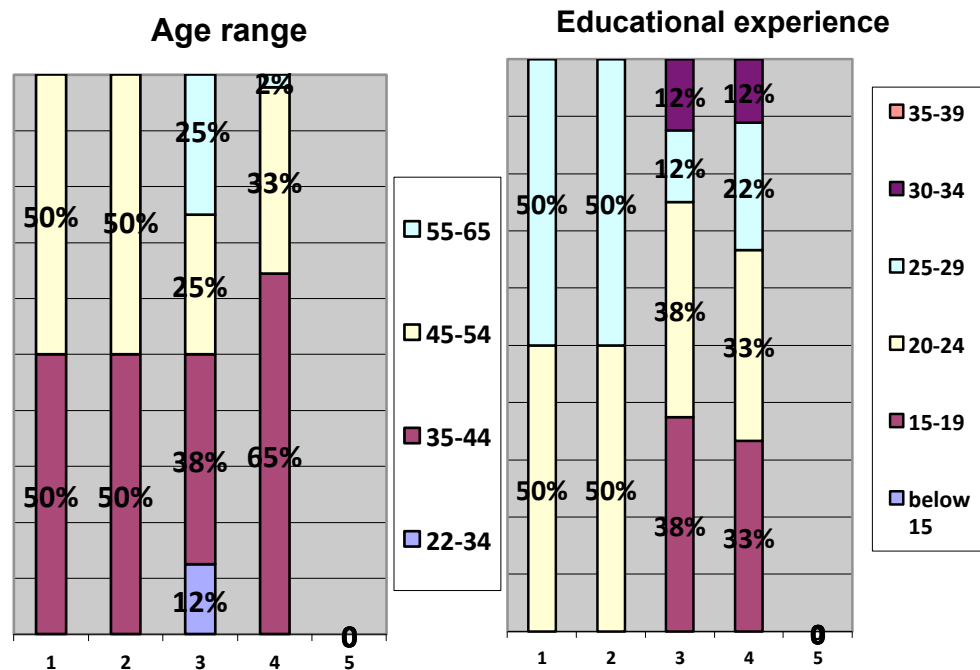
Educational experience

Figure 4.33.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
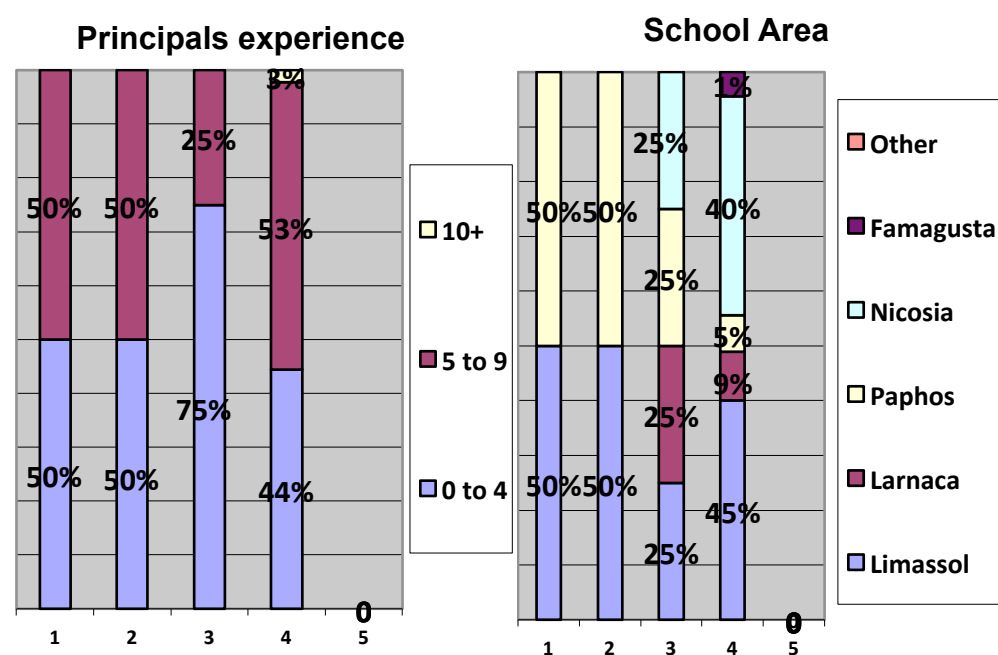
Figure 4.33.3 Principals experience

School Area

Figure 4.33.4 School Area

Figure 4.34 shows the results for the last facilitator factor, that of leadership seminars.

Facilitator = Leadership seminars

| Very unimportant | Unimportant | Neither important nor unimportant | Important | Very important |
| 2% | 2% | 6% | 67% | 23% |
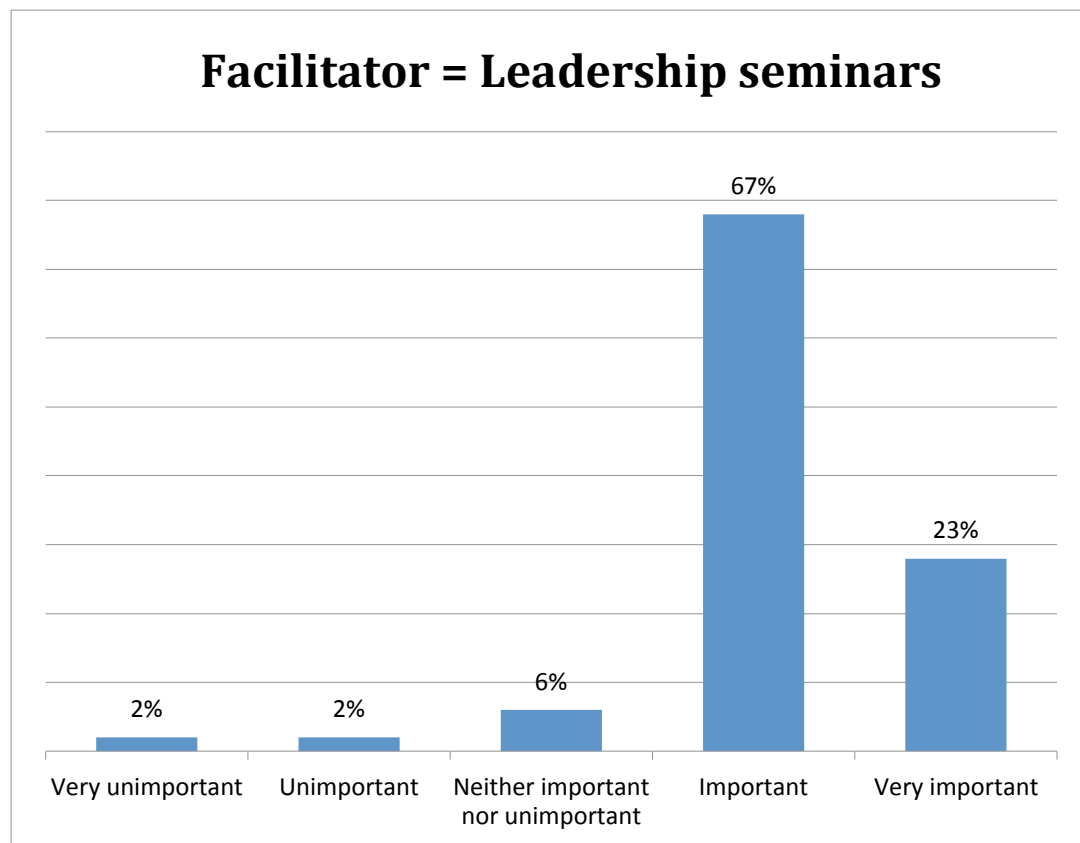
Figure 4.34. Facilitator factor = Leadership seminars (n=58). (1=very unimportant, 2=unimportant, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4= important, 5= very important) (mean= 4.10; standard deviation= 0.71)).

The great majority of respondents (90%) stated that leadership seminars were an important facilitator towards their decision to aspire to leadership positions, while only two (4%) principals stated that this was unimportant for them. These leadership seminars are designed to help new principals to prepare for their new challenges and responsibilities, and to learn how to develop their leadership styles. It is, therefore, unsurprising that the findings were very positive for this dimension.

Figures 4.34.1, 4.34.2, 4.34.3 and 4.34.4 show how these findings relate to the biographical data. Younger and less experienced educators and principals stated that this factor was unimportant for them but the numbers are so small that this finding should be regarded as indicative, not definitive. These principals are both from Limassol but this may be incidental.

Age range

Figure 4.34.1 Age range
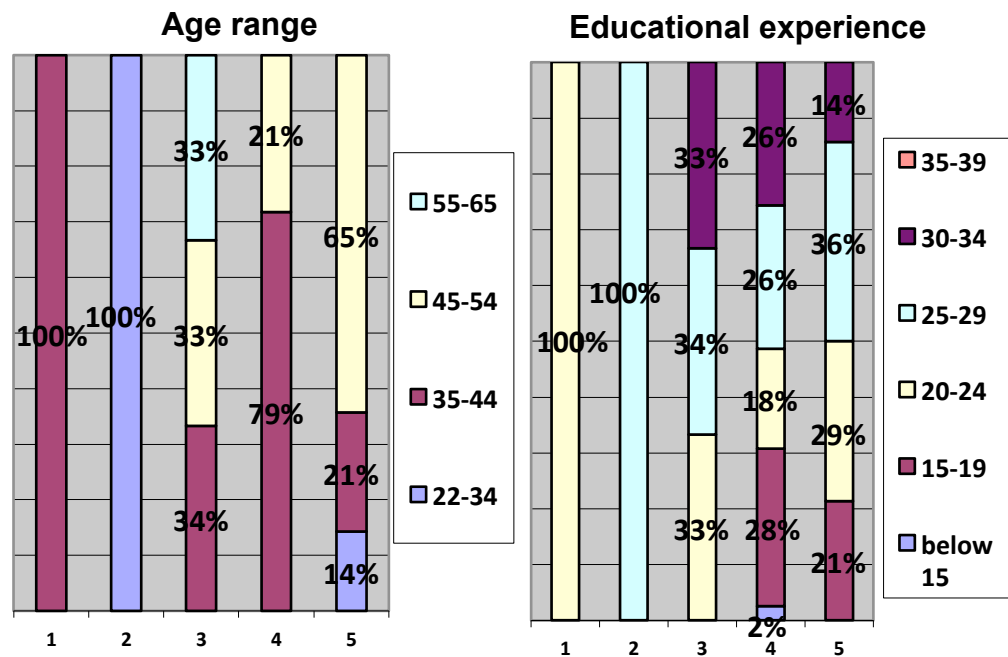
Educational experience

Figure 4.34.2 Educational experience

Principals experience
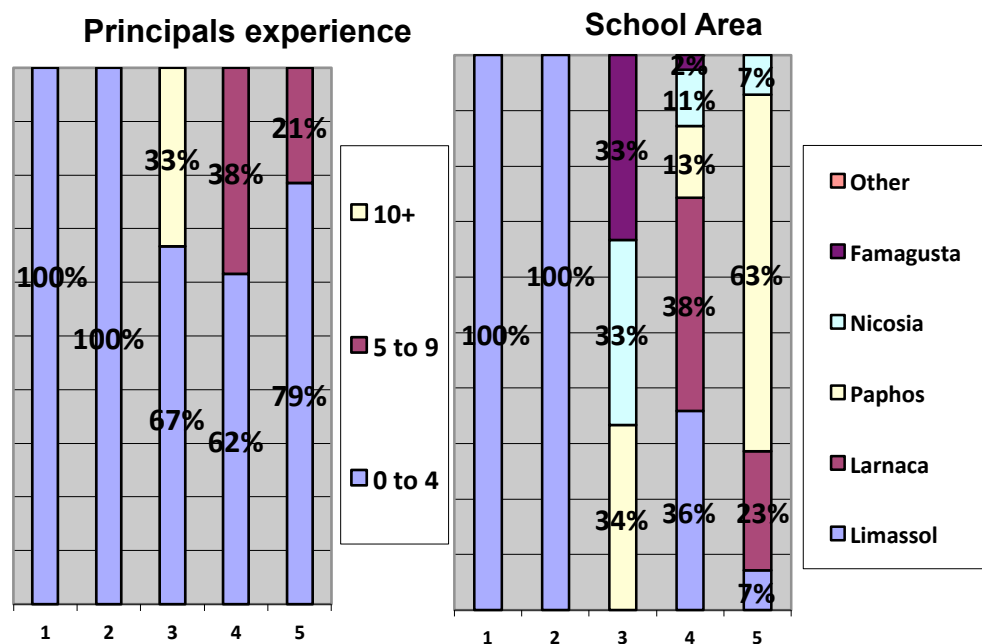
Figure 4.34.3 Principals experience

School Area

Figure 4.34.4 School Area

Overview

This chapter reports the findings from the survey of women principals in Cyprus primary schools. The data show that the most significant findings relate to family influences, stereotyping, and discrimination.

The findings indicated that family influences were significant in several ways. Many principals reported that their families supported their career aspirations and this was most pronounced where there was a family history of female principals. However, many women principals encountered challenges relating to the patriarchal family, which was perceived as a barrier for them. Subsequently, motherhood duties appeared to be a very important factor for women respondents in deciding whether to apply for a leadership position. Balancing professional and domestic workloads created role conflict for many of the respondents.

Stereotypical attitudes also influenced these principals. The perceived gender bias of the selection process sometimes made them passive and unmotivated to advance their career since they did not know when and whether they would be promoted. Some of these women accepted that men must lead schools due to the lack of female role models in leadership positions. The impact of gender stereotyping on the women was clearly illustrated in the societal belief that a good leader should not also have responsibilities as mothers.

These stereotypical attitudes often led to perceived discrimination. Most principals believed that discrimination constituted a barrier to their career progression. Many also experienced continuing discrimination after accessing principalship roles. The combination of school and domestic responsibilities meant that they were often under pressure to achieve their goals in order to prove their worth.

The next chapter presents the data from the interviews with 20 women principals in Cyprus primary schools. The themes for the interview questions were developed from the survey findings. The interview questions were designed specifically to seek more in depth information in respect of role models, the patriarchal family, inhibitors and facilitators, conflict between family and professional roles, as well as the underrepresentation of women school principals. Therefore, the topics of interest for the interview questions were carefully planned in order to directly address the research questions but also to enable the researcher to gain more information about the themes mentioned above.

One example showing how interview questions developed from the survey findings relates to female family members. When the researcher analyzed all the data from three survey questions relevant to female family members, other principals in the family, and their childhood female role models, it showed a necessity to analyze the lack of female role models in more depth. This led to the first interview question (Did

you have female role models in your family? If yes, how did they influence your career path?) around the female role models theme.

Another example of interview questions arising from the survey data relates to the theme of patriarchy, when the researcher combined three questionnaire questions to form the second interview question which was: How, if at all, did the patriarchal family model in Cyprus influence your decision to become a teacher and a school leader?. The survey findings showed that a majority (60%) of respondents experienced the patriarchal family model, notably among more mature principals, aged over 45. This led the researcher to conclude that an interview question on this theme was essential to provide more in-depth evidence on this issue. The answers to these questions provided the researcher with more information in relation to female role models in their family, and the patriarchal family model, as well as their influences on their career path. These data will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE – INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter the interview data will be presented. The chapter is divided into six parts, based on the six questions used to structure the interviews. The presentation includes direct quotes as well as discussion of the findings.

Interview Questions

To secure the participants' privacy, each interview respondent was given a unique identifier, from P1 (principal 1) to P20 (principal 20). These identifiers do not match the identifiers from the questionnaires (P1-64).

The interview questions addressed to all participants were:

1) Did you have female role models in your family? If yes how did they influence your career path?
2) How, if it all did the patriarchal family model in Cyprus influence your decision to become a teacher and a school leader?
3) What factors, if any, inhibited your career progression as a teacher and school leader?
4) What factors, if any facilitated your career progression as a teacher and school leader?
5) Do you experience conflict between your professional and family roles?
6) Why do you believe that women are underrepresented in school leadership positions in Cyprus?

The respondents are from different professional backgrounds, in terms of location, years of principalship experience, and age range. The respondents work in five different cities: Nicosia (7), Limassol (5), Larnaca (3), Paphos (3) and Famagusta (2). Most of the principals (11) are very experienced, in the 45-54 age range, with an average of more than thirty years of experience in education. A significant minority (8) are in the age range 35-44, with an average of more than fifteen years professional experience. One of the respondents was in the early stage of her career as a principal, in the 22-34 age range.

Female Role Models

The principals were asked if they have female role models in their family. The findings showed that those with female role models identified their mother, grandmother, aunts or mother-in-law. Eight of the respondents said that their female role model was their mother, four their grandmother, three their aunts and one their mother-in-law. Ten of them said that they had no female role models. Significantly P6 and P16 said that they had two role models, those of their mother and aunt.

Mothers as role models

As noted above, eight respondents said that their mother was their female role model. Many of the respondents said that their mothers were those who motivated them to become teachers and subsequently to apply for a headship position. The respondents' mothers motivated the participants in different ways and for different reasons.

P7 said that:

> My mother came from a wealthy family, but unfortunately my grandfather didn't allow her to be educated. Therefore, she raised me up, with a constant thirst for learning and educating myself. This was the biggest influence for my career path, as one of my life goals was to please her by becoming a teacher'.

Similarly, P8 said that her mother always wanted to become a teacher, and then a principal, but, because her family was poor, she did not have the chance to become one. 'Therefore, I wanted to fulfill her dreams and follow the career path she never had.

P13 says that: 'yes I had a female role model, that of my mother'. Her mother was one of the biggest influences on her career path, as she was 'a living example on how to combine family and professional life. These two sectors can be considered to be controversial nowadays, as family and professional life can lead to conflict'. P5 stated that 'my mother came from a rich and wealthy family. As she was a teacher, she motivated me to become a teacher as well'.

The identification of their mothers as role models was linked to society's admiration of them. P6 said that her mother was a teacher and the way people treated her and respected her were among the main reasons for

her to become a teacher. Linked to this theme, one respondent's father inspired her to become like her female role model - that of her mother. P5 said that her father wanted all his daughters to become teachers as he admired her mother, for the way the village community respected her. 'Those were the good days, when a woman was a teacher she was a role model for everyone. Even when a woman managed to finish school, she was considered to be an educated woman' (P5).

P19 did not consider herself to have a female role model, but her mother influenced her. She discussed the matriarchal family model, saying that her 'grandmothers and mother had the first word in family'. Therefore, 'growing up in this family model, I can easily assume that this was the main influence for me to become a teacher and then decide to apply for a principal's position'.

P11 shares that view and said that, during her childhood, she did not have a female role model, but when she had to take her decisions on which career path to follow, her mother was the one giving her the right instructions. 'I followed her guidance correctly and became a teacher and then a school principal'.

Other female relatives

A second category of role model was that of grandmothers, who seem to have played a significant role for four of the principals. These grandmothers influenced their way of thinking and their career trajectory. P1 explained that she had two female role models in her family, those of her grandmothers. 'Due to family difficulties, my two grandmothers were those who raised me up. Because of this, they influenced my way of thinking, perceptions as well as my inner strengths.' She added that her two grandmothers influenced her career path. Similarly, P11 admitted that, if it was not for her grandmother, who was a teacher as well, she would not have become a teacher.

P2 commented that 'the only female role model I can recall was that of my grandmother' who was an active woman, working alongside my grandfather. She influenced me a lot'. P19, a principal with two role models, referred to the matriarchal family model, where her 'grandmothers and mother had the first word in the family'.

Three of the women respondents said that their female role model was their aunt. P16 considered her aunts to be her female role models who influenced her career path. 'This is my 17th year in the educational field

and the main reason for me to become a teacher was that most of my aunts were teachers. In general I come from a teacher's family'. P3 said that her father's sister (aunt) was her female role model. Her father had only one sister but, because they were both raised in the same way, her aunt was a strong woman with lots of aspirations in life:

> Therefore, when I was young I was spending lots of time with her. She taught me how to perceive things in life, be responsible for my actions and showed me how to stand on my own feet in order to take the right decisions for me. For that reason, she was my mentor in life and therefore the main influence for me to become a teacher and later to apply for a principals' position.

P6 has two aunts who were strong role models during her life. 'My two aunts were teachers in different cities around Cyprus. My mother was a teacher in Nicosia, whereas my two aunts were teachers in a village'. She adds that:

> Since I was a child, I was fascinated with the different stories and approaches by different people… Being a teacher in a school located in a town, and being a teacher in a school located in a village, was very different, even though it was the same profession.

This was the motivation for her to become a teacher, and afterwards a principal. Only one of the women respondents said that one of her female role models was her mother-in-law. P1 said that 'my mother-in-law was in a principal's position and she motivated me to apply for a principal's position'.

No Female Role Models

As noted above, ten women principals stated that they did not have any female role models in their family. Kythreotis and Pashiardis's (1998a: 7) research on women principals in Cyprus also points to the absence of role models as a negative feature of their career development:

> Women principals all had varied, diverse and very strong experiences and took chances with their careers. They all made strong efforts to further their education in order to enhance their options for advancement in the educational system, as it seemed they did not have any extra support from other women principals in such positions.

Those ten women respondents experienced the patriarchal family model and that was the reason for not having a female role model. P11 said that 'the patriarchal model was a huge barrier for women to become what they wanted, apart from housewives and being responsible to raise their children'. P2 also acknowledged that, during her childhood years, she had no female role models. 'The reason for that was my mother being a housewife'.

P4 was raised in a rather patriarchal family and her father usually took the decisions. 'My mother was responsible for the household and raising of children'. She highlighted that role models did not influence her decision to become a teacher. 'Becoming a teacher was entirely my own decision, as one of my biggest aspirations in life was teaching'. A good motivation for her was that the Cypriot society wanted teachers to hold a good position in society and were considered to be the notables of the village. P9, P10 and P18 said they did not have any female role models, as they grew up in a patriarchal family model.

P12, said that, 'due to the patriarchal model, prevailing back in time, my decision in regards to the career path I was about to follow, was mainly influenced from the trend of those times. Everyone aspired to follow careers such as teachers or doctors'. Her father was the one who motivated her to follow this career path. This view was also expressed by P15, who said that she had no female role models and most of her decisions, included that of becoming a teacher, were mostly influenced by her father. 'Applying for a principal's position came after long years of experience in the educational field, as I wanted to prove to the society that women can break the glass ceiling'.

P17 also said that she had no female role models. Her decision to become a teacher was, based on her discussions with her father (patriarchal family model). 'I can say that my decision to aspire and apply for a leadership position was because of my 31 years of experience in the educational field'. 'Applying for a principal's position had nothing to do with the patriarchal family model'. P20 also considered that she did not have a female role model during her childhood years. She added that her decision on becoming a teacher was influenced by the patriarchal family model she was experiencing. 'There were lots of families those days, experiencing the patriarchal family model and there was a lack of female role models. A big number of women were responsible for the household and raising their children. Fathers were those taking the decisions. One of those decisions, influenced by my father, was to become a teacher. He always believed that women are made to become teachers'. However her decision to

apply for a principal's position but was entirely her own decision, after 27 years of experience in the educational field.

The discussion of the lack of female role models links to the influence of the patriarchal family model, the focus of the next section.

The Patriarchal Family

The researcher collected data about whether the patriarchal family model influenced participants' decisions to become teachers and school principals. The researcher's data analysis identified four themes; patriarchal family, matriarchal family, both patriarchal and matriarchal, and neither patriarchal nor matriarchal. Seven women principals experienced the patriarchal family model, five experienced the matriarchal family model, four mentioned both patriarchal and matriarchal family models and four indicated that their family was neither patriarchal nor matriarchal.

Patriarchal family model

As noted above, seven women respondents experienced the patriarchal family model. The data show that their decision to become teachers, and then to apply for a principal's position, was strongly influenced by the patriarchal family model. P3 indicated that the patriarchal family model was a big influence on her:

> On the one hand, my aunt was motivating me to become a teacher and, on the other hand, my father wanted me to become a housewife and raise the children. At the end of the day I combined both, which wasn't the easiest thing for me to do, as my father was not fully convinced that I would be able to become a teacher and raise a family at the same time.

In respect of her principalship career, she said that the patriarchal model had nothing to do with it and it was a decision taken after many years of experience in the educational field. 'Even though it was hard for me to combine both professional and domestic careers, I made it and I am well satisfied with myself'. P17 also considered the patriarchal family as an influence on her decision to become a teacher. 'When I was young, most of the Cypriot families adopted the patriarchal family model and therefore fathers had the first word on everything. My family was a patriarchal family model as well'. She added that 'he was the one

deciding everything'. Even though she is in the 45-54 age group, she suggested that, even today, there are families who still adopt this family model.

P4 is also a very experienced principal, in the 45-54 age range, and from the biggest town in Cyprus, Nicosia, which is usually not expected to produce stereotypes of the patriarchal family model. However, she was brought up in Nicosia in a patriarchal family model, which influenced her decision to become a teacher and then a school principal that can admit that the 'patriarchal family model influenced me, if not fully, largely'. Even though her father was responsible for the decisions taken at home, he wanted his children to be educated. 'I was raised up, having another four older siblings, brothers, and therefore it was my aspiration to educate myself and become a teacher. Being a teacher those days was a profession that everyone showed respect to'.

P4 said that one of the main reasons she wanted to become a teacher was that this was the only profession her father could accept, as it had to do with educating children and looked like a family model to her. As P6 explained, and supporting P4's view, her family was also patriarchal and she had experienced this family model for a long time. She admitted that this was the main reason she had come into a conflict with her father, as he did not let her become a teacher and he was trying to convince her to be responsible for the household. Her mother and aunts were those who 'convinced my father to allow me to become a teacher'. Her decision to apply for a principal's position was taken after many years of experience in the educational field.

Another woman principal who was influenced by the patriarchal family model was P9. She was raised in a single parent family, that of her father. He motivated her to study and help the family financially. 'Even though I was raised inside the patriarchal family, I had to follow the teacher's career path, which was the most accessible profession those days'. Her decision to become a school principal was influenced by her experience as a teacher.

P11 offered a different view. 'My father wanted me to become a teacher so as to become like my grandmother. He always admired her for being a teacher and he wanted me to follow this pathway as well'. The reason for her to apply for a principal's position, however, was her husband's and children's motivation. 'They have always wanted me to become a successful school principal'.

P17 was also mainly influenced from this family model. Her father wanted her to become a teacher. However, applying for a principal's position was her own decision and not based on the patriarchal family model. 'Being in the educational field for more than 32 years was the main reason for me to apply for a principal's position'.

This family model also influenced P20. 'At that time, someone who was a teacher was a role model for everyone. If s/he was a teacher in a village, everyone respected that teacher'. Her decision to become a teacher was taken after long motivational talks from her father. 'He was my biggest influence in becoming a teacher'. When asked whether she became a principal because of her father, she admitted that her decision to become a principal was taken after twenty seven years of experience in the educational field. She has never regretted that her father pushed her to become a teacher. 'If I was given a second chance to decide what I wanted to study, I would choose the profession of a teacher, all over again'.

Matriarchal family model

There were five women principals, who said that they have experienced the matriarchal, rather than the patriarchal, family model. P1 stated that 'I cannot really say that I have experienced the patriarchal family, as I was raised by my two grandmothers. I believe that my family was rather matriarchal, as my two grandmothers were those who constantly took the decisions at home'. P1 is in the 45-54 age range and comes from Paphos, which is one of the smallest and most traditional towns in Cyprus. She said that most women from her generation were meant to be teachers and, if they were men, meant to be priests or doctors. 'I don't know if this is because I came from a rural area in Paphos, but views and beliefs were different there, from a big city'.

P2 was another woman principal who stated that, during her childhood years, she experienced the matriarchal family model. 'My mother was the one taking all the decisions at home, but I can really say that my family was the main influence for me to decide to become a teacher'. P2 expressed the view that, in those days, if someone was a teacher s/he was a role model for everyone. 'Being a teacher wasn't a profession of privileges or routine. Those were the good days, when most of the teachers were teachers because they loved to teach children and not because of the privileges of becoming a teacher'. That was the main reason for her to become a teacher. P2 said that her decision to apply for a leadership position was influenced by her many

years of experience in the educational field and her professional development. She is an experienced principal, in the age-range 45-54 and comes, from Famagusta, a very rural area of Cyprus.

P7 also indicated that the matriarchal family model influenced her. 'My mother had a positive attitude towards learning and therefore she pushed me to become a teacher. She was always saying to me that I have to be confident, as sometimes the Cypriot society is hard to handle'. From a young age she has experienced societal stereotypes and her mother did not want her to have to deal with all these issues. Her mother stressed that learning and knowledge are two of the most priceless values in life. 'My decision to apply for a leadership position wasn't influenced from my mother's views, but instead thanks to the many years of experience I had in the educational field'. P7 is in the 35-44 age range. P13 also said that her family was rather matriarchal as her grandmothers were those who had the first say at home. This model seemed to influence her career choice, as those 'were the good days to become a teacher'. 'People considered teachers to be the society's role models'. Her decision to be promoted into leadership positions was 'influenced from my long career in the educational field and my passion for my job'. She recalled that this influence came from her family as they gave her the motivation to aspire to leadership positions, but not the final word.

P19 also indicated that she experienced the matriarchal family model. Her mother was her role model and influenced her career decision. 'My mother was always the strong woman of the village and there were many people admiring her inner strengths. Therefore I wanted to become like her, that's why I've chosen to become a teacher'. P19, similarly to P7, was rather influenced by her mother's character, but this was not the main reason for applying for a leadership position, which was rather a consequence of her many years of experience in the educational field, as well as confidence that she was able to lead a school on her own.

Both patriarchal and matriarchal family

The interview data show that there were four women principals who, at some point, experienced both patriarchal and matriarchal family models. P5 illustrates that view:

> Even though those were the days when most of the families were patriarchal, my family was different. It might be a patriarchal family but, because my mother was educated, she was

responsible for other things besides raising the children. She had a good say at home as well as my father. Becoming a teacher was fully my own decision, even though my parents showed me this career pathway.

P5 added that her parents were supportive, as they wanted her to chase her dreams. After twenty years of experience in the educational field, her husband and children pushed her to apply for a leadership position. During her childhood years, and after she got married, both families motivated her to make those decisions. 'They partially influenced my career path, not totally decided which career path to follow'. Similarly P8 said that, even though she experienced the patriarchal family model, this was not a big influence on her career. P8 linked her decision to become a teacher to her mother. As her mother was her female role model, and she wanted to become a teacher because of her, that was the main reason for her to become a teacher. 'She was the main influence for me since I was a child and therefore I decided to follow that pathway. My family was both a patriarchal and matriarchal family, but, because my mother always wanted to become a teacher, and she couldn't, I decided to become one'.

P10's view was that, even though she had experienced both family models, these did not influence her decision to become a teacher. Despite not having any female role models, she always aspired to become a teacher, since she was a child. Her decision to apply for a principal's position was taken after many years of experience and confidence in the educational field.

P12 shared the same view that, even though she experienced both family models, they did not influence her decision to become a teacher or a school principal:

> When I was a child, most families were adopting the patriarchal family model. My parents were both responsible for taking decisions at home. I can say with certainty that, even though my father was trying to have the leading role at home, my decision on becoming a teacher didn't have anything to do with it. As I said above, my decision was fully taken from the trends of the time. Everyone wanted to become teachers or doctors in those days.

P12 offered the same view as some other respondents, that her decision to apply for a principal's position was after many years of experience in the educational field.

<u>Neither patriarchal nor matriarchal</u>

There were four respondents who said that their decision to become a teacher, and then a school leader, was influenced by neither the patriarchal nor the matriarchal family model. Their career decisions were a consequence of their own choices.

P14 explained that, even though she experienced the patriarchal family model, as many Cypriot families did in those years, it did not really influence her career decisions. 'My decision to become a teacher was influenced from the way I was thinking and perceiving things. Maybe because I liked teaching, and I admired my teacher in primary school, this would be the main motivation for me to become a teacher'. Her decision to apply for a principal's position was influenced by her experience in the educational field, as well as her desire to become a leader. P14 added that her opinion on the patriarchal family model is that older generations' decisions were influenced more. 'The way they were living was different from nowadays and I believe that, as years are going by, things change and stereotypes started to be eliminated.' This respondent is in the age range of 45-54 and comes from Nicosia.

Similarly, P15 stated that the 'patriarchal family model can easily influence a woman's decision, even if it's not coming from her own family. It's how people treat this family model and this is why I didn't let the patriarchal family model influence my career decisions'. P16 stated that even though she experienced the patriarchal family model, it didn't really influence her on which career pathway to follow. 'My mother and aunts were teachers in primary education. As they had a strong and confident character, I was always aspiring to be like them. Therefore I have chosen to become a teacher'. P18's motivation for applying for a principal's position was not influenced by the patriarchal or matriarchal family model, but by other colleagues and training seminars offered by the Ministry of Education. 'My school was mostly surrounded by women who I was very lucky to work with. We were mentoring each other and this made me more confident in order to apply for leadership positions'.

P18 said that her decision to become a school principal came after twenty years of experience in the educational field, as well as her passion for her profession. 'I have always wanted to make some changes in our educational system'.

Factors Facilitating Career Progression

The researcher aimed to collect data on which factors facilitated the respondents' career progression as a teacher and a school leader. The main factors arising from the findings were family and friends, seminars, previous educational experience, Cypriot culture and stereotypes, passion for their work, and response to discrimination.

<u>Family and friends</u>

The most frequently mentioned facilitator was that of family and friends. Almost all (17) women principals said that their family and friends were facilitating factors towards their career progression. Fourteen women principals named family as an influence. P16 strongly believes that a woman has to receive support from her family in order to be able to cope with the issues arising at work. Her family was one of the facilitating factors, which helped her during her career progression. 'Nowadays, Cypriot society doesn't seem to facilitate a woman who wants to apply for a leadership position. Especially if the candidate is sensitive and takes everything seriously, she won't be able to cope with the conflicts and issues arising in her work environment'. P2 expressed the same view as she said that 'the truth is that many are the reasons that can easily lead a teacher to alternate her course, or can motivate her to carry on, on what she is doing, until she is successful. Based on my own experiences, I can easily say that one of the factors facilitated my career progression, was my family'. She added that family plays a significant, if not a decisive, role on how people perceive different situations or even how people act, and treat these situations.

P4 explained how her family facilitated her career progression:

> My family played a significant role in my career progression as they were supporting me since I was a teacher. My family gave me the opportunity to become a teacher … When I had my own family, the children made me realize that I wanted to apply for a leadership position. It was hard for me, having my children attending the same school where I was a principal. Sometimes I caught myself behaving towards them as a strict principal and that was the point when I had to balance family and professional life.

P19 also said that one of the facilitating factors towards her career progression was her family. 'They supported me from the beginning of my career until now'. P12 said that one of the three facilitators was her

family, being there to support her during her career accession. P13 added that 'my family was one of the facilitating factors, as they were supporting me and motivating me when needed'. 'Family is very important for us women who lead schools, as we always have to have someone at home to speak to whenever we feel overwhelmed from work'.

P20, P10, P17, P18 and P5 all commented that their families were always there to support them. 'During my career, several times I had to make a hard decision, leading to good or bad consequences, and my family was there to support me' (P5).

P9 said that 'my family was the biggest facilitator factor for me. Without them I wouldn't be able to cope with the issues arising on a daily basis at school'. P11 acknowledged that one of the factors that facilitated my progress was 'my need to do something different for me and my father who motivated me to become a teacher and then to apply for a principal's position'. P14, leading a school in Nicosia, said that 'I can easily recall my family to be one of the biggest supporters during my career progression since I was a teacher. Besides that, they were my mentors, as it is well known that the educational system in Cyprus does not really provide mentoring'.

Three principals mentioned that their friends facilitated their career progression. P4 said that her friends were there for her, supporting her in every career step. 'They were teachers or principals, so usually we exchanged ideas on how to lead our schools, ideas on strategies and how to respond to several issues arising on a daily basis. We used to mentor each other for a long time, as mentoring is something that is lacking in the Cypriot educational system'. P6 and P7 also stated that their friends were always there to support them during their career path, and even a phone call conversation would make things easier. P6 mentioned that her friends helped with her children's schooling. 'Picking them up from school was an issue I had to deal with. My friends were there for me, to collect my children from school, when things were getting busier at work'.

Seminars

Twelve women respondents stated that seminars worked as a facilitator towards their career progression. P16, leading a school in Paphos, commented that the training seminars specially organized for new principals were valuable. 'They provide you with the guidelines on how to handle issues arising on a daily basis, familiarize you with new

teaching methods and on how to network with other principals'. P19, leading a school in Famagusta, also acknowledged that the training seminars she attended during her career, organized either from the Ministry of Education, or by other educational bodies in Cyprus, worked as a facilitator towards her career progression.

P13, from Larnaca, also acknowledged that training seminars were a facilitator. 'Those seminars are offered for new school principals to guide them through the profession. They show you how to adopt your own leadership style, how to react in certain situations, how to lead the school and you can even discuss problems arising from your daily routine at school'. Similarly, P20 stated that the training seminars, especially those organized by the Ministry of Education in Cyprus, were vital for her career progress, as she enjoyed good networking with other women principals, who allowed her to shadow them for a few days.

P5 also stated that training seminars were vital for her career progression. 'They organize these seminars in order to give the principals the opportunity to network with other principals, to exchange ideas and strategies, and principals can take advantage of the knowledge and apply it for their school needs'. P10 also mentioned that one of the facilitators was the training seminars, as for a reason the people were usually other women principals who made her feel more confident.

P17, from Limassol said that the training seminars she attended during her career, organized for new principals, were very helpful on several matters linked to leadership'. P17 added that these seminars are organized in a way to provide new principals with the confidence they needed. 'They give you the right guidelines on how to lead a school. P18 agreed with P17 and suggested that training seminars are vital, especially for newly qualified principals, who do not feel confident and ready to 'give up' on their personal life, by giving extra time to their professional life. They state that it is necessary to be able to balance both.

P6 added that training seminars were one of several facilitators, which played a significant role during her career. 'The training seminars were vital for me as, before I applied for this position, I didn't have the confidence needed for it'. P7 expressed a similar view stating that 'I can consider training seminars to be the one of the main facilitators for my career progression, as they provided me with the right knowledge. Those seminars were vital as they supplied me with a good network, new experiences, courage and inner strengths-values that women

principals usually don't have when they reach a principal's position'. P8 also mentioned that training seminars were valuable for her, especially when she was a newly qualified principal, a view supported by P11. Both believed that women principals need to attend more of these seminars.

Previous educational experience

There were six women principals who stated that their previous educational experience was one of the facilitating factors towards their career accession.

P18 stated that previous experience in the educational field was one of the factors that facilitated her career progress. P8 and P11 also agreed that one of the facilitating factors for them was their previous educational experience. P1 said that, 'when I decided to apply for a principal's position, I wasn't experienced at all. For that reason, I was more motivated and determined to enrich my knowledge and experience in the field'. Similarly, P19 stated that 'a significant facilitator was the previous experience I had in the educational field. I strongly support the statute that, in order for a teacher to apply for a principal's position, they must have fifteen years of experience in education. This is what gives the right to the teacher to go through every single stage of the hierarchy until s/he reaches the top of it. Then you can consider yourself experienced'.

The previous experience in the educational field can also be linked to good relationships with colleagues and school staff. This view was supported by P20, who said that her previous experience in the educational field influenced her career progression. 'Something else that I consider to be important is the previous experience in the educational field, which allows you to perceive things from a different perspective. After all, practice makes perfect!'

Cypriot culture and stereotypes

Three respondents said that Cypriot culture and stereotypes worked as a facilitator towards their career progression. P3, a principal from Paphos said that one of the facilitating factors was the first school she was working at as a principal, which was linked to the Cypriot culture, as it was a small school in a rural society. 'It was a nice school, in a small village in Paphos and the situation there was controllable. I didn't find it so difficult to cope with, as those were the first steps of my career as a school principal'. She explained that the children and staff there

were friendly and kind, and respected everyone, especially their teachers. She added that 'rural societies haven't changed so much. They kept their traditions and, above all, they respect everyone'. P2, a principal from Famagusta, commented that, 'when asked in the questionnaire about facilitators, I mentioned that Cypriot culture was one of those. I can say that Cypriot culture can easily be a facilitator and an inhibitor at the same time for a teacher's career progression. It can be linked with societal stereotypes. In my own career I found this factor to work as a facilitator for me, as I wanted to prove to everyone that gender doesn't play any significant role when it comes to accession to leadership positions. Even though women tend not to be accepted as 'good' enough to lead schools'.

P12, from Larnaca, acknowledged that Cypriot culture was one of the facilitators, which played a significant role in her career progression. 'It really depends on each person how s/he will consider these factors as facilitators or inhibitors. I considered this factor as a facilitator as I received the support needed to succeed at the end of the day. Other colleagues of mine did not. I was lucky enough I did'.

Passion for work

Another facilitating factor was that of passion for their work, mentioned by three women respondents. P5 said that 'I truly believe that what it takes for someone to be successful is the passion about what she is doing. If you don't love what you are doing, you will never have the motivation to wake up every morning and get to school'. She added, 'above all was my passion for my work'. P15 expressed a similar view. 'I believe that passion for what you are doing is one of the most significant supporting facilitator factors for a school principal to ask for', a comment also endorsed by P10. P10 mentioned that 'I truly believe that people, sometimes, are born to become teachers. Teaching is in their genes. We all have that nurturing side. All it takes is to combine it with some good teaching skills'.

Factors Inhibiting Career Progression

The researcher aimed to collect data on which factors inhibited the respondents' career progression as a teacher and a school leader. The main factors identified by the participants were the following: stereotypes, family, lack of training seminars, previous experience, domestic issues, discrimination, negative colleagues, career breaks, and lack of role models.

<u>Stereotypes</u>

Stereotypes were the most frequently named inhibitors, mentioned by nine principals. P19 stated that there are 'stereotypes based on the patriarchal family model, especially after the Turkish invasion on 1974. Our society duplicates these stereotypes and does not leave women to access leading positions easily, without facing any barriers'. Similarly, P13 commented that 'a few of the factors that played a negative role in my development were the stereotypes of the Cypriot society. This is happening as we live in a small society where stereotypical views and beliefs perpetuate'.

P5 said that stereotypes, linked to the Cypriot society and culture, were one of several factors working as inhibitors. 'Our society is based on culture and, especially in the rural areas, stereotypes are duplicated, which most of the time are against women. If that woman candidate is not confident enough, those stereotypes can be harmful towards her career'. She added that, during her own career, there were many occasions where she received negative feedback from parents on being a woman school principal. 'Eventually after conversations, we resolved these issues. What worries me is the fact that I lead a school in one of the biggest towns in Cyprus, where stereotypes should be eliminated by now'. P10 expressed a similar view but also mentioned that 'it depends on your character on how to perceive and deal with these stereotypical attitudes'.

P4 linked society's stereotypes to the patriarchal family. 'Sometimes the Cypriot culture duplicates stereotypes against women and I believe that this is happening due to the patriarchal model, which still exists'. P18 also experienced stereotypes, which acted as an inhibitor to her. 'I am sensitive and I let things get to me'.

P14 acknowledged the presence of stereotypes but these were not major inhibitors for her. 'I am pretty sure that I haven't experienced any inhibiting factors towards my career progress. Even though it is more difficult for us women to access these positions because of gender stereotypes, I consider myself to be lucky leading a school in a big town. I am thankful because I was offered tremendous support from my family, which is vital for the confidence of a woman principal'.

P6 commented that 'the factors which inhibited my career progression were more than those facilitating my career progress. The main reason for me was the continuous judgment against me, because I was a woman principal. I know from other colleagues that they experience the

same. Usually, this judgment comes from either parents or the teaching staff. The principal has to be always prepared to fight against these views and not let the negative judgments influence her position'. P7 expressed a similar view that stereotypes can work negatively towards a principal's career. 'Because families were patriarchal, nowadays these stereotypes are not fully eliminated. That is why people might still act based on that'. P6's, and P7's, views about the patriarchal family link to the next inhibitor, that of family.

Family

Five respondents mentioned family as an inhibitor towards their career progression. P19 linked this issue to the patriarchal family and said that this was one of the factors, which inhibited her career progress, and that most of the women of her age experienced this family model.

Two respondents said that they did not receive any support from their family and they consider that to be an inhibitor. P20 stated that 'the family factor can work as an inhibitor in time zero for a woman's career. If they do not support your decisions, it is definitely an inhibitor towards your career progression'. Similarly, P11 commented that lack of support from her family was one of the inhibitors during her career path, as she lacked belief in her ability to become a leader.

Lack of training seminars

Lack of training seminars was another important inhibitor mentioned by three respondents. P20 commented that:

> In order for a woman to be able to lead a school … she must to be able to find the right guidelines for several issues arising at school. Absence of those seminars might possibly mean absence of the right guidance on that.

P11 talked about the lack of meaningful seminars which 'I consider valuable for a woman's career progress and how she leads a school'. P12 linked the lack of training seminars to the lack of role models, as seminars could be a very good and vital source for good networking.

Previous experience

Two respondents stated that their previous educational experience inhibited their career progress. P2 stated that 'in the earliest stages of my career, I found many difficulties on how to respond to several issues but thankfully I have attended training seminars which helped to build

my confidence and how to react to several issues in my work'. Similarly, P11 said that lack of experience and confidence could be considered as negative factors. 'Career breaks can ''harm'' your professional development which automatically links to previous experience'.

Domestic issues

Two of the respondents commented on this issue. P17 talked about balancing family and professional life. She said that people need to decide how to balance professional and domestic life. 'It depends on each person really, to what extent she will let family and professional life come into conflict'. P15 stated that an inhibitor for her was being a mother. 'Sometimes, being a mother can lead to several conflicts between and professional and family life'.

Discrimination

Two women respondents said that discrimination was one of the factors that inhibited their career progression. P1 stated that one of the main inhibitors faced during her career progression was gender discrimination. 'Therefore I decided to move against that view, but sometimes due to fact that I come from a rural area, I faced several negative attitudes towards me. Words like ''you are a woman, you don't know what you are doing'', or ''you are a woman you cannot be a school leader and that is a man's position'', were words used against me. All these attitudes may work as an inhibitor on the principal's confidence on how you perceive things'. Similarly, P2 said that 'during my career, there were many times due to discrimination issues I had to face different situations. As I have replied in the questionnaire, sexism against women is a severe issue that many women face in different societies. It's up to everyone on how to face each situation arising from discrimination issues'.

Negative colleagues

Two respondents commented that the work environment could be damaging for career progression. P10 stated that 'If inside your work environment you have colleagues you cannot really cope with, then this factor could be fatal'. 'In my case, other women colleagues were an inhibitor for me. Sometimes I felt that their actions were pure jealousy against me'. Similarly, P16 from Paphos talked about the school staff with whom she could not work. However she said that she was able to overcome such problems. 'It's how you will perceive and treat situations. It's one thing facing barriers and it's another being able to treat them right'.

<u>Career breaks</u>

P13 shows how the required fifteen years of experience, to apply for a leadership position, can be an inhibitor for women who need to take career breaks.

> After these fifteen years of experience, that candidate has to apply for it and s/he has to be inspected to see if s/he is suitable for that role. On my own point of view, I believe that men may be more favoured when it comes to apply for it, as women may apply for maternity leave, or days off, especially if they have young children at home. Therefore they miss time from their working experience, which might be an inhibitor towards their progression.

<u>Lack of role models</u>

The lack of role models can be considered as an inhibitor towards women career progress. P12 said that:

> The only factors that I can consider as inhibitors were the lack of meaningful training seminars and women role models in leading positions. It's a hard decision for a woman to aspire to those positions, if she cannot take examples from other women in similar positions. Unfortunately, our educational system is short on these women role models.

P2, P4, P10 and P12 also mentioned that they did not have any female role models, as their mothers were housewives. This played a significant role in their career path decisions, as they had no female role models to emulate. P4 also said that she was very influenced by this lack of role models and she always believed that women are meant to stay at home and be responsible for child care.

Three principals (P6, P14 and P15) linked the absence of role models to discriminatory behaviour against women. P6 said that:

> One of the barriers I have actually faced during my career were the discriminatory comments against women principals. Therefore I never really believed that I had the inner strength or any female role models to take examples from in order to be promoted as a school principal, as I knew what was coming.

As P17, P18 and P20 acknowledge, the presence of female role models can help to address most of the barriers, whereas the absence of female role models in such positions can aggravate them. 'Women have to break the glass ceiling by themselves in order to make other women, even younger women, believe in themselves' (P17).

Conflict between Professional and Family Roles

The researcher collected data on the possible conflict between participants' professional and family roles. The main factors arising from the findings were: role overlap, balancing these roles, training seminars, networks and workload.

<u>Role overlap</u>

Many of the women respondents (nine) acknowledged that there is an overlap between their professional and family roles. Data from the interviews show, as also evident from the surveys, that most of the women principals acknowledge that there is sometimes an overlap between professional and personal life.

P1 explained how she balances her professional and family roles:

> It is really important if a woman principal is a mother or not. Someone could easily support that a mother always knows how to deal with situations. I, on the other hand, say that if that person doesn't know how to balance both professional and family life, she will carry her work issues at home, or the opposite.

She admitted that she came across this issue several times, but now she tries not to allow professional issues to invade her personal life. 'This issue can be overcome at the end of the day and it really depends on how experienced is that person'.

P2 leads a school in Famagusta and she said that 'being a mother of two children, I caught myself being really strict with them. I was using my leadership style even when I was at home with them'. She added that sometimes it's too hard to leave your professional life out of your personal life. 'I caught myself acting motherly and caring at school, especially when the children are the same age as mine'.

P14 said that:

Most women principals holding a leadership position, and being mothers at the same time, inevitably causes conflicts between their professional and family roles. There were many times that I caught myself leading the school with sensitivity and being caring with everyone. At the same time I was acting bossy and being strict at home. I met other women principals who learned how to balance professional and family roles, became really bossy and domineering at school just to make sure they will not make the same mistakes again, or to prove to themselves and society that they act in the same way society expects them to do.

P19, a principal from Famagusta, said that 'many were the times when I caught myself thinking whether a promotion to a principal's position could affect my tenderness as a mother'. Women being mothers and principals at the same time might act more caring than the position allows them to be. 'When they go home they act using their leadership style and being bossy with their own children. Sometimes, they act more bossy, and adopt several leadership styles just to prove to society that they are capable of holding that position. This is the time when they want to hold a shield against gender stereotypes'. P12 leads a school in Larnaca and acknowledges that 'at the very first stages of my working career there were a few times when I caught myself carrying my leadership style at home and the opposite. Acting out of sensitivity and being more caring at school. This gave me second thoughts whether I made the right decision to move on a leadership position or not'. 'Sometimes I feel like I am failing in both areas' (P12).

P4 was another respondent who admitted that she had experienced role overlap. 'I am already in my thirtieth year of experience in the educational field. Since the early stages of my career, there were many times that I caught myself involving my professional life with my family role and the opposite'. P4 also mentioned that, 'I could not stop working even when going home after work'. She realized that she was dealing with home issues strictly, adopting her leadership style instead and this is what made her think twice about applying for a leadership position. Similarly, P7 said that 'there were a few times when I caught myself dealing with inner thoughts, about being a principal and a mother at the same time. I was wondering what I was doing wrong, since my husband was sometimes complaining that I carry my leadership profile at home. At the very first stages of my career, I didn't know how to handle my professional and family role at the same time. Then I realized that was the lack of previous experience on how to deal with these issues'. She

strongly believes that this is happening with most of the female school principals.

<u>Balancing these roles</u>

There were eight female respondents who stated that they have managed to balance both professional and family roles. P3 has thirty years of educational experience. She worked as a teacher for twenty years and as a principal for the past ten years. 'In the early years of my career, I came across several conflict situations, between my professional and personal life. After so many years of experience I have now realized that these two fields are two separate things'. She argued that, if a young mother holds the principal's position, it's very difficult to balance both professional and personal lives'. P16 offered a similar view, stating that newly qualified principals need to attend more seminars on how to balance these roles.

P11 explained how she balanced these roles:

> Since I was a child, my parents taught me how to balance several issues at the same time, separate different sectors and how not to confuse several running issues at the same time. Few were the times I had to ''steal'' time from my family life to balance things at work and the opposite. Noteworthy to mention, is the fact that sometimes I caught myself thinking that my role as a mother could influence my role as a school principal, especially my way of thinking.

Several principals linked their experiences to balancing their professional and personal role. P13 added that:

> Motherhood duties can work as an inhibitor for a woman's career progress. What will give you the right guidelines is previous experience in the field and adopting the correct leadership style. The main issue is to be strong enough and eventually balance career and personal life.

P20 stated that there were many times when she caught herself thinking negatively on how to balance personal and professional life.

> I was even thinking whether being a school principal could damage my role as a mother, as I was carrying my leadership style at home, even when talking to my children. Speaking out of experience, this is something which lots of female teachers are

considering before applying for a leadership position and even when they access that role (P20).

P17 claimed that 'most of the women, when they have a motherhood role, without realizing it might carry their leadership style at home and the opposite'. The key to success is to learn how to balance both, 'in order to be good at both at the same time' (P17). 'A woman principal, being a mother at the same time, can attend training seminars if she is not experienced enough to balance both.' 'This is how I managed to bring balance between the two sectors'.

P5 commented that there were many times when:

> I caught myself thinking whether my accession to a leadership position could possibly influence my role as a mother. I believed that happened at the very first stage of my career as a school principal, I used to use my leadership style at home, and my motherly style at work.

Sometimes she found herself acting like a principal at home with her own children, 'being bossy and strict and wanting everything to take place at the right times, and I am not the only one'. At school she was acting in a more caring way and adopting a more sensitive profile. After attending several training seminars based on leadership styles and teaching personas, she learned how to balance professional and family roles. P5 and P18 commented that they have never experienced this kind of conflict between their professional and family role, as they are not mothers yet. P18 mentioned that the challenging part of balancing these two roles is what keeps her back from having children.

Training seminars

Three women respondents commented that training seminars could be valuable in learning how to balance professional and family life. P12 said that training seminars are offered for school principals, aiming to guide them through these role conflicts. 'They supply the principal with the teaching persona and leadership style s/he has to adopt in order to provide him/herself with calmness and coordination for their work role'. P17 and P5 mentioned that the teaching persona and leadership profile are two very important things to maintain balance between professional and family life. 'This is the key to success if you ask my personal view. A woman has to work hard in order to get things balanced and not influence or compare her family role to her professional role' (P17).

Two women principals mentioned the significance of networks. P8 and P9 stated that, due to their good networks with other principals, they knew how to deal with these situations, even before they access this position.

P6 was the one respondent who referred to workload. Sometimes the workload, the huge responsibilities, and especially when you have leadership duties, do influence your family duties and responsibilities. I strongly believe that, if a woman does not have her own children, she acts differently from someone who is a mother at the same time. This is how conflict between the two sectors starts'.

Under-representation of Women in School Leadership Roles in Cyprus

The researcher collected data on the reasons for the under-representation of women in primary school leadership roles in Cyprus. The main factors arising from the findings were the following: lack of role models, stereotypes, patriarchal family, balancing professional and family life, and career breaks.

Lack of role models

More than half of the respondents (12) referred to the lack of role models as a reason for women to be underrepresented in leadership positions. P1 said that 'women do not seem to be willing to apply for leadership positions, as in Cyprus we lack female role models in leadership positions. I consider this to be unfair as nowadays we speak about gender equality'. She added that more female role models would give women principals self realization, more opportunities to grow and more goals to achieve. P19 acknowledged that 'this is happening because, over time, women didn't have any female role models in leadership positions'. This is supported by P5 and P13, and by P12, who leads a school in Larnaca. She said that 'women nowadays haven't got the female role models needed for aspiration to leadership positions'. P10 added that under-representation of women 'might be happening because of a lack of female role models in principals' positions. There is always something there for women to overcome in order to get to the top'.

P17, who leads a school in Limassol, said that 'when it comes to leadership positions, usually women are underrepresented. It might be because of the lack of female role models in that field'. P6, a younger principal the 35-44 age range stated that:

> For some reason, women are usually underrepresented as they are not usually promoted into leadership positions due to lack of female role models in leadership positions. Did someone ever consider the fact that, even though female teachers are more than male teachers in the educational field, as we move on to leadership positions, women are becoming fewer than men? This is a good question for everyone to consider, that this might be linked to any barriers that women may be facing during their accession to leadership positions.

P11, a younger principal (35-44 age range), said that women could now easily apply for and access, leadership positions.

> Stereotypes eventually started to be eliminated but it always depends on the school area. I strongly believe that, if there were more female role models in leadership positions, everything would be much easier for women to aspire to these positions.

'As one of my colleagues said, ''you cannot be what you cannot see!'''. She believed that women need the right models, not just standard role models. P11 acknowledged that, in all fields, not only in education, you can come across women who don't really want to make this 'bigger step' and access leadership positions. 'In general, lack of female role models makes things more difficult for a woman to aspire to leadership positions' (P14). 'Sometimes we need someone to show us the right pathway in order to do it' (P14).

Stereotypes

More than half of the respondents (11) acknowledged that one of the reasons they believe that women are underrepresented in principalship roles, is stereotypes. P1, from Paphos, said that 'this is happening because of the small society we live in, which reproduces gender stereotypes. It's not only in the educational field that this is happening, but in many other fields'. P3 also acknowledged that this is happening because of the gender stereotypes that exist in the Cypriot society and culture. 'Unfortunately, a lot of Cypriot people haven't learned how to respect women and recognize that they have the same abilities as men.

I realize that this is happening to other countries as well, but it is always more alive in smaller societies'. This view was endorsed by P16.

P19 said that these stereotypes could be happening because of the patriarchal family models. P12 commented that this might be happening because of the stereotypes which are still alive in Cypriot society, linked to the Cypriot culture responsible for reproducing the patriarchal family model'. She added that another reason for this happening might be the society's view that a woman cannot really take over a principal's position, due to lack of confidence and determination, a view also mentioned by P13.

P5, from Limassol, answered that 'most of the time, women are underestimated and are not promoted so easily to leadership positions for many reasons'. She added that, besides the stereotypes which are still alive in the Cypriot society against the female gender, a considerable factor can be the women teachers, who do not really want to access leadership positions, due to stereotypes'. P17 supported that view, saying that 'it might be the views and stereotypes that women do not really want to access a leadership position'. P18, in the 35-44 age range, expressed similar views. She believed that under-representation might be because of the stereotypes and views linked to the patriarchal family model, which is still alive in Cypriot society.

Another young principal, P7 (35-44 age range), said that 'I believe that women in Cyprus, and around the world, might be under-represented and it is hard for them to access leadership positions. In general, I believe that this might be happening in Cyprus for two reasons. Either because they haven't got any female role models to aspire to or due to the views or gender stereotypes that are still alive in the Cypriot society'. P8, who is a mature woman principal, expressed the same view as P7, commenting that it's time for women to have an 'easy' career pathway. The more women you see at the top, the more you will believe in yourself.

Patriarchal family

Eight of the respondents referred to the patriarchal family, as a reason for women to be under-represented in principalship positions. P2 said that the main reason for women to be underrepresented when accessing leadership positions is because Cypriot society is not overcoming the patriarchal family model. 'This is not happening only in

the educational field but in all sectors where women are trying to reach leadership positions'.

P20 explained that:

> After the Turkish invasion in 1974, families in Cyprus are mostly patriarchal. Even though my mother was in the workforce since she was young, and stopped working immediately after the Turkish invasion, I was raised with the opinion that, even though women and men will not get the same opportunities during life and sometimes they are not consider equal, they are given the same opportunities to access leadership positions in education.

P15 said that this under-representation might be happening due to the Cypriot culture favouring the patriarchal family. P18 and P14 also expressed this view.

<u>Balancing professional and family life</u>

P5 said she might not be capable of combining or balancing professional and family roles at the same time. She added that a woman is under-represented in a different way based on her environment, background, family and different experiences in life. 'At the end of the day she might perceive herself inadequate to hold a leadership position and have family at home. This might be happening because of the stereotypes against women in leadership positions'.

<u>Career breaks</u>

Only one respondent referred to career breaks as a reason for women to be under-represented in leadership positions. P4, a mature principal in the 45-54 age range, acknowledged that:

> The Cypriot educational system might be responsible for this under-representation of women in leadership position. In order to access these positions, you have to have fifteen years of experience in the educational field. Therefore, women who take maternity leave, can miss some experience. On the other hand, I believe that experience is really important for someone before s/he accesses those positions.

Overview

This chapter reported the findings from the twenty interviews with women principals in Cyprus primary schools. The data show that the most significant findings relate to family influences, stereotyping, previous educational experience, training seminars, Cypriot society and culture, lack of female role models and discrimination. These themes recur in several places within this chapter, showing the pervasive nature of these influences on women principals in Cyprus.

As shown in the survey, the interview findings indicate that family influences were significant in several ways. Many principals reported that their families supported their career aspirations and this was most pronounced where there was a family history of female principals. However, most women principals encountered challenges or barriers, mostly relating to the patriarchal family. Subsequently, motherhood duties appeared to be a very important factor for women respondents in deciding whether to apply for a leadership position. Balancing professional and domestic roles often led to role conflict, possibly because of lack of experience or the absence of training seminars.

Stereotypical attitudes were also negative influences during their careers. Women principals adopted different leadership styles just to prove to society or themselves that they were capable of being principals. The impact of gender stereotyping on the women was clearly illustrated in the societal belief that a good leader should not also have responsibilities as mothers.

These stereotypical attitudes, sometimes linked to the patriarchal family model, often led to perceived discrimination, which was often another barrier for women to face. Many also experienced continuing discrimination after accessing principalship roles – especially those leading schools in a rural area. The combination of school and domestic responsibilities meant that they were often under pressure to achieve their goals in order to prove their worth. Many of the principals acted differently at school and at home, as they were trying to achieve their goals under pressure. After attending training seminars, and being more experienced, most of them managed to balance and separate their professional and family roles.

The next chapter analyses and discusses the data gathered from the surveys and interviews, and links these data to the empirical literature.

CHAPTER SIX - DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction: Under-representation of Women Principals

This chapter draws together the findings of the study and links them to the empirical literature. The chapter has a thematic structure based on the key themes emerging from the data and the wider literature.

The data, which underpin the analysis, comprise survey findings from 64 principals and in-depth interviews with 20 of these leaders. This is not representative of all women principals in Cyprus but, as the enquiry was based on a census of the whole population, the findings provide both breadth and depth to provide a picture of the experience of women primary school principals in Cyprus.

Women are under-represented in leadership positions in most countries in the world (Airini, 2010). Cubillo and Brown (2003) also note the inequity between women's dominance of the teaching profession and their relative under-representation of leadership positions in European countries.

One of the most important findings, and a potentially significant contribution to knowledge, is the intersection between age, gender, teaching and principals' experience. This finding will be developed and discussed throughout this chapter, as well as in a separate section, in recognition of a changing gender and leadership discourse in Cyprus. Pashiardis et al. (2002) comment that, although women make up more than 50 percent of the teacher population internationally, they hold far fewer than half of the management positions in schools. Women are over-represented at the classroom level but under-represented in the higher echelons, which have to do with the exercise of authority and with decision-making mechanisms. However, the majority of principals' positions are held by men (Cyprus Statistical Service, 2012).

This chapter is structured according to five major themes that are significant in helping to understand and explain women's under-representation in leadership positions. The discussion will move from the macro to the micro level, focusing on:

- Societal culture and discrimination,
- The influence of the patriarchal family,
- Family and domestic responsibilities,

- The intersection between women's age, sex and the location of schools and,
- Professional development.

Societal Culture and Discrimination: Barriers and Facilitators

Societal culture, and the linked issue of discrimination, seem to be two significant factors for women from aspiring leadership positions. The researcher collected data on societal culture to establish whether this factor facilitated or inhibited the respondents' careers but it should be noted that the participants may not have distinguished clearly between the author's interpretations of these two concepts.

The interview data from the present research show that more than half of the respondents (11) acknowledged that cultural stereotypes are one major reason why women are underrepresented in principalship roles. Two interview respondents commented that under representation of women principals in Cyprus arises because gender stereotypes exist within society and are embedded in the culture. One of the respondents mentioned that many Cypriot people do not know how to respect women and to accept that they have the same abilities as men. In many studies, women describe their social justice mission as one that they carry out through education. As Shakeshaft (2004:4) notes, it is difficult to know the extent of the underrepresentation of women in leadership or if there are changes over time. 'Most of why women do not become school administrators can be explained by understanding that women are not valued as much as men and that this bias results in negative attitudes and practices toward women aspiring to be school administrators'.

The survey and interview data show great similarities in respect of culture, society and societal stereotypes, so these three aspects will be grouped for this part of the discussion, which will examine influences, facilitators and barriers to the accession an enactment of leadership.

Discrimination

The findings from the present research show that most women respondents acknowledge discrimination to act as a barrier to their leadership accession and enactment. Discrimination is underpinned by societal attitudes arising from Cypriot culture and society. These seem to comply with the literature on discrimination against aspiring and practicing principals has been reported in Australia (Blackmore 2006), China (Coleman et al. 1998), England (Coleman, 2002), Greece

(Kaparou and Bush 2007), South Africa (Buckland and Thurlow 1996; Bush et al. 2006a) and the USA (Shakeshaft, 1989).

Significantly, however, in the present research a few women perceived discrimination to act as a facilitator for their career progress as it motivated them to access and enact leadership roles.

Survey data from the present research show that almost half of the respondents (44%) stated that discrimination was an important or very important influence on their decision to aspire to leadership positions, while eighteen principals regarded this as unimportant. Coleman (2007) states that there is a stereotype of hegemonic masculinity that consciously and unconsciously influences our expectations of what a leader 'should' be. The present research shares a similar view with Moorosi (2010) who stressed that findings from her study in South Arica show that women face discrimination at the level of preparation, access into principalships, as well as after employment as newly appointed principals.

Although all respondents have successfully accessed leadership, the majority of them have experienced discrimination during their career path. This findings link to Moorosi's (2010) view that, despite being successful in accessing leadership positions, some of her participants had experienced direct discrimination in their earlier attempts to access the principalship. The interview data from the present research show that two women respondents experienced discrimination that inhibited their career progression. One said that discrimination was one of the reasons she was not willing to apply for leadership positions, as she knew that men are those who hold these positions. Moorosi (2010) commented that prejudicial views held by many of those who have the responsibility to appoint principals seem to be affecting women more at the entry level, acting as gate keeping criteria that bar many women from accessing the position of principal in schools.

Women in Cyprus tend to passively deny that there is a problem whilst at the same time they are able to give examples of their own or others' experiences of discrimination. Survey data from the present research show that Cypriot principals seemed to be affected by discrimination issues. More than half of respondents (57%) stated that discrimination constituted a barrier to their career progression, while about a quarter (24%) said that this was not a barrier.

All the interviewees acknowledged that older and more experienced educators and principals were more likely to feel influenced by discrimination. This also seems to be more prevalent for principals in smaller towns such as Paphos and Larnaca. Similarly, Aslanargun's

(2012) research shows that women principals face barriers in Turkey. She adds that three senior women principals, who have been in post for more than thirteen years, mentioned technical and bureaucratic problems linked to gendered identity and discrimination. In both countries, the greater emphasis on discrimination by older principals may suggest that this problem is easing in the 21st century.

Facilitators

Stereotypical culture

In the present research, only a very small proportion of respondents (10%) stated that cultural stereotypes were an important facilitator for their decision to aspire to leadership positions, while the majority of respondents (58%) stated that this factor was unimportant to them, of which a significant number (43%) said that this was very unimportant. Only three interview respondents said that Cypriot culture and stereotypes worked as a facilitator towards their career progression. One of them explained how such stereotypes could work as a facilitator. 'It really depends on each person how she will consider these factors as facilitators or inhibitors. I considered this factor as a facilitator as I received the support needed to succeed at the end of the day'. One interviewee, leading a school in Famagusta, acknowledged that Cypriot culture could be a facilitator and an inhibitor at the same time for a teacher's or principal's career progression. It can be linked with societal stereotypes. During her own career, she found this factor to work as a facilitator, as she wanted to prove to everyone that gender doesn't play any significant role when it comes to accessing leadership positions. As confirmed in the present research, stereotypes are linked to culture and society, as they arise from these cultural aspects. Significantly, experienced principals are more likely to regard this factor as important, suggesting that younger principals are less inhibited by cultural stereotypes.

A women interviewee in the present research, leading a school in Paphos, said that one of the facilitating factors was her first school as a principal, which was linked to the Cypriot culture, as it was a small school in a rural society. 'It was a nice school, in a small village in Paphos and the situation there was controllable. I didn't find it so difficult to cope with, as those were the first steps of my career as a school principal'. She explained that the children and staff there were friendly and kind, and respected everyone, especially their teachers. She added that 'rural societies haven't changed so much. They kept their traditions and, above all, they respect everyone'. Lee's (2011)

research shows that women principals' leadership experiences sometimes operate contrary to the traditional gendered stereotypes, and trying to meet the cultural norms expected of them resulted in conflict and was at times stressful.

Discriminatory attitudes

As noted earlier, discrimination seems to discourage most women leaders, but a few responded by being more determined. This finding is a significant contribution to the current literature, which tends to focus on how discrimination inhibits leadership accession, making them less available for leadership positions (Shakeshaft, 2007). In the present research, only one participant mentioned that she perceived discrimination as a facilitator. She strongly believes that this depends on how each person perceives and responds to discrimination; 'you either go with it or against it'. The survey data show that a very small proportion of respondents (9%) stated that discrimination was an important facilitator towards their decision to aspire to leadership positions, while a significant majority of respondents (65%) stated that this factor was unimportant to them. Significantly, all five respondents who regard discrimination as facilitators have less than five years' experience as principals.

The determination of some of the principals to succeed, sometimes against great odds, is evident from the data and in parts of the literature. Lifelong learning is a strong theme, with many women determined to educate themselves into the principalship (Lumby 2010). Data from the present research showed that discrimination can also be a valuable resource for someone who wants to go against the Cypriot cultural beliefs, as one interviewee indicates. Arguably, the debate should not be around how many women are supporting discrimination as a facilitator but how the presence of more self-defining women can encourage greater access to leadership positions.

Barriers

As one female interview respondent from the present research acknowledged, it is important to recognize that Cypriot society still has a more or less male-dominated culture. This issue seems to underpin the Cypriot literature as Hadjipavlou (2009), states that, in Cyprus, the acknowledged head of the family is still the father. Her research has

shown that Cypriot women are going through a transitional phase between traditionalism and modernity.

Survey data from the present research also show that Cypriot culture might act as a barrier for principal's career progression. The author's findings demonstrate that more than half of survey respondents (54%) regard Cypriot culture as a barrier to their career progression, while more than a third (35%) said that this was not a barrier. The interview data show that almost half of the respondents (9) acknowledged cultural stereotypes to be the most important inhibitor for them. A study of barriers to women leaders across nine countries – Indonesia, China, Cyprus, Greece, Kuwait, Iraq, Commonwealth of Dominica, Gambia, and Zambia – found similar patterns of stereotypical cultural expectations that devalued women (Cubillo and Brown, 2003).

Across cultures, women are seen as less than, and different from, men (Shakeshaft, 2007). One survey response from the present research mentioned that 'given that the Cypriot society is a small society and sometimes this links to some stereotypes from the old years, not only in the school areas, but, in general, women cannot be found to hold leadership positions'. The same interview respondent considered this to be linked to some cultural issues arising from the past. The author's survey data also show that more than half of respondents (57%) consider stereotypes to be a barrier to their career progression, while about a quarter (24%) said that this was not a barrier. One survey respondent added that, even though women have started to appear in leadership positions, stereotypes about men holding principals' posts still exist. Data have shown that while equity gains have been made, different expectations and attitudes towards women, based on culture, still exist. Studies indicate that these negative attitudes to women constitute the major barrier to female advancement in school leadership (Shakeshaft, 2007). Why women do not become school principals can often be explained by understanding that, because of cultural stereotypes, women may not be valued as much as males and that this bias results in negative attitudes and practices toward women aspiring to be school principals (Shakeshaft, 2007). Data from the present research strongly support Coleman (2012) who suggests that the stereotypical principal is someone who is male, from the dominant ethnic group, of middle age and from a reasonably privileged background.

One interviewee from the present research commented that the cultural factors, which inhibited her career progression, were much greater than those facilitating her progress. The main reason was the continuous

judgments about and against her, because she was a woman principal. She added that 'I know from other colleagues that they experience the same. Usually, this judgment comes from either parents or the teaching staff. The principal has to be always prepared to fight against these views and not to let the negative judgments influence her position'. Similarily, Mahlase (1997) investigated the position and experiences of black women teachers in South Africa and highlighted race and culture as issues affecting and defining experiences of women teachers in general and women managers in particular.

One participant in the present research added that, during her own career, there were many occasions where she received negative feedback from parents for being a woman school principal. This information gained from the present research support Meyerson and Fletcher (1999) who acknowledge that, the barriers to advancement are not just above women, but they are all around them within the structures of the organisations and their cultures. One interviewee mentioned that a woman candidate may be hesitant to apply for a leadership position because the Cypriot society chooses to leave the patriarchal model in place. Barriers to the entrance of women into leadership positions include patriarchal societal structures and the devaluation of women within societies (Shakeshaft, 2007). The patriarchal family theme will be explored later.

Survey and interview data from the present research also support this assumption of 'traditional patterns linked to stereotypes', as one interviewee mentioned. The survey data also show that older and more experienced educators are more likely to experience stereotypes as a barrier, although data for principalship experience are less clear cut. Principals working in more traditional locations, such as Paphos and Larnaca, more often reported societal stereotypes as a barrier. This supports the views of Blackmore (1989), who claims that traditional patterns of behaviour prescribe certain roles to which women conform to differing degrees, and that is why they form part of women's identity, values and needs.

The findings from the present research show that cultural, societal and stereotypical attitudes often led to perceived discrimination, which was a barrier for these women. The societal stereotypes and discrimination data are very similar, suggesting that perceived stereotypical attitudes may be manifested as discrimination. Both factors appear as barriers for accession to leadership positions for a majority of principals.

The author's survey data show that more than half of respondents (57%) stated that discrimination constituted a barrier to their career progression, while about a quarter (24%) said that this was not a barrier. Two interview respondents, in particular, stated that discrimination was one of the factors that inhibited their career progression. One of them stated that gender discrimination was one of the main inhibitors. Perhaps because she comes from a rural area, she faced several negative attitudes towards her. Words like 'you are a woman, you don't know what you are doing', or 'you are a woman you cannot be a school leader and that is a man's position', were typical of the comments she experienced. Gronn and Ribbins (2003) discuss this issue in respect of small island states. They refer to 'ascriptive' systems, which tend to emphasize the personal characteristics of individuals and usually reproduce a leadership cohort (often predominantly male) from a narrow social base. Cyprus is one of these small islands that has adopted an approach that leads to the appointment of highly experienced, and usually male, principals (Pashiardis and Ribbins, 2003, Gronn and Ribbins, 2003). Georgiou et al., (2002:81), referring to Cyprus, say that 'discrimination against women in regards to their promotion to leadership posts… should be considered unfair' (Georgiou et al., 2002:81).

Data from the present research show that one of the interviewees had to face difficult situations, because of discrimination. Respectively, Moorosi's (2010) South African study showed that women face discrimination at the level of preparation, and access into principalship, as well as after employment as school principals. Moorosi (2010) added that 'sexism against women is a severe issue that many women face in different societies. It's up to everyone how to face each situation arising from discrimination issues'. This confirms Coleman's (2004) finding that about half of her surveyed female principals reported experiencing gender discrimination.

The present research showed that, amongst the barriers that some women face, is the negative attitude from some colleagues and the community, which may have a bearing on how women principals carry out their leadership functions. Moorosi (2010) reports that there were a significant number of women principals in her South African research who were subject to insubordination from their male and female colleagues, who would not accept the principals' authority. Two survey respondents from the present research linked previous experience and negative colleagues. One said that 'especially if a woman, who is usually more sensitive than males, is not experienced enough she will accept the criticism either from parents, or negative colleagues'. Only

two interview respondents from the present research commented that the work environment could be damaging for career progression. One of them said that, if there are difficult colleagues, this could be damaging for leadership enactment. The other interviewee, from Paphos, reported problems with school staff who did not accept her. However, she added that she was able to overcome such problems. She argued that each person will perceive, and respond to, situations, differently.

Some women from this research who experienced problems after their appointment seemed 'to have lost the love for principalship' (Moorosi, 20010:12). Both survey and interview data from the present research showed that support from colleagues is vital for the principal's professional development. Similarly, Moorosi's (2010) research on South African women principals showed that the support women received was important in that it influenced their job satisfaction, which could have positive implications for their retention. 'The more support women principals got from the stakeholders, the more they seemed comfortable with principalship.

Transgressing the rules

One discriminatory aspect of the Cyprus Educational System is that teachers are prohibited from applying for principals' positions if they do not have 15 years' primary school teaching experience, a requirement that affects women who take career breaks, for example to look after young children. Cases of principals with less than 15 years of experience are very rare, although one of the author's respondents was promoted without 15 year's experience. This raises the question of whether the principal succeeded in breaking this legislative 'glass ceiling'. Figure 6.1 shows the official requirements for promotion to the principalship.
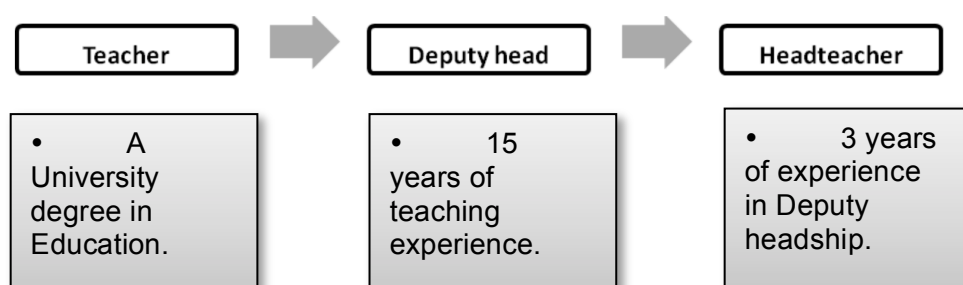
Figure 6.1 Teachers' career advancement in Cyprus

As shown in figure 6.1, a minimum of 15 years of satisfactory teaching experience, and at least three years of service in deputy headship

(Eurydice, 2013), are the two main criteria for eligibility for promotion. When available positions are announced by the ESC, prospective candidates apply for the posts. The applications are examined by a committee of inspectors which grants points to candidates based on three factors: (1) seniority of the staff, (2) the numeric teacher's performance evaluations by the Inspectorate and (3) postgraduate academic qualifications that deputy principals may have.

Despite these official criteria, there is at least one woman principal who has managed to break the rules and somehow 'skip' the basic rules of promotion shown in figure 6.1 (Ministry of Education, 2014). This suggests a changing gender and leadership landscape in Cyprus but the formal requirements still remain. The legislative requirement of 15 years experience is unfair for women and discriminatory. Two interviewees mentioned that this requirement let them to consider if it was 'sensible' for them to take a career break for maternity leave. As one of them commented, 'the majority of my friends at work think the same. Will maternity leave have a negative effect on my career?'. The legislation and the wider educational system appear to discourage women from aspiring to leadership in Cyprus. As a Cypriot female school principal in Pashiardis and Ribbins's (2003:31) study commented, 'we have a very male dominated society ... Until recently women did not dare aspire to these positions.' Apparently, this view had adversely influenced the career intentions of most participants in the research, considering the fifteen years of experience that women have to have in the field. A policy change is required so that the 'transgression of rules' by one principal, who succeeded in breaking this legislative 'glass ceiling', becomes unnecessary and all promotions are based on merit.

Patriarchal Family

The Cypriot culture can still be considered essentially as male dominated, and patriarchy is the social system in which a male is the family head and the primary authority. Therefore, it is not surprising that most respondents agree that Cypriot culture did not facilitate their decision to access leadership positions. The researcher collected survey and interview data about whether the patriarchal family model influenced participants' decisions to become teachers and school principals. The researcher's data analysis identified four themes; patriarchal family, matriarchal family, both patriarchal and matriarchal, and neither patriarchal nor matriarchal. Cyprus has adopted an approach that leads to the appointment of highly experienced, and

usually male, principals (Pashiardis and Ribbins, 2003: Gronn and Ribbins, 2003). This section focuses on the impact of the patriarchal family on principals' decisions to access, and to enact, principalship.

The influence of the patriarchal family model

The survey findings show that a slight majority of principals (30), of those who responded to this question, experienced the patriarchal family while the other 27 did not. One survey respondent said that, in her large family, males always had the first say in every decision, especially from her dad's family. Most (80%) of the women who experienced the patriarchal family model are mature principals, aged over 45, suggesting that it may be less influential for younger principals. School area data provide a mixed picture but the patriarchal model was more common in the traditional rural towns of Paphos, Larnaca and Famagusta than in more urban locations. Interview data showed half of the women respondents (ten) experienced the patriarchal family model. The present research seem to support views from another study by Hertz-Lazarowitz and Shapira (2005), on educational leadership in Israel, exemplifies the limiting conditions of Arab women living in a patriarchal society structured by gender and age. Data from the present research confirm this ideology of patriarchy.

Survey data from the present research show that only thirteen of the sixty four principals stated that the patriarchal family was unimportant in their decision to aspire to leadership positions while a larger number (18) regard this factor as important for their future decisions. Almost all (17/18) of those principals who regarded the patriarchal family as an important influence are mature (over 45). Seven women interviewees experienced the patriarchal family model and one of those said that her decision to become a teacher was, based on her discussions with her father (patriarchal family model). Coleman et al. (1998), referring to research in the Shaanxi province of China, indicated that the 'underlying patriarchal values made it very difficult for women to transcend entrenched attitudes to women and take on senior management roles in schools, despite the general approval of the idea of equality between the sexes'.

The present interview findings directly link to Coleman et al's (1998) view regarding underlying patriarchal values. One participant noted that, when she was young, 'most of the Cypriot families adopted the patriarchal family model and therefore fathers had the first word on everything. My family was a patriarchal family model as well'. She added that 'he was the one deciding everything'.

Younger principals were much less likely to cite the patriarchal model as an influence on their career development, suggesting shifting attitudes to traditional patriarchal culture in Cyprus.

Patriarchy as an inhibitor

The majority of the survey respondents (66%) do not regard the patriarchal family as an inhibitor. One survey respondent linked this issue to the Turkish invasion in 1974, when families in Cyprus were mainly patriarchal. This is when the patriarchal family model was much more prominent and inhibited women's career progression. Five interview respondents mentioned the patriarchal family as an inhibitor towards their career progression, aligning with Coleman et al's (1998) comment about the patriarchal family in China. Tsangari and Stephanidi (2012:150) also note that women's 'decision to work has an impact on the institution of family: on one hand, the home is still mainly dependent on the woman but, on the other hand, the Cypriot family structure is still characterised by patriarchy'. This view aligns with one interviewee's response from the present research. Although many women can now access leadership positions, 'even today, there are families who still adopt the patriarchal family model'.

Data from the present research seem to contrast with the work of Shakeshaft (1989) whose view is that the patriarchal family model acts as an inhibitor. Only five of the present author's interviewees feel that the patriarchal family model inhibited their career decisions. One stated that a reason for women not applying for leadership positions is because the Cypriot society leaves the patriarchal model in place. She mentioned that, even though the patriarchal model is less prominent in the 21st century, you can still find people supporting the statement that, if you are a woman, you cannot lead and that this is a man's job. As Jakobsh (2012:1) notes, gender roles are socially constructed classifications that are inspired and furthered by the overarching influence of patriarchy within society, communities, and families. One interviewee said that living in a patriarchal family left her unable to decide what she really wanted to become in the future, as this family model was influencing her decisions. Another participant stated that, even though her aunt was motivating her to become a teacher, her father wanted her to become a housewife and raise the children, a feature of a patriarchal society.

Survey data from the present research showed that a significant number (18) regarded this factor as important for their future decisions. Shakeshaft (2004) acknowledges that barriers to the entrance of

women into leadership positions include patriarchal societal structures and the devaluation of women within societies.

The power of socialization that underlies this system cannot be ignored. As noted earlier, the author's survey data show that almost all (17/18) of those principals who regarded the patriarchal family as an important influence are over 45. 'Sexist, patriarchal values are so deeply engrained in society's consciousness that they are largely invisible' (Jakobsh 2012:1). They also have more than 30 years' experience, suggesting that younger and less experienced professionals are much less likely to be influenced in this way. Previous experience seems to be a significant variable for women who aspire to leadership in Cyprus, as more experienced principals know how to react to the sexist and patriarchal values and they have become more confident to handle situations arising from these values. Principals working in more traditional areas, notably Paphos and Larnaca, are more likely to regard the patriarchal family as a significant influence. One survey respondent stated that the patriarchal family model influenced her decision to become a teacher. She added that 'the patriarchal family role model was an inhibitor on my decision to aspire to a principal's position, since women for years now don't have any female role models in leadership positions. Therefore, this family model seemed to inhibit my personal decisions, in relation to the male holding leading positions'. Seven interviewees have experienced the patriarchal family model and one commented that patriarchy was the main reason she had come into conflict with her father, as he did not want her become a teacher and he was trying to convince her to be responsible for the household.

The findings of the present research offer a similar view to that of Celikten (2005), in Turkish state primary schools. Turkish society still seeks out women to be teachers and to take care of children, but not to be leaders. In the present research, seven women interviewees claimed that their decision to become teachers, and then to apply for a principal's position, was strongly influenced by the patriarchal family model. Cubillo and Brown (2003:285) suggest that paternal support is especially important in many of the male-dominated countries they studied. 'This emphasis on paternal support may have been a consequence of the strongly patriarchal societies into which many of these women were born and socialized'. Survey data from the present research confirm Cubillo and Brown's (2003) view of the importance of the patriarchal family model, with a large number (18) of women principals regarding the patriarchal family as an important factor for their future decisions.

Patriarchy as a facilitator

Even though there is a lack of literature about this, the present research provides significant data about women principals in Cyprus who consider that the patriarchal family worked as a facilitator for them, with (66%) of survey respondents noting that the patriarchal family was not an inhibitor for them.

One of the survey respondents also acknowledged that, even though her family was patriarchal, her father wanted all his children to be educated. However, he only wanted her to be a teacher. Her father believed that this was the woman's profession if she was educated. As a result, when she was given the right to apply for a leadership position, she perceived this option as a bit difficult for her, as most of the principals were males, and she didn't have a female role model in a similar position.

Interview data from the present research show that ten women principals considered paternal support to be really important, as their fathers were their role models and they can link that to the patriarchal family model. Another interviewee also said that she had no female role models. Her decision to become a teacher was based on discussions with her father (patriarchal family model). One interviewee stated that one of the main reasons she wanted to become a teacher was that this was the only profession her father could accept, as it had to do with educating children and looked like a family model to him. This positive aspect of patriarchy is a very important finding as the international literature generally regards patriarchy as a major inhibitor.

Experiencing both patriarchal and matriarchal family models

In patriarchy, belonging to the society, or legitimacy, comes from fathers through ritual and law. Patriarchy provides ruling power to men. In matriarchy, belonging to society, or legitimacy, comes from mothers through childbirth. Matriarchy distributes power throughout a community (Dickel, 1997). The interview data from the present research show that there were four women principals who experienced both patriarchal and matriarchal family models. One of the interviewees mentioned that, even though the majority of families were patriarchal, her family was not. She claimed that this was because her mother was well educated and she was responsible for other matters as well as domestic duties.

A shifting attitude towards traditional patriarchal culture

As noted above, the author's survey findings show that a slight majority of the principals responding to this question were influenced by the patriarchal family model. Significantly, the great majority (80%) of those who were so influenced were mature principals, over 45 years old, showing that the patriarchal family model is less influential for younger women. Most (53%) of those who were influenced by this family model were also principals in more traditional areas of Cyprus, where the society is more conservative. According to Hadjipavlou (2009), in a patriarchal society such as Cyprus, the two genders are socialized into different roles and are associated with different values. It is expected that each gender will behave according to socially constructed roles, gender stereotypes and expectations of the area.

The author's data reveal that patriarchy may be a form of control, disguised as supportive, but which goes only so far. Seventeen out of eighteen women interviewees mentioned that the patriarchal family model was an important influence for them to aspire leadership or not. Nine of the respondents referred to the patriarchal family as a reason for women to be under-represented in principalship positions, whilst eight of them considered this as a facilitator. Eleven of these women were mature principals over 45 years old. Six of these eleven mature women worked in more rural areas, such as Paphos and Larnaca. Their fathers seemed to 'allow' them to become teachers as this was seen as nurturing, as in family life. Traditional culture in the rural areas of Cyprus raises barriers for women's aspirations, because of the attitudes, behaviours and routine practices that are practiced and reinforced in different generations. One interviewee (P14) from a rural area said that her father would allow her to be educated only if she wanted to become a teacher. This is also evident in the literature as patriarchy tends to dominate in rural areas. Kyriakou-Savva (2013) argues that girls and women were commonly physically and mentally oppressed by fathers, brothers and/or husbands.

The data show that seven interviewees decided to become teachers because of supportive fathers. Their fathers had the first word on everything even though they only supported them in becoming teachers. One of the interviewees mentioned that 'my father would only allow me to become a teacher'. The patriarchal family supports women in the role of teacher, but not as a leader because, as in this case, the father did not want his daughter to apply for leadership. The literature also shows that the socio-cultural obstacles hindering women's

advancement to leadership are particularly evident in developing and conservative societies, where patriarchy and religion dominate (Cubillo and Brown, 2003; Rarieya, 2005; Oplatka, 2006; Shah, 2009; Strachan et al., 2010).

There is emerging evidence of a shifting attitude towards the patriarchal family in Cyprus, as most (66%) of the survey respondents, including younger and more mature principals, mentioned that this family model was a facilitator for them.

The shifting attitude towards the patriarchal culture in Cyprus is helpful for women, but the researcher believes that simply changing the structures in Cyprus is not enough. The prevalent value system of society itself also has to change and, according to the patriarchal society structure in Cyprus, women cannot readily avoid the roles given to them by society. The lack of family support, both in their professional and private lives, the lack of learned self-esteem, and stereotypes about women embedded in the roots of patriarchy, are all very important.

Family and Domestic Responsibilities

Data analysis from the present research brought to the fore a number of ways in which family and domestic responsibilities impacted on the career of the principals, often in positive ways, but sometimes also in a negative manner. This seems to support Coleman's (2004) view as she notes that the identification of women as caring, domestic, and implicitly of lesser importance and status than men, impacts on the experience of women in positions of leadership.

The role of a supportive family

Survey data from this research, as a large majority (83%) of respondents state that family support was important or very important for their career development. Survey data from the present research also indicate the importance of respondents' family backgrounds in influencing their decision to aspire to a leadership position. Almost all (89%) of principals state that their family background was an important influence on their aspiration to leadership positions. Particularly significant were the answers of most (17) interview respondents who said that family has a vital role for a woman principal's career progression, especially if the candidate is sensitive and takes everything seriously. The present data seem to be consistent with other

research showing that principals who are married to a supportive partner view their marital status as an advantage for their career progress (Lumby et al., 2010). Lumby et al., (2010) also note that most principals with families view them as advantageous to their career progress.

Families are also influential in leadership enactment. Lumby et al's (2010) South African research showed that many principals reported their family to be very supportive, giving encouragement and advice, and accompanying them to school or related functions. The author's interview data also demonstrated that family is really important. Most participants (17) indicated that their family played a significant role in their career progression as they had been supporting them since they were teachers.

The changing role of husbands in the Cypriot context

The present research shows that most women still carry the lion's share of domestic responsibilities due to cultural assumptions about gender-specific roles. One interviewee commented that she remained single in order to avoid the extra responsibilities linked to marriage. She believed that, by having a husband, she wouldn't be able to make her aspirations come true, as this would give her more domestic and esponsibilities.

This comment links to Moorosi's (2007) South African research, which showed that unmarried female principals were able to devote more time to school matters without feeling the pressure of not leaving sufficient time for family.

Two interview respondents from the present research mentioned that their husbands did not share their aspirations, and did not support them at all. A significant number (8) of the interview respondents mentioned that their husbands undermine them, offer poor support, and do not share domestic responsibilities at all. This finding connects to Lumby et al's (2010) view hat those principals who do not have supportive partners view their marital status as a disadvantage for their career.

The present research shows that ten survey respondents consider their husbands as their role models who encourage them on a daily basis. These respondents were all married to a supportive partner and view their marital status as an advantage to their career progress. Two interview respondents perceived their husbands to be their mentors, who always support them and motivate them to pursuit their dreams. This contrasts with traditional Cypriot culture which expects women to

stay at home and be responsible for raising their children. This finding also connects to Lumby et al's (2010) South African research, where many respondents reported that their partners or spouses offered great support, giving encouragement and advice, and accompanying them to school or related functions. Some principals even reported that their partners regularly help out around the school by running errands or assisting with issues concerning the security of school property.

The role of husbands in Cyprus is slowly but steadily changing as younger women principals are reporting more supportive partners. This issue provides further evidence of the significance of the 'age' variable as younger principals, often have more supportive husbands who encourage them to aspire to leadership, without thinking about the implications for domestic and family issues without such support.

Husbands as role models

As suggested above, the role of husbands is changing and ten survey respondents mentioned that their husbands are role models, who encouraged them to apply for principals' positions, which is quite different from previous literature which tends to focus on female role models (e.g. Coleman, 1998; Coleman, 2002; Lumby and Coleman, 2007). Two interviewees identified their husbands as mentors. Both men worked in the educational field, confirming Lumby et al's (2010) finding that, when participants showed their husband as their mentor, these were mostly educational participants. The author's survey and interview data tend to confirm this body of literature. These principals said that their husbands are understanding when it comes to their profession and consequently they are mentoring each other.

Family as inhibitor

The author's survey data, however, also show that more than half of the respondents (64%) stated that family background constituted a barrier to their career progression, while only twelve said that this was not a barrier. Two interview respondents said that they did not receive any support from their family and husbands and they considered that to be an inhibitor. Another principal stated that the family factor could work as an inhibitor for a woman's career. Overall, the data showed that, if family does not support the women principals' decisions, it could definitely work as an inhibitor for their career progression.

Some (8) of the women interview respondents report that their husbands undermine them, treat them poorly, do not support them,

and/or do not share domestic responsibilities. Lumby et al. (2010) explained that there are principals who are less fortunate and do not have family or partners who support them and view their marital status as a disadvantage to their career enactment. The survey data also show that some (8) women chose to remain single to avoid a clash between family and career. Coleman's (2004) data showed that those women who stated that they had experienced barriers in their career were most likely to link it to their family responsibilities, reporting that interviewing panels showed concern that these responsibilities might impact on their ability to do their job.

Most participants in the present research also mentioned that they could not seek promotion earlier because they had family commitments. There is a clear link between lack of support from family and family as a barrier. Several (5) interviewees mentioned that family worked as an 'invisible' barrier because of the responsibilities they had when they returned home from school. The term 'invisible' is appropriate here as the interviewees mentioned that there was a barrier that they could not see but still had to be overcome. As the interviews were conducted in Greek, 'invisible' was the most accurate word to translate their responses. The present research supports Moorosi's (2010) South African finding that family issues might be another barrier as women's chances of promotion were limited because of their family responsibilities.

The author's data show that initiatives such as childcare assistance enable women to act and succeed as surrogate men, putting in long hours of work and acting as though they have no primary responsibilities for family. This does not challenge beliefs and values about traditional ways of working and about the interdependence of work and personal lives. Interview as well as survey data from the present research show that, even though more women are managing to combine career and family, there is a real discrepancy in the allocation of family responsibilities and the levels of support that women report.

The importance of children as facilitators

The author's data also show that children are very important for a principal's career. Many (20) of the survey respondents commented that children were important in order to access a leadership position. Lumby et al., (2010) report that many of their principals indicate that having children was advantageous to their careers. Several (9) interview participants acknowledged that having children made them realize that they wanted to apply for a leadership position. Having children enhanced their own character and, for some women, their children

became a source of support, influence and encouragement, and helped them to grow in understanding. Many (12) interviewees also reported that, after having children, they became more compassionate and fair towards learners, or that they understood the nature of children better. Many also indicated that they could easily relate to the parents of learners since, being parents themselves, they understood the concerns and feelings of a parent. These data suggest that having children equips women to become better leaders.

The importance of children as inhibitors

Children can also inhibit some women from accessing leadership positions. Coleman (2007) notes that some women may opt to prioritise their career over family and 'choose' not to have children. As her research shows, this was more common in the 1990s when 67% of the women principals were married or partnered and only 52% had a child or children. By 2004, 'although the proportion of women who were married/partnered and had a child or children had increased, they were still much less likely to have a partner and children than their male colleagues' (pp.10). Linked to Coleman's (2007) findings, the present research shows that five interviewees preferred to stay childless as this facilitated their career progression. These data confirm Coleman's (2004) evidence that many of the younger women principals were choosing not to have children, in spite of the availability of maternity leave which guarantees job security for women taking the statutory break. However, maternity leave does nothing to help the women who return to work, with family responsibilities adding to their management role at work. The author's survey data showed children to be one of the main inhibitors for women considering applying for principalship positions. The researcher confirms that the age of these women was a considerable variable. Younger women principals considered this issue to be a major barrier for them to aspire to leadership, because they still have young children and they are the main carers for these children.

Children may also affect leadership enactment. Coleman (2004) claims that the job of being a principal is undoubtedly a 'greedy' one. The tension between work demands, and the care of children, meant that many women expressed guilt. This aligns with two of the interview responses from the present research, as they both expressed their guilt about working during their children's childhood. They were worried as their children were constantly complaining that their mother was always busy and not spending time with them. Similarly, in Coleman's (1996) research, one of her interviewees expressed that one of her biggest fears was that her daughter might be damaged by the terrible life she

had given her. The author's survey data show that some (20) of the respondents mentioned children as an inhibitor for their career development. One of the interview respondents mentioned that having children would be an extra responsibility for her, and constitute a barrier to her career progression.

Most women principals reported that their children posed difficulties for them in balancing responsibilities and in dealing with the practical issues of childcare. Respondents reported that physical care of children, and looking after children when they are sick, pose great challenges and sometimes makes them tired, or otherwise interferes with their job performance. Similarly, interview data from the present research show that a few (4) women principals acknowledged children to be one of the factors, which inhibited their career progress. The survey data show that principals of schools in more traditional locations, such as Paphos and Larnaca, were marginally more likely to feel inhibited than those in more urban settings.

Shakeshaft (2002) states that there are still many women who believe that parental responsibilities inhibit them from performing their jobs as school principals, and that such responsibilities may make women undesirable candidates for administrative positions. This issue was also explored in the present research and the survey data show that women principals are especially reluctant to apply for leadership positions when they have children. The interview data also show that two of the participants acknowledged children to be a major barrier for them, especially when their children are young.

Career breaks

The survey and interview data show that career breaks, usually taken to look after young children, were a factor influencing women's professional development. As Coleman (2007:21) explains, 'the expectation that women will take maternity leave, rather than having a more extended career break, may not in itself have been helpful to women, as it has fuelled the expectation that women will take only short breaks for childbirth and childcare'. McNamara et al's (2008) research on principalship showed that the smallest proportion of staff having taken career breaks were those under 35 years old; the group with the largest proportion were teachers aged 56 and over. The survey data from the present research show that only one respondent mentioned career breaks and she is a mature principal in the 45-54 age range. Age seems to be a very significant variable. One interviewee acknowledged

that, in order to access leadership positions, you have to have fifteen years of educational experience. Therefore, women who take extended maternity leave miss some experience, which may affect their leadership aspirations. This links to McNamara et al's (2008) view that the impact of taking a career break upon career trajectory was evident in terms of the increased time it took to achieve promoted posts.

However, it is significant that only one interviewee in the present research referred to career breaks as a reason for women to be under-represented in leadership positions. Despite this, women have to be convinced that, if they take a career break, this will not reduce their opportunities to be successful in accessing and enacting the principalship. Research on leadership and gender conducted by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) (2009-2010) showed that some participants cited career breaks as a reason for not being interested in progression. The researcher believes that the Ministry of Education needs to review their policy in regards to career breaks, and consider whether these can count towards the fifteen years experience required to become a principal, as this affects women's intentions to have children, or to apply for leadership positions. As noted earlier, one female respondent was able to become a principal without the requisite fifteen years of experience.

Domestic responsibilities

The survey data show that most of the women respondents (45) referred to domestic responsibilities as a barrier to their career accession. Lumby et al's (2010) research shows that most South African women still carry the main domestic responsibilities and that this inhibits their career progression.

The survey data from the present research also show that women have more domestic responsibilities than men, especially when they are married. Some (5) of the interview respondents argued that this might be the reason that males aspire to, and access, principalship positions more easily than women. Both survey and interview data from the present research seem to confirm Lumby et al's (2010) view that not having domestic and family responsibilities left the candidates free to invest as much time as they need in their career and related studies.

Data show that there are also challenges relating to the enactment of leadership for women principals. Moorosi (2010) notes that the performance of women principals is affected by family and domestic responsibilities. 'Overburdening' domestic obligation was more challenging for women principals when they did not receive support.

Interview data from the present research show that women are concerned that their professional responsibilities may adversely affect their domestic responsibilities, or the opposite. Similarly, the survey data show that more than half of respondents (64%) stated that domestic responsibilities constitute a barrier to their career progression, while only twelve said that this was not a barrier. One principal acknowledged that domestic responsibilities after school constituted a barrier for her. This made it more difficult for their career enactment. The older generation had fewer domestic responsibilities and received more support from spouses. This notion is explored in detail elsewhere (Moorosi, 2007) but it is a significant issue which affects women's performance as managers.

Conflicting roles: balancing family and professional lives

As most (17) of the interview respondents acknowledged, they have to negotiate the conflicting expectations held by others with whom they interrelate. The author's data led to questions about whether and how working women can balance professional and family lives. As a result, women are more likely than men to take their domestic situation into account when considering whether or not to apply for headship (Coleman, 2004). The research was designed to investigate multiple variables. One aspect relates to teaching experience and the findings showed that principals with greater experience found it easier to balance their professional and family roles. Shakeshaft (2002) argues that the search for balance among family, work, and personal lives explains some women's reluctance to take on the public responsibilities that come with some leadership positions. Work and family are the dominant life roles for most employed women in contemporary society (Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000).

As one of the author's respondents noted, not only in Cyprus but also around the world, with the current economic context, it appears necessary to maximize family income. This is one of the main reasons why women seek to access leadership positions. This confirms Couzy's (2012) view that women work because they want to and, more specifically, that they need to. This need is not only financial but also mental. Indeed, working activities seem to be good for the 'brain's health' (Couzy, 2012).

Participants in the present research indicated that the impact on personal and family life ranked first among the reasons they were unwilling to apply for a principalship. Shakeshaft (2002) argues that women sometimes say that family responsibilities keep them from

applying for and assuming leadership positions, because they believe the costs would be too high for their families and themselves. Present research's survey data seem to support Shakeshaft's (2002) data, as women highly rated the conflict between professional and family life as an inhibitor for their career progression. The interview data support this, as many (9) of the women respondents acknowledged that there is conflict between their professional and family roles.

Leadership enactment was also affected by the need to balance professional and family roles. The author's data show that women, being mothers and principals at the same time, might act in a more caring way than would normally be expected of the position. One interview respondent illustrates this point by mentioning that she was really strict with her two children. She was using her leadership style even when she was at home with them. She added that sometimes it is too hard for a principal to separate her professional and personal lives. Several (7) also mentioned that they caught themselves acting 'motherly' and caring at school, especially when the children are the same age as theirs.

Most (45) of the surveyed principals acknowledged that they found it really difficult to balance professional and domestic workloads. The author's data seem to confirm Coleman's (2005b) report that women teachers have difficulties with their work/life balance, as there is no time off work for the children. One of her respondents mentioned that 'you cannot go back into teaching at the same level you were after having children'.

Taking the principal persona home

Participants from the present research described the challenges and rewards of balancing the dual roles of mothers and school leaders. They also noted the importance of being able to balance motherhood and career, even if sometimes they are caught in the middle by acting as mothers at school and as principals at home. One of the interviewees (P4) acknowledges this issue by saying that she was 'mixing up' her professional and personal life, and being strict with her own children, as if they were students. She adds that this may be a particular problem for less experienced principals.

Parker (2015) noted that her US participants reported that stressors seemed to shape their perceptions and experiences. They also described an immense sense of responsibility to fulfill these roles satisfactorily when realising that there was a confusion between their personal and professional identities. Most (77%) of the survey

respondents in the present research mentioned that they attended training seminars, because they did not know how to dinstinguish between professional and family life, and one interviewee added that these seminars helped her a lot. The seminars provided her with several strategies for coping with the phenomenon of combining motherhood and school leadership and not taking the principal's persona home.

One interviewee (P6) mentioned that she could not distinguish her principal and mother personas as her main hopes were to provide a home environment grounded in high expectations, and the modeling of behaviours that will lead to success in the workplace. This view connects with Parker's (2015) perception that finding a reason to keep one of the personas going links to their experiences as mothers and school leaders. Many of the participants in the present research emphasized their desire to serve as role models for their children at home. Their responses centred around the view that they wanted their children to grow up with a strong work ethic, and that they wanted to be able to model this for their children. This is why they were thinking that acting as principals at home would benefit their children.

Two interviewees mentioned that one aspect of the conflict between their professional and family roles, was that they found it hard not to adopt the leadership persona at home and that they used the strategies that seemed to fit best within the context at home. This seems to validate Parker's (2015) on time, resources, and personal preferences. Her research participants tended to utilize coping strategies to either revitalize themselves mentally and physically, or to organize themselves in order to increase efficiency and be better able to meet demands in order to balance work and home. As in the present research, such coping strategies helped to avoid the women taking the principal persona home.

Overcoming role conflict

The author's interview and survey data reflect Friedman and Greenhaus's (2000) view that women in leadership positions wonder how they can find the time and the energy to fulfill their various commitments to work and family while achieving satisfaction and success in all the different facets of their lives.

Many (8) women principals, from the present research, acknowledge that they managed to balance their professional and family lives by finding someone from family or school to support them. Lack of support

also creates problems for women, who are expected to negotiate a balance between their work and family lives. This confirms Couzy's (2012) view that support can significantly influence women's lives.

Support comes from different sources such as family, partners and employers. Women face less conflict when they feel that their employers support their lives beyond work (Friedman, 2000). The author's interview data show that, if a person doesn't know how to balance both professional and family lives, they carry their work issues at home, or the opposite. The author's survey data show that a lot of women principals (48) stated that, if someone from their work environment supports them during their career, they would not allow professional issues to invade their personal life. As one of the interview respondents explained, it really depends on the level of support available to women leaders.

Data from the present research suggest something new for the Cypriot educational system, and the researcher considers whether co-headship could be a solution for those women who think that they are not able to balance these two roles, in order to overcome this role conflict. Expectations about family and domestic responsibilities are strongly influenced by the enduring significance of the concept of the patriarchal family. Porritt (2016) advocates the use of co-headships to reduce role conflict between personal and professional obligations.

The Intersection between Women's Age, Sex and the Location of Schools

The data from this study revealed an intersection between women's age, sex and the location of their schools.

This research identified that women's age was a very important factor that influenced women's aspirations to leadership, showing that younger principals are less prone to adhere to traditional gender-related values about women's careers and are less affected by the patriarchal family model. This study also shows a lack of self confidence which seems to link to age and experience, and tends to diminish as they gain experience of leadership.

Another significant issue affecting women's aspiration to leadership relates to age, and family and domestic responsibilities. Younger women's aspiration for leadership was complicated by their domestic obligations, linked to mixed levels of support. There was a significant

difference between younger women with children and older women with no children. The older generation had fewer domestic responsibilities and received more support from spouses. This notion is explored in detail elsewhere (Moorosi, 2007).

School location is another significant variable arising from the analysis. Rural areas in Cyprus tend to be more conservative, and this includes attitudes to women principals, despite their years of experience,even though mature women seem to be more confident to work in rural areas because of their previous experience. The present research showed that the gendered practices influenced by cultural norms and belief systems are played out at the social (macro) level within the school, and outside the school context, and that the rural context strongly reinforces the masculine image of leadership that served to disadvantage women. This constituted an additional barrier for women seeking to lead in such contexts. A related consideration was the relative absence of networks, where women could learn from their peers and broaden their experience, in rural areas. Younger women working in urban areas appeared to be able to access professional networks more readily than those in rural contexts, perhaps because of greater accessibility.

Both qualitative and quantitative data from the present research showed that a comprehensive approach to gender inequality is necessary in the Cypriot context due to the complexity of the centralised educational system and the interface between these three factors; age, sex and location of school. Intersectionality in this research was very strong, as the interconnected nature of social categorizations, such as age, gender and school location, created the climate for overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination and disadvantage.

Professional Development

Pashiardis (2009) states that we live in an era of complexity, where the only stable factor is constant change. Educational leaders around the globe need to work in this context (Pashiardis, 2009).

Participation in training seminars

Survey data from the present research show that a large majority (77%) of respondents have attended such training seminars. One interviewee said that she considers training seminars to be the one of the main facilitators for her career progression. They were vital as they supplied her with a good network, new experiences, courage and inner strength; attributes that women may not have when they reach a principal's position. Respectively, this view is supported from the literature as Moorosi (2010) claims that the acquisition of qualifications, training and workshops, as well as participation in informal networks, play a crucial role in preparing women to acquire management positions. This is also linked to Raza's (2010) view that the leadership style of principals may be improved through in-service training, seminars, networking, workshops, departmental meetings and supervision. Another interview respondent from the present research mentioned that these seminars also provide the opportunity to network with other principals, to exchange ideas and strategies, and principals can take advantage of this shared knowledge and apply it to address their school's needs.

A large majority (77%) of the author's survey respondents said that they have attended such training seminars, whereas fewer than a quarter (23%) had not done so. The great majority (84%) of the survey respondents agreed that such seminars were helpful or very helpful. The author's data support Gronn's (1996) view that leadership can be developed through skill-based training programmes (Gronn, 2003:21). Only two women respondents from the present research disagreed with this proposition. Survey data from the present research show that younger principals are more likely to participate in these seminars than older principals but the figures for experience are less clear-cut. Two interviewees agreed that training seminars are vital and important, especially for newly qualified principals, as they helped them develop their skills. The interview data confirm Gunter and Thomson's (2009:472) perception that 'leadership is seen as a form of mandatory skills and behaviour training'. Two more interviewees share the same view that training seminars were valuable for them, especially when they were newly qualified principals. This evidence adds to the literature as it seems to support Mestry and Grobler's (2002:22) point that 'the training and development of principals can be considered as the strategically most important process necessary to transform education successfully'.

The importance of training seminars

Survey data from the present research show that training seminars are really important for women principals. The great majority (84%) of the respondents agreed that such seminars were helpful or very helpful. Only two disagreed with this proposition. Moller and Schratz (2008) emphasise the significance of preparation programmes for principals, which provide a useful base for theoretical engagement. Data from the present research seem to connect and share the same view with Moller and Schratz's (2008:363) as they argue that 'the less preparation head teachers have, the more likely they are to fall back on their lay theories of leadership that are often premised on a very narrow experiential base of prior experience as a teacher'.

The author's interview findings support this view as a majority (12) of the participants stated that seminars worked as a facilitator towards their career progression. One of the interviewees said that these seminars provide principals with the guidelines on how to handle issues arising on a daily basis, familiarize them with new teaching methods, and how to network with other principals, in order to meet the needs of the educational system. Pashiardis (2009) acknowledged that there is a need to recruit and develop a new generation of school leaders with the knowledge, skills and dispositions best suited to meet the current and future needs of education systems.

As in many countries, the present research showed that there is a growing concern that the role of school principal was designed for the needs of a different time and may not be appropriate to deal with the challenges schools are facing in the 21st century (Brauckmann, 2008). The author's interview findings share Brauckmann's (2008) perception that those seminars are offered for new school principals to guide them through the profession and to teach them how to deal with the challenges arising. Brauckmann's (2008) point seem to support the present research's interview findings in respect of principals' professional updating. Several interviewees stated that these training seminars were 'vital' for their career progression. They provide networking opportunities, offer guidelines on how to handle issues arising on a daily basis, familiarize them with new teaching methods, and show principals how to adapt their own leadership style to the situation.

The interview findings show that these seminars provide women principals with greater confidence. One principal from Limassol stated that the training seminars she attended during her career, organized for new principals, were very helpful on several matters linked to leadership. She added that these seminars are organized in a way to

provide new principals with the confidence they needed and they give you the right guidelines on how to lead a school. According to Cubillo and Brown (2003), the personal level is where women grapple with internal issues such as professional experiences, aspirations, ambitions and confidence - what Tallerico (2000) calls 'individual agency'. The researcher believes that these female candidates need mentoring sessions in order to build their confidence to take on the role.

Lack of training seminars

Fewer than a quarter (23%) of the principals in the current research reported that they had not attended training seminars and it is not clear whether this was due to lack of availability. However, this supports the international evidence which continues to show a lack of preparation opportunities for school leadership in the developing world (Lumby, Crow and Pashiardis 2008), suggesting that school principals are largely overwhelmed by the role with negative implications for the improvement of schools. However, the interviews show that women principals did not attend these training seminars because they were not perceived as 'meaningful'. The interview data also show lack of training seminars to be another important inhibitor but only three participants mentioned this. One female respondent said that, in order for a woman to be able to lead a school, she must to be able to find the right guidelines for several issues arising at school. Not attending seminars might mean missing out on appropriate guidance.

The interview data show that women consider these seminars to be valuable for their career progress and how they lead their schools. One commented that absence from these seminars might lead to unskilled school principals. This links to Bush and Oduro's (2006) view that untrained school principals feel overwhelmed by the role. Therefore, the researcher suggests that women need more training and professional development, in order to prepare them for principalship and to overcome the barriers they may face due to limited leadership experience, which is one of the three variables mentioned earlier outlining the present research's material.

Networks and workload

The data from this research show that these networks support women principals to maintain passion for their work, especially when young and working in challenging backgrounds. These networks can also assist

women to maintain a high level of commitment to their jobs. Bush et al's (2007) overview of NCSL evaluations agree with the present research that networking is the most favoured mode of leadership learning. Also, Moorosi (2010:2) supports and identifies the importance of networks, 'as the acquisition of qualifications, training and workshops, as well as participation in informal networks, is viewed as playing a crucial role at the personal level to prepare women for acquiring management positions'. Interview data from the present research show that two women principals mentioned the significance of networks. They stated that, due to their good networks with other principals, they knew how to deal with these situations, even before they access this position. One of them adds that good networking can lead to better workload balance. 'This is where you need a good network so you can exchange ideas, views and perception on how to balance workload and professional development'.

The author's data showed that attending seminars appears to be important in helping women principals to maintain their work/life balance, in order to achieve their professional development, a significant addition to the current literature. The survey data show that a large majority (77%) of respondents said that they have attended such training seminars in order to learn to how to balance their professional and family life. Most interviewees (12) also stated that it is important for them to attend these seminars for this purpose. One of them acknowledged that attending several training seminars based on leadership styles and teaching personas, helped her to balance professional and family roles.

Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the author's findings linked to insights from the literature. The themes identified and analysed provide a series of perspectives, which each show how they play a significant role in women's decisions on accession and enactment of leadership positions. These factors are rooted in the practices, aspirations, decisions and perspectives of the research participants. These findings seem to highlight the intersection between women's age, sex and the location of schools. It is clear, from the most recently available data that women continue to be under-represented in leadership positions in Cyprus, as in most other countries. However, role models can be important in demonstrating how barriers to career development can be overcome. The data collectively suggest that role models are important

for the career development of these leaders. More experienced principals are often good role models for less experienced professionals, to help in developing their career.

Family and domestic factors remain powerful influences in Cyprus. Balancing family and professional roles remains a challenge for women principals and may lead to conflict, for example in adopting the principal persona at home. While most participants point to the difficulty of balancing careers with family responsibilities, there are several examples of women who received strong support from their families.

The Cypriot culture remains male dominated, and patriarchy is the predominant social system. However, the present research findings show that there is a shifting attitude towards traditional patriarchal culture in Cyprus. Patriarchy seemed to influence women at different times, in different ways and places, and for different reasons. For example, patriarchy seemed to be less influential for younger principals, whereas more mature women principals seem to have experienced it more.

A significant finding was the prominence given to professional development as means of building participants' capability and confidence and in providing what often became long-lasting professional networks. The research suggests that the more female role models there are in leadership positions, the greater the possibility that women will be encouraged to pursue a career in leadership. The literature and data collectively suggest that female role models for women principals are valuable and symbolic in promoting their career aspirations.

The transgression of rules regarding the requirement of 15 years teaching experience for all principals might be interpreted as breaking the 'glass ceiling'. In order for these women to become successful, they have to overcome the glass ceiling factor. The findings show that this rule was broken (by someone) to enable at least one woman to be appointed to principalship despite less than 15 years of teaching experience. This suggests a changing gender and leadership landscape. Linked to this, women have to be confident that, if they take a career break for any reason, such as maternity leave, this will not diminish their opportunities to access and enact principalship.

The researcher's findings in respect of gender, age, and teaching and leadership experience, provide an alternative perspective to that of the literature by academics from English speaking contexts, and from developing countries (which share a similar cultural background to Cyprus). The author acknowledges that patriarchy and glass ceiling

issues are universal but these factors play out in a different way in the Cypriot context. These issues, and the specific claims for knowledge made in this thesis, are explored in the next and final chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN – CONCLUSION

Introduction

This final chapter provides an overview of the research. The author adopted a sequential mixed methods approach, a questionnaire survey followed by interviews, to facilitate a better understanding of the relationships between variables and to provide a more rounded picture of the phenomenon. The study was based around five research questions, which will be discussed and answered in the next section.

Answering the Research Questions

Question 1: What aspects of a female's life influence her leadership progress?

The researcher intended to explore whether, and to what extent, women principals' childhood and adult years influenced their career progress. Both survey and interview data showed that the families of many principals supported their career aspirations and this was most obvious where there was a family history of female principals. However, many women principals faced challenges linking to the strongly embedded Cypriot notion of the 'patriarchal family', which was seen as a barrier for them. Family and domestic responsibilities also appeared to be a very important factor for women respondents in deciding whether to aspire to, and apply for, leadership positions. Balancing professional and domestic workloads created role conflict for many of the respondents.

This research identified that age was a very important factor that influenced women's aspirations to leadership, showing that younger principals are less prone to adhere to traditional gender-related values about women's careers and are less affected by the patriarchal family model. In contrast, younger and less experienced women appear to show a lack of self confidence, which tends to diminish as they gain experience of leadership.

Stereotypical attitudes also seemed to influence these principals. The apparent gender bias of the selection process sometimes made them

inactive and lacking in enthusiasm to move forward their career. Some of the participants had previously accepted that men must lead schools due to the lack of female role models in leadership positions. The impact of gender stereotyping on career aspirations was another significant factor, illustrated in the societal belief that a leader should not also have responsibilities as a mother.

Another significant issue affecting women's aspiration to leadership relates to family and domestic responsibilities. Younger women's aspiration for leadership was complicated by their domestic obligations, linked to mixed levels of support. There was a significant difference between younger women with children and older women with no children. The older generation had fewer domestic responsibilities and received more support from spouses. This notion is explored in detail elsewhere (e.g. Moorosi, 2007).

Data from the present research showed that a significant number of respondents mentioned childhood influences as factors in developing their leadership potential. Many grew up within the patriarchal family model and felt the absence of female role models. The patriarchal family model was often a significant barrier for women seeking school leadership roles, because they were expected to be housewives and to be responsible for raising their children. The main reason for the absence of female role models was that their mothers were housewives, a feature of the patriarchal family model.

A linked issue was that of parental attitudes. For many respondents, the decision to become a teacher was not influenced by role models. Becoming teachers was entirely their own decision. However, a small number of participants mentioned that their decision to become a teacher was, based on their discussions with their fathers (patriarchal family model). Some fathers accepted teaching as a suitable profession for their daughters, because of its nurturing dimension.

Question 2: What are the barriers for women in seeking to access leadership roles?

The researcher intended to establish what barriers exist to limit women's access to leadership positions. This links to Schmuck's (1980) view that dissimilar socialization directs females and males into different areas of work with differential pay and status. The present research identified barriers they face in accessing and enacting leadership.

Family and domestic issues were among the most common barriers for women seeking to access leadership roles, especially among older and more experienced principals. This was often linked to the patriarchal family, a Cypriot cultural phenomenon constituting a barrier to career progress. As one participant stated, the Cypriot culture still assumes that 'if you are a woman, you cannot lead. This is a man's job'. The majority of those women who experienced the patriarchal family as a barrier were mature principals, who stated that their fathers were the ones who tried to 'force' them to become what they wanted.

Another barrier for women seeking to access leadership positions was discrimination, which is linked to societal stereotypes. Both factors appeared as barriers for accession to leadership positions for the majority of principals. Discrimination was sometimes manifested in comments such as 'you are a woman, you don't know what you are doing', or 'you are a woman you cannot be a school leader and that is a man's position'. Such attitudes may inhibit women considering a leadership career.

The impact of negative colleagues was perceived to be a barrier for some women aspiring to leadership positions. Respondents from the present research commented that the work environment can be damaging for career progression. Negative colleagues, who are not willing to work as part of a team, can be damaging for a principal's career. A negative colleague can play a significant role for a leader's career accession as they can discourage them by giving them pessimistic feedback and making them believe that they are not capable of reaching such positions. Enactment may also be challenging for women principals facing criticism from negative colleagues.

The absence of good female role models is an additional barrier for those women who are seeking accession to leadership positions. Role models seem to be really important in overcoming the reluctance of capable women to aspire to such positions but there are few such good models in Cyprus. The present research shows that women are under-represented in leadership positions, and this impacts on the availability of suitable role models.

Following accession, the majority of respondents reported that they find it very difficult to balance family and domestic responsibilities with their professional lives. They feel that if a person does not know how to balance professional and family life, she will face work issues at home, or the opposite. Most respondents admitted that they came across this issue several times. Others said that being a school principal and a

mother at the same time had some unexpected consequences, as they sometimes found themselves leading the school with sensitivity and being caring with everyone. These principals described the challenges and rewards of balancing the dual roles of mothers and school leaders. They also noted the importance of being able to balance motherhood and career, even if they are sometimes caught in the middle by acting as mothers at school and as principals at home.

School location is another significant variable arising from the analysis. Rural areas in Cyprus tend to be more conservative, and this includes attitudes to women principals. The present research showed that gendered practice, influenced by cultural norms and belief systems, are played out at the social (macro) level within the school, and outside the school context, and that the rural context strongly reinforces the masculine image of leadership that served to disadvantage women. This constituted an additional barrier for women seeking to lead in such contexts. A related consideration was the relative absence of networks, where women could learn from their peers and broaden their experience, in rural areas. Younger women working in urban areas appeared to be able to access professional networks more readily than those in rural contexts, perhaps because of greater accessibility.

Career progression was also inhibited for women who chose to take career breaks. In order to be eligible to apply for principalship positions, a candidate requires fifteen years of professional experience. This can be an inhibitor for women who need to take career breaks for maternity leave, or to care for young children at home.

The Cypriot culture was also a barrier for their career enactment, because of the stereotypical view that women are not suitable for leadership positions, particularly if they have family responsibilities. This was notably true for older and more experienced educators and in more conservative areas, such as Paphos and Larnaca, where traditional attitudes are more prevalent.

The author's data showed that older and more experienced educators and principals were more likely to have experienced discrimination as a barrier to their career development. Many also experienced continuing discrimination after accessing principalship roles. The combination of school and domestic responsibilities meant that they were often under pressure to achieve their goals in order to prove their worth.

The present research showed that a comprehensive approach to gender inequality is necessary in the Cypriot context due to the

complexity of the centralised educational system and the interface between age, sex and location of school. The interconnected nature of these social categorizations, created the climate for overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination and disadvantage.

Despite the barriers experienced by many women, the participants all succeeded in accessing principalship positions. The next section discusses how they were able to do this.

Question 3: How can these barriers to leadership positions be overcome?

This research question intended to explore how these women principals have been able to succeed as leaders despite the barriers they may have faced. This links to Coleman's (2010) view that the field is slowly changing. 'More than ever before, opportunities for women to overcome traditional barriers are available' (Coleman, 2010:9). Data from the present research show that there is a range of support that can help principals to overcome the barriers that they are facing.

Family support is one of the most common forms of support mentioned by the Cypriot principals. This may begin in childhood, when it can play a vital role in forming and building their character. Subsequent support can come from different sources such as family, partners and employers.

Good networking is another important factor that can help women to overcome barriers, as they can exchange ideas, views and perceptions with other women principals, whether newly qualified or more mature. When people from the principal's work environment support them during their career, they will be able to handle their work-life balance more easily, as they can mentor each other. Some principals commented that people in their work environment were their 'mentors', as an alternative to the lack of formal mentoring in the Cypriot educational system. Mature principals can mentor and provide newly qualified principals with support and the knowledge on how to overcome barriers.

As noted earlier, high quality training seminars can also help women to build confidence and to overcome barriers. They are perceived to be helpful as they provide principals with a good network, new experiences, courage and inner strength; attributes that women need to access and enact leadership. These seminars help women principals to

perceive and treat various issues. Therefore, women need more training and professional development, in order to prepare them for principalship and to overcome the barriers they may face due to limited leadership experience. Given the importance of female role models, it may be sensible to provide female-only professional development.

All the participants admitted that they faced several barriers and that the right forms of support are essential to overcome these barriers and to become a successful principal.

Question 4: What forms of support are significant in helping women to access leadership?

The researcher intended to establish the extent and nature of support for women to access leadership positions. Coleman (2010) identified the importance of networking and mentoring in the career progress of women. Data from the present research indicate several forms of support that are vital in helping women to access leadership positions in Cyprus.

Family support was strongly indicated by a large majority of participants. Women who gained support from their family added that it plays a significant, if not a decisive, role in helping people to access leadership positions. Support from friends was also important for these principals. This took the form of exchanging ideas on how to lead their schools, ideas on strategies and on how to respond to issues arising on a daily basis. The study also showed that friends mentor each other, often for long periods, as formal mentoring is something that is lacking in the Cypriot educational system.

Networking, and support from work colleagues, are other important forms of support for the participants. This is particularly helpful when a woman is at the beginning of her career, as more experienced colleagues give her help on how to handle issues.

The author's findings show that seminars provide principals with guidelines on how to handle issues arising on a daily basis, familiarize them with new teaching methods, and how to network with other principals, in order to meet the needs of the educational system. Pashiardis (2009) acknowledged that there is a need to recruit and develop a new generation of school leaders with the knowledge, skills and dispositions best suited to meet the current and future needs of

education systems. This aspect of support relates to training and development, which are discussed in the next section.

Question 5: What types of training and development contribute to women's preparation for principalship?

The researcher aimed to establish the nature of preparation required for women to access leadership positions in Cyprus. This links to Schmuck's (1995:216) view who suggested that '. . . there is something special and celebratory for same gender members of all races and ethnic groups to come together; perhaps one of the most compelling and powerful experiences that women have in the conferences and workshops for women is the camaraderie, the shared unspoken assumptions, and the revelation of oneís experience which is understood' (p. 216).

Training seminars, which contribute to women's preparation for principalship in Cyprus, are mostly organised by the Ministry of Education and, less often, by other educational bodies. The present research showed that these training seminars are 'vital' for women's career progression. The main purpose of such seminars is to provide principals with guidelines on how to handle issues arising on a daily basis, to familiarize them with new teaching methods, and to guide them on how to network with other principals. A large majority of women principals said that they have attended such seminars, and most of these agreed that these seminars were helpful and important for their career.

These seminars appear to be a very important influence on women's decisions to aspire to leadership positions, as these seminars provide women principals with greater confidence. This is true for all groups but was particularly influential for the youngest principals. Biographical data showed that younger principals participated in these seminars more often than older principals. Understandably, less experienced educators were more likely to find them helpful than very experienced practitioners. Principals spoke about the importance of this form of support, as these training seminars provided them with guidelines and support on how to balance professional and family life.

However, a minority of the principals referred to the lack of meaningful seminars. It seems that some participants felt that the seminars they attended did not give them appropriate guidelines on how to handle some of the issues, which arise at schools. Some added that the

training seminars would be more meaningful to them, if there were more female role models there, to share views and to help them to find ways to balance their professional and family lives. Women who perceive a lack of meaningful seminars often find this to be a barrier to their career progress.

Significance of the Study

This section outlines the contextual, empirical and theoretical significance of this research on the career progression of women primary school principals in Cyprus and on the barriers they face in accessing and enacting leadership.

<u>Contextual significance</u>

Cyprus has only a limited literature on school leadership and this research is one of the first major studies of women school principals in Cypriot primary schools. The findings reinforce the widely accepted view that leadership is context-specific. This is borne out in the impact of Cypriot culture, with its patriarchal assumptions, embedded within family structures and also affecting communities, notably in more traditional areas. The present research showed that there is emerging evidence of a shifting attitude towards the patriarchal family in Cyprus. This, is helpful for women, but the researcher believes that simply changing the structures in Cyprus is not enough. The prevalent value system of society itself also has to change and, according to the patriarchal society structure in Cyprus, women cannot readily avoid the roles given to them by society. The lack of family support, both in their professional and private lives, the lack of learned self-esteem, and stereotypes about women embedded in the roots of patriarchy, are all very important and play out in a distinctive manner in the Cypriot context.

The widely held belief that leadership is 'man's work' discouraged many potential leaders but the participants in this study succeeded in accessing and enacting leadership, demonstrating that such attitudes can be overcome with talent and determination. In examining these contextual influences, this research is also contributing to the wider body of knowledge in different international contexts, including South Africa (Moorosi, 2010), England and Wales (Coleman 2002) and

Greece (Mitroussi, 2009). ibutes to this international This thesis contr literature through its specific focus on Cyprus.

The thesis aimed to clarify whether women in Cyprus are under-represented in leadership positions, as in most countries in the world (Shakeshaft, 2006). The research shows that women in Cyprus are over-represented at the classroom level but under-represented in more senior positions, including principalships, which have to do with the exercise of authority (Cyprus Statistical Service, 2012). Five factors are linked to women's under representation in Cyprus; lack of role models, family and domestic responsibilities, the patriarchal family, societal culture and discrimination, and opportunities for professional development.

The present research showed that Cypriot culture and family issues are interpreted as 'invisible' for the majority of respondents. This might contradict literature based on English speaking and other Western contexts, where these factors are not seen as 'invisible'. Family responsibilities have been a visible barrier for decades in other countries whereas, in Cyprus, family responsibilities are so deeply embedded that women cannot see that they are there to be overcome.

The research also identifies significant differences between urban and rural locations with traditional areas more likely to adhere to patriarchal attitudes, in respect of accession and enactment. More traditional areas (mostly rural areas) gave greater prominence to patriarchy, and parental and community attitudes towards gendered leadership strongly reinforced male norms.

The research identified that most of the newly appointed primary school principals in Cyprus received support from their spouses while accessing and enacting leadership positions, even though, during childhood, they experienced the patriarchal family model. This contrasts with previous research, which tends to emphasise support from other sources. Moorosi (2010:14), for example, shows that 'these women principals relied heavily on support from other family members such as mothers and sibling sisters as well as domestic helpers, but noticeably less from spouses' (Moorosi, 2010:14).

This research is also a significant contribution to our understanding of gendered leadership in small island states. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are low-lying coastal countries that share similar sustainable development challenges, including small but rising populations, inadequate resources, remoteness, vulnerability to natural

disasters, vulnerability to external shocks, excessive dependence on international trade, and fragile environments (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992). Their isolation from other countries tends to reinforce traditional attitudes, for example in respect of gendered leadership. This thesis contributes to the limited literature on women primary school principals in such contexts.

Empirical significance

This study adopted a mixed methods approach, providing breadth and depth, while some previous studies on gendered leadership were based on a single approach (Kythreotis, Pashiardis and Kyriakides 2010; Coleman, 2003; Moorosi, 2006; Shakeshaft, 2006). As Creswell (2008:138) notes, a mixed methods study 'relies on neither quantitative nor qualitative research alone, some combination of the two provides the best information for the research questions'. The researcher adopted a mixed methods approach to facilitate a better overall perspective on the research phenomenon.

The researcher adopted a 100% sample survey of all women primary school principals, enabling her to generalise the findings to the whole country. The researcher also interviewed every respondent who indicated her willingness to participate. This provides the researcher with confidence in relation to the survey and interview findings. The author collected sufficient data to allow her to explore features, create interpretations and test for trustworthiness (Bassey, 2007).

Using a mixed methods approach, the researcher was able to achieve methodological triangulation, through the use of questionnaires and interviews. The survey and the interviews were consistent in identifying the influences and barriers that Cypriot women face during their accession to leadership positions and in enacting leadership.

The author's research contrasts with most of the previous literature in its focus on gendered leadership in primary schools. As noted by Moorosi (2010), for example, much of the current and recent research examines women principals' underrepresentation in secondary schools. The author's research provides a significant contribution to our knowledge and understanding of the accession and enactment of leadership by women principals in primary education.

Theoretical significance

The influence of societal culture is an established feature of the existing literature but the present research is significant in extending traditional patriarchal notions to the more specific notion of the patriarchal family. The author's findings highlight the significant role of the patriarchal family, which is still embedded in Cypriot society, although there is emerging evidence of a shifting attitude towards the patriarchal family in Cyprus. Patriarchy influences girls' career choices from an early age, especially in traditional communities, as they observe gendered roles and see little evidence of women exercising leadership outside the home. Similar attitudes affect leadership enactment for those who overcome such prejudices to access principals' positions. Parents and the wider community tend to regard women as unsuitable for leadership and the women principals have to grapple with, and try to overcome, such conservative attitudes.

The role of husbands in Cyprus is slowly but steadily changing as younger women principals are reporting more supportive partners. This issue provides further evidence of the significance of the 'age' variable as younger principals, often have more supportive husbands who encourage them to aspire to leadership, without thinking about the implications for domestic and family issues without such support.

One more theoretical feature of the present research relates to notions of discrimination. This is widely discussed in the literature but, in Cyprus, unlike many countries, this is statutory because of the requirement for fifteen years' professional experience, which inevitably means that career breaks, for maternity leave or to care for young children, serve to inhibit women's accession to the principalship. This contrasts with the more subtle 'glass ceiling' concepts, which are prevalent in the current literature.

Another aspect of theoretical significance is the evidence of a relationship between conservative communities and accession of women to leadership. While much of the current literature tends to offer a general overview of the issues facing prospective and current women leaders, the author's research shows that these factors play out in very different ways, according to the specific context. Traditional, mainly rural, communities reinforce ingrained stereotypical views while urban areas are more likely to adopt more modern attitudes to gendered leadership. The patriarchal culture remains powerful, especially in very conservative parts of rural Cyprus.

Several authors (e.g. Chorn, 1995; Loden, 1987; Rogers, 1988) asserted the significance of feminine values in leadership settings, such as schools, as a means of challenging the dominant 'masculinity' perspective. For example, Loden (1987:60-61) explained a feminine leadership style as comprising cooperation rather than competition, team structures where power and influence are communal, with interpersonal competence, and participative decision making. She identified feminine qualities as 'concern for people, interpersonal skills, intuitive management and creative problem solving'.

McCrea and Ehrich (2000) contend that there is value in focusing on feminine values, such as those identified above, but do not argue that feminine values belong to, should fit in to, or portray, all women. This seems to apply to the Cyprus context, where women principals have been socialized to be carers and nurturers (Shakeshaft, 1989). In this setting, women generally do not 'challenge' the dominant patriarchal model, suggesting a modification of the theories proposed by Loden (1987) and others.

Implications of the Research

This section outlines the implications of this research for three different sectors: the leaders themselves, the educational system, and Cypriot society.

The leaders themselves

The survey and interview data showed that women principals in Cyprus primary schools seem to under-represented and were facing discrimination in accessing and enacting leadership positions. This was supported by the most recently available statistical data from the Ministry of Education which show that women in primary schools have been disadvantaged in accessing leadership positions for many decades, even though they dominate the teaching profession.

Women in Cyprus seemed not to be as confident to aspire to these leadership positions, because of the lack of female role models in such positions. One implication of this study, therefore, is that women in Cyprus need more female role models in leadership roles in order to become more confident to apply for leadership positions.

The educational system

The researcher's qualitative and quantitative data show that the educational system in Cyprus seems to allow, or even 'promote', the under-representation of women in leadership positions. The policy that teachers must have 15 years of experience in order to apply for a principal's position creates a significant barrier for women. The implication is that the Ministry of Education should review this requirement.

Women principals spoke about the lack of meaningful training seminars, which they consider valuable for a woman's career progress as well as giving them guidelines on how to lead a school. The implication for the educational system is that such training should be made available to all aspiring leaders.

A linked issue is the lack of mentoring and coaching in the Cyprus education system. As Fibkins (2002) suggested, through having role models, principals become aware of their own individual strengths and weaknesses and teach each other mentoring skills. The implication is that provision of coaching and mentoring, especially from successful women principals, would help in developing a new cadre of school leaders.

Cypriot society

The evidence of the continuing application of stereotypes against women can only be traced to the deep-rooted, patriarchal prejudices of society (Coleman, 2002). As societal stereotypes arise from cultural and societal attitudes, this thesis shows how these findings link to the Cypriot biographical data. Older and more experienced educators and principals were much more likely to be influenced by such social stereotypes than younger and less experienced leaders.

Cypriot society still seems to be influenced by patriarchal family models, as patriarchy seemed to be one of the main inhibitors for women aspiring to leadership positions. Cypriot societal expectations, that women should mainly be responsible for child-care and domestic responsibilities, increase the workload for women who seek to build a career profile. These values often reproduce discrimination, because the Cypriot culture remains male dominated, and patriarchy is the predominant social system, in a very conservative Cypriot society. This also seems to be more prevalent for principals in rural areas and

smaller towns such as Paphos and Larnaca. The implication for Cypriot society is that such stereotypical attitudes need to be challenged by people in positions of influence, including men.

Recommendations

This study raises several possible avenues for future research, which could enrich understanding in order to explore the barriers that women might be facing in order to access the principalship. A number of recommendations for further research have emerged from this study's findings. These lie beyond the scope of the present research, but deserve a more systematic examination.

Grounded in the findings from this study, a number of recommendations for further research, and for policy changes, are proposed:

Socialization of female principals

Additional multi-perspective studies are needed in the Cyprus educational system, to explore more deeply the socialisation experiences of female principals, in different school areas. This kind of research will assist to comprehend the differences and similarities between leadership contexts in the same country, and how women principals with different years of teaching and leadership experience react to the barriers they are facing.

In order to achieve a better understanding of the socialisation of women principals as a two - way process, it would be helpful conduct a study which includes the voices of teachers, parents and the local community in schools led by women principals. This might allow the identification of key qualities, skills, training and support needed during the entry to leadership stage.

Training courses and support for principals

Another recommendation for further research relates to longitudinal studies. This is necessary in order to understand how successful school principals developed over time in order to access and enact leadership, so as to identify support strategies as well as training seminars that would potentially enhance professional growth at each stage of leadership. These will provide networking opportunities, offer guidelines on how to handle issues arising on a daily basis, familiarize them with

new teaching methods, and show principals how to adapt their own leadership style to the situation.

This might involve more support strategies, such as having more female role models leading these training courses, shadowing other school principals, attending conferences, having networks available for new and experienced women principals to interact with each other, and training on how to complete applications for leadership positions. Further research is needed to establish a possible relationship between preparation for the post, and professional growth in post, in order to overcome barriers that women may face in pursuing their career path.

A change of educational policy

Findings from this research highlighted another area to investigate relating to the policy of rotating teachers and school principals in other cities in Cyprus and how this affects principals' progression towards leadership. Legislation that requires teachers to have fifteen years educational experience before they can apply for leadership positions is discriminatory for women taking career breaks and this policy should be reviewed.

Co-headship, a way to balance professional and family roles

The terms co-headship or co-principalship, imply simply that two people share their school's leadership. This model is not acknowledged or applied to the Cypriot educational system, as each school has their own principal. As data from the present research have shown that women are concerned about the need to balance professional and family roles if they apply for leadership, the researcher recommends that co-headship might be a possible solution to overcome this major barrier that discourages some women from applying for leadership positions.

Mentoring and coaching

The research shows that mentoring and coaching, which is considered as a way of supporting and developing principals, does not exist in the Cypriot educational system. Therefore, another recommendation is to introduce mentoring and coaching in the Cypriot educational system, as this will help women principals to overcome the barriers they are facing, not only in their early experiences in post, but at the same time eliminate the difficulties in their daily routines. Mentoring and coaching from past principals, and networking with more experienced principals, will support new female principals to handle their challenges and to alleviate their professional isolation. It will also enhance their

professional identity formation by allowing them to better understand their role in schools and that the challenges they may be facing are similar to those of other principals who have greater experience.

Overview of this chapter

This chapter provides an overview of the research, shows how the research questions were answered, and examines, the empirical, contextual and theoretical significance of the thesis. The research questions serve to examine the career progress of female principals in Cyprus primary schools and to address the apparent under-representation of women in leadership positions. The research established the barriers that women face in order to be promoted as school leaders, and how they can be overcome. The survey and interview data showed that the families of many principals supported their career aspirations and this was most noticeable where there was a family history of female principals.

The discussion of the factors that influence women's progression adds to the contextual significance of the research which is believed to be a major study on gendered leadership in Cyprus.

Overview of the Thesis

The research presented and discussed in this thesis examined the career progress of female principals in Cyprus primary schools and addressed the apparent under-representation of women in leadership positions. This research also explored the barriers that Cypriot female leaders face in order to access principalships and how they can overcome them. The research also examined the leadership experiences of female principals in Cyprus schools in order to contribute to the discourse for understanding school leadership nested in social and cultural contexts.

The researcher adopted a 100% sample survey of all women primary school principals (187), as well as a 100% sample of all those who were willing to be interviewed. This mixed methods research, both questionnaires and interviews, led to consistent data, demonstrating the value of methodological triangulation.

The findings show that societal culture and discrimination, the patriarchal family, family and domestic responsibilities, the intersections between women's age, sex and the location of schools, and professional development, were the major factors influencing women's career progression in Cyprus. These themes play a significant role in women's decisions on accession and enactment of leadership positions. These factors are also embedded in the practices, aspirations, decisions and perspectives of the research participants. The thesis shows that women continue to be under-represented in leadership positions in Cyprus, as in most other countries. However, this research also suggests that role models can be valuable in demonstrating how barriers to career development can be overcome.

The research also demonstrated the intersectionality of age, sex and location of school, in creating climate for overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination and disadvantage.

This thesis is significant, notably because it is believed to be a major research on gendered leadership in Cyprus. Barriers to the entrance of women into leadership positions include patriarchal societal structures, which devalue the role of women within societies. These factors lead to gender discrimination and support stereotypes about female insufficiency. Societal expectations that women are responsible for child-care and home maintenance increase the workload for women who work outside the home. These values often lead to discrimination, because the Cypriot culture remains male dominated, and patriarchy is the predominant social system, in a very conservative Cypriot society.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Questionnaire

English version of the questionnaire:

The questionnaire below was designed for a Doctoral research with the title 'Women principals in Cyprus primary schools: Barriers to accession'. In case the questions needs to be answered with a Likert scale, please consider the scale below and circle the answer you wish based on the options below.

5=Strongly agree

4=Agree

3=Neither agree nor disagree

2=Disagree

1=Strongly disagree

Gender: Female ☐   Male ☐

Age range: 22- 34   ☐

35 - 44   ☐

45 - 54   ☐

55 - 65   ☐

Part A: Educational Background.

1) How many years have you been in education?   ☐

1) How many years have you been a principal?   ☐

2) In which area is the school that you are a leading?
A) Limassol ☐

B)Larnaca ☐

C)Paphos ☐

D)Nicosia ☐

E)Famagusta ☐

F) Other (Please state)_____

Part B: Childhood and family background

1) Did any other female members of your family hold principal positions? Yes ☐ No ☐

2) If yes, what was your relationship to this person? _____

3) During your childhood years did you have any female role model from your family? Yes ☐   No ☐

4) During your childhood years, did you experience the patriarchal family? The patriarchal family is a family model in which males are the primary authority figures and fathers hold authority over women and children. If yes, please give some information on how, if at all, this influenced your later decisions to aspire to leadership positions?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

5) How important do you consider the family model (patriarchal model) to be on your decision to aspire to leadership positions? Circle the right answer.

SHOW KEY 1=Very Unimportant

SHOW KEY 2=Unimportant

SHOW KEY 3=Neither important nor unimportant

SHOW KEY 4=Important

SHOW KEY 5=Very Important

6) Was the Patriarchal culture of Cyprus an inhibitor on your own decision to aspire to leadership positions?

Yes ☐   No ☐

7) If yes, please explain how it inhibited your aspirations.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Part C: Forms of support.

1) During your career path, have you ever attended seminars related to training for women principals?

Yes ☐   No ☐

2) If yes, were these seminars helpful for your career? Circle the right answer.

SHOW KEY 1=Strongly agree

SHOW KEY 2=Agree

SHOW KEY 3=Neither agree nor disagree

SHOW KEY 4=Disagree

SKOW KEY 5=Strongly disagree

3) How significant was family support for your career? Circle the right answer.

SHOW KEY 1=Very Important

SHOW KEY 2=Important

SHOW KEY 3= Neither important nor unimportant

SHOW KEY 4=Unimportant

SHOW KEY 5=Very Unimportant

Part D: Barriers and facilitators for your career

1) How important were the factors below in influencing <u>your</u> decision to aspire leadership position?

SHOW KEY:1 = Very Unimportant

SHOW KEY:2 = Unimportant

SHOW KEY 3:= Neither Important Nor Unimportant

SHOW KEY 4:= Important

SHOW KEY 5:= Very Important

- Family background   1   2   3   4   5
- Cypriot culture   1   2   3   4   5
- Cypriot society   1   2   3   4   5
- Societal stereotypes   1   2   3   4   5
- Discrimination   1   2   3   4   5
- Experience in the educational field   1   2   3   4   5
- Leadership seminars   1   2   3   4   5

2) How important do you consider the factors below to work as barriers for your career in leadership position? Use the Show Keys below to state your answer.

SHOW KEY: 1= Very Unimportant

SHOW KEY: 2= Unimportant

SHOW KEY: 3= Neither Important Nor Unimportant

SHOW KEY: 4= Important

SHOW KEY: 5= Very Important

1) Family background   1   2   3   4   5
2) Cypriot culture   1   2   3   4   5
3) Cypriot society   1   2   3   4   5
4) Societal stereotypes   1   2   3   4   5
5) Discrimination   1   2   3   4   5
6) Experience in the educational field 1   2   3   4   5
7) Leadership seminars   1   2   3   4   5

3) How important do you consider the factors below to work as facilitators   for your career in leadership position? Use the Show Keys below to state your answer.

SHOW KEY: 1 = Very Unimportant

SHOW KEY: 2 = Unimportant

SHOW KEY: 3 = Neither Important Nor Unimportant

SHOW KEY: 4 = Important

SHOW KEY: 5 = Very Important

1) Family background   1   2   3   4   5
2) Cypriot culture   1   2   3   4   5
3) Cypriot society   1   2   3   4   5
4) Societal stereotypes   1   2   3   4   5
5) Discrimination   1   2   3   4   5
6) Experience in the educational field 1   2   3   4   5
7) Leadership seminars   1   2   3   4   5

The second part of my research will include face-to-face interviews. The reason I chosen to include the second phase in my research, is to discuss with you issues that will help me to facilitate better and to have validity in my research. This process will take around 20-40 minutes.

If you are willing to take part in the second part, please fill in the information below. The information given by you will remain confidential and anonymous and will be used ONLY for my research purpose.

Name: _____

Surname: _____

Telephone number: _____

Mobile number: _____

School: _____

APPENDIX B: Principal Interview Questions

Before we start, I would like to thank you for being willing to take part in the interview. Firstly, I would like to assure that you will remain anonymous and only the researcher will have access to the raw data collected for the research. The interview is intended to be non-invasive and confidential. It should last approximately 20-40 mins and you are free to stop the voice recorder or withdraw from the interview at any time.

Personal & background information

Pseudonym used in the analysis of the study:…………………………..

School:..................................Principal: ....

1) Did you have female role models in your family? If yes, how did they influence your career path?

2) How, if at all, did the patriarchal family model in Cyprus influence your decision to become a teacher and a school leader?

3) What factors, if any, inhibited your career progression as a teacher and school leader? [prompts: Cypriot stereotypes?, family attitudes, etc.]

4) What factors, if any facilitated your career progression as a teacher and school leader? [prompts: family support, mentor support, etc.]

5) Do you experience conflict between your professional and family roles? [the researcher should not assume that all the principals are mothers]

6) Why do you believe that women are under-represented in school leadership positions in Cyprus? [prompts: family attitudes, stereotypes, workload expectations, etc.]

Principal's reflection, general comments and Closing Questions

1. *Is there anything else you would like to comment on?*

Please add any comments you believe that they will help my research to fulfill its aims. Your information will still be kept confidential!

> ***Thank you very much for participating in the interview. Your contribution to my research study is valuable and your co-operation is greatly appreciated!!!***
>
> If you would consider having a copy of your interview transcription, in terms of member checking to validate your responses, please inform the researcher. Yes / No
>
> If you would be willing to receive a report on the project's results, inform the researcher. Yes / No Address for those requesting a research report: ....

APPENDIX C: Consent Form Signed by the School Principals

Outline Consent Form

I, the undersigned ...., principal of the (name of the school) ...., have been explained very carefully the purpose of the present research, and I understand the methods which will be used, during this research.

I will also read the Greek as well as the translated interview transcript in English, conducted from Miss Maria Karamanidou.

I also understand that, even though I have agreed to participate in the study, I may withdraw from this research, discontinuing my participation while it is voluntary, if I am displeased at something that comes to my notice.

I agree to my participation in the doctoral research of Miss Maria Karamanidou.

I have received a copy of this Consent Form.

Name:..
Signed:..
Date:...

(Researcher to keep the signed copy and leave the unsigned copy with the respondent)

APPENDIX D: Interview transcript (translated from English)

Before we start, I would like to thank you for being willing to take part in the interview. Firstly, I would like to assure that you will remain anonymous and only the researcher will have access to the raw data collected for the research. The interview is intended to be non-invasive and confidential. It should last approximately 20-40 mins and you are free to stop the voice recorder or withdraw from the interview at any time.

Personal & background information

Pseudonym used in the analysis of the study:…………………………..

School:..................................Principal: ....

Question 1: Did you have female role models in your family? If yes how did this influence your career path?

Yes, I did have female role models in my family and specifically that of my mother. My mother was coming from a very wealthy family. She was a teacher and she was the one who motivated me to become a teacher. Besides this, my father wanted all of his daughters to become teachers, as he admired the way people were treating my mum's profession. Those days were the good days. Especially in rural areas, where I come from, it was an asset for women to manage to finish primary school. So imagine if women were even teachers! Therefore, both of my parents wanted me to become a teacher. At home, I was seeing my mother's emotional strength and determination and that was a big influence for myself. Something else that I would like to mention is the fact that people from our village respected and appreciated teachers and despite the fact that people used to be very poor, they used to give my mother eggs, chickens and bread as a gift to show their appreciation and respect. People used to be different those days.

Question 2: How if it all did the patriarchal family role model in Cyprus influence your decision to become a teacher and a school leader?

Even though families were patriarchal and all decisions were made from the male figure-the father, my family could possibly be considered as patriarchal. Despite this, at the same time my mother had a saying in the family as she was well educated. The patriarchal family model was not the main influence for my career decisions. What influenced me the most was my parents' decision to become a teacher. After twenty years of teaching experience in the field, my husband and children motivated me to apply for a leadership position. In general, I can consider that my family gave me the motivation otherwise I would have never decided it by myself to apply for it.

Question 3: What factors facilitated your career progression as a teacher and a school leader?

Most of the factors that played a significant role in my career path was my family, the training seminars for newly appointed principals but above all the passion I have for my job. My family was the one who motivated me and gave me the financial opportunity to become a teacher. Training seminars especially designed for newly appointed principals were sometimes very useful. The Ministry of Education organizes them in order to give principals the opportunity to exchange teaching and leadership ideas and everyone can gain lots of strategies in order to apply them in their school. The intense passion that I have for my job is perceived as a vital requirement for someone who is in leadership positions. If someone does not love what they are doing, they will never have the right amount of willingness to sacrifice other habits and values of their daily lives in order to run a school.

Question 4: What factors, if any, inhibited your career progression as a teacher and a school leader?

During a teacher's career and afterwards as a principal, I have faced a number of factors that worked as inhibitors. Specifically in my career path, there were many times that I had to consider things twice, as there were a few factors that wouldn't let me aspire to achieve more or even making decisions. As I have previosuly mentioned in the questionnaire, one of the factors that inhibited my career progression is

the societal stereotypes which link to the Cypriot culture and society. Our society, which is based on the Cypriot culture and most specifically in rural areas promote stereotypes that most of the times go against women. If a woman is not confident and has less inner strength than others, she might let these stereotypes to work against her career progression. For example, in my career there were a few times that I had to deal with these societal stereotypes as people were producing negative comments, views and critiques for my job. These people were mostly parents and they were criticizing that school decisions could be made better if there was a male principal.

Question 5: Do you experience conflict between your professional and family roles?

Of course! There were a few times that I caught myself thinking whether my promotion to leadership position could affect my role as a mother. This was happening because at the beginning of my leadership career, I was sometimes considering myself mixing up my professional and personal life. I used to take work issues at home and the opposite. It is quite embarrassing but I have caught myself treating my children with more strictness, as if they were my students. I used to carry my teaching profile at home and this wasn't good at all. I feel lucky as after my children and husband flagged up this issue to me, I registered myself to attend these training seminars on how to balance your professional and personal life. These seminars taught me a lot as I have learnt to leave things at work and never 'carry' them at home. This can be a very serious issue for women principals who do not have many years of experience in school leadership. I truly believe that this can be improved if we manage to get more women to these positions. Role models always work as facilitators and can definitely eliminate professional and family roles conflicts.

Question 6: Why do you believe that women are under-represented in school leadership positions in Cyprus?

In my opinion, which is formed by my long experience in the field as well as my wide network, I have come up to this point that I truly believe that women are under-represented in the field. Teaching is clearly a female profession but as you go up the hierarchy women are not

equally represented in school leadership positions. I am also aware of the fact that women are not given the same opportunities to be chosen among candidates to achieve leadership. From my experience, I have met other women who have experienced discrimination coming from the Cypriot society. Also, another reason that women are under-represented is women themselves. I have met lots of female teachers that do not aspire leadership as they believe that they will not be able to combine professional and family roles. Therefore, less female role models in these positions lead to less aspiration and determination from women to aspire them. During my career, I have met lots of female teachers who do not aspire leadership purely because of their childhood experiences (e.g. patriarchal family model, or absence of female role models). Lastly, I do believe that women can experience under-representation in a different way and this links to their background, family and previous experiences. Cypriot society and culture can also play a vital role. If a female candidate leaves in a rural area, it is inevitable that society there will produce different stereotypes that someone who lives in an urban area.

Researcher: Thank you for al these fruitful responses to my questions. Is there anything else you would like to comment on? Please feel free to add any comments you believe that they will help my research to fulfill its aims. Your information will still be kept confidential!

Interviewee: You are more than welcome. I really enjoyed sharing my experiences and views with you! I do believe that women need to have a bigger saying in leadership and it is never too late to change things.

Researcher: Thank you very much for participating in the interview. Your contribution to my research study is valuable and your co-operation is greatly appreciated!!!

Interviewee: You are welcome.

If you would consider having a copy of your interview transcription, in terms of member checking to validate your responses, please inform the researcher. Yes / No

If you would be willing to receive a report on the project's results, inform the researcher. Yes/No Address for those requesting a research report: ....

APPENDIX E: Coding of interview transcript

During the analysis of the data, a coding framework was employed consisting of thematic categories and other sub-categories that will be presented below. The researcher has used colour coding to mark the different themes arising on each question from the interview transcript. She also had a list of useful definitions that have previously <mark>arisen</mark> in the questionnaire analysis. Below, there is an example of the way the transcript was coded, the definitions and themes were developed so to assist in the manual analysis of the interviews.

Definitions of the main keywords (themes):

Female role models: A person who serves as an example of the values, attitudes, and behaviors associated with a role. For example, a father is a role model for his sons. Role models can also be persons who distinguish themselves in such a way that others admire and want to emulate them.

Rural areas: A rural area is an open swath of land that has few homes or other buildings, and not very many people. A rural areas population density is very low. Many people live in a city, or urban area.

Urban areas: An urban area is the region surrounding a city. Most inhabitants of urban areas have nonagricultural jobs. Urban areas are very developed, meaning there is a density of human structures such as houses, commercial buildings, roads, bridges, and railways. "Urban area" can refer to towns, cities, and suburbs.

Patriarchal family: Patriarchy is a social system in which males hold primary power, predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property. In the domain of the family, fathers or father-figures hold authority over women and children.

Matriarchal family: matriarchy is a "form of social organization in which the mother or oldest female is the head of the family, and descent and

relationship are reckoned through the female line; government or rule by a woman or women <mark style="background-color: yellow">(Oxford English Dictionary, 2013)"</mark>.

Stereotypes: Stereotypes are overgeneralizations; they often involve assuming a person has certain characteristics based on unfounded assumptions. We stereotype people based on how they look in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity.

Culture: A culture is a way of life of a group of people--the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.

Society: a large group of people who live together in an organized way, making decisions about how to do things and sharing the work that needs to be done. All the people in a country, or in several similar countries, can be referred to as a society:

Discrimination: The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or gender.

Colour coding and main themes:

Colour coding of keywords identified from the respondent's answer in regards to question 1:

Female role models: <mark style="background-color: lime">Yes</mark>   <mark style="background-color: red">No</mark>

<mark style="background-color: cyan">Mother</mark> (each of these role models was given a specific colour)

Profession of female role model: <mark style="background-color: magenta">Teacher</mark>

In case of other roles models: <mark style="background-color: yellow">Father</mark>

Background: <mark style="background-color: silver">rural</mark> or <mark style="background-color: olive">urban</mark> areas

Colour coding of keywords identified from the respondent's answer in regards to question 2:

Patriarchal family: <mark style="background:lime">Yes</mark> <mark style="background:red">No</mark> (The following four categories were framed from the all the respondents answers):

1. <mark style="background:blue">Patriarchal</mark>
2. <mark style="background:purple">Matriarchal</mark>
3. <mark style="background:silver">Both matriarchal and patriarchal</mark>
4. <mark style="background:green">Neither patriarchal nor matriarchal</mark>

Patriarchal family as influence for career decisions: <mark style="background:cyan">Yes</mark> <mark style="background:magenta">No</mark>

Teaching career decisions: (each keyword another colour) <mark style="background:silver">parents</mark>

Leadership career decisions: (each keyword another colour) <mark style="background:yellow">husband and children</mark>

Colour coding of keywords identified from the respondent's answer in regards to question 3:

Facilitators:

1. <mark style="background:yellow">Family</mark>
2. <mark style="background:lime">Training seminars for newly appointed principals</mark>
3. <mark style="background:cyan">Passion for job</mark>

Colour coding of keywords identified from the respondent's answer in regards to question 4:

Inhibitors:

1. <mark style="background:yellow">Societal stereotypes</mark>
2. <mark style="background:lime">Cypriot culture</mark>
3. <mark style="background:cyan">Cypriot society</mark> : <mark style="background:olive">rural</mark> or <mark style="background:teal">urban areas</mark>
4. <mark style="background:magenta">Lack of confidence</mark>
5. <mark style="background:silver">Negative comments, views and critiques</mark>

Colour coding of keywords identified from the respondent's answer in regards to question 5:

Experience of conflict: `YES` `NO`

Mixing up professional and personal life: `YES` `NO`

Ways to overcome this (different keyword for each factor):

1. `Training seminars`
2. `Role models`

Colour coding of keywords identified from the respondent's answer in regards to question 6:

Underrepresentation of women: `YES` `NO`

Reasons for underrepresentation:

1. `Discrimination`
2. `Cypriot society:` `rural` and `urban areas` `Stereotypes`
4. `Cypriot culture`
5. `Mind-set:less aspiration and determination`
6. `Childhood experiences`
7. `Patriarchal family model`
8. `Absence of female role models`

**Note: This is <u>one</u> out of the twenty interview transcripts coding analysis. The researcher used the same colour coding for each question and this applied accordingly to all twenty interview transcripts.