



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Research Commons

<http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/>

Research Commons at the University of Waikato

Copyright Statement:

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

The thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of the thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from the thesis.

Ting ting blo oloketa tisa lo Solomon Islands aboutim ol mere principals

**EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS ON
WOMEN PRINCIPALS IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Educational Leadership

at

The University of Waikato

by

Laisa Nadia Elisha



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

2012

ABSTRACT

This study explores the perceptions of teachers who have worked under female principals in the Solomon Islands. While much research on this discourse has been concentrated on developed countries, less has been done in developing countries, particularly in Melanesian society. Most literature in Melanesian countries concentrates on the experiences of women as principals, deputies, head of department, and higher education. However, nothing has explored the views of teachers who have worked under women principals in the Solomon Islands.

This study is a qualitative methodology that uses the Talanoa (Pasifika research method) to support. A thematic approach was used in analysing data. The data gathering was conducted in January 2012. Interviews were conducted with nine teachers who were working under women principals. The four schools involved were urban schools centred around Honiara, the capital of Solomon islands. These four schools were chosen because all four had women principals. The four schools were a primary, two community high schools and a national secondary high school.

Findings on the perceptions of teachers include the influence and effect that cultural norms had in shaping the attitudes and beliefs that teachers had as they commenced working for women principals. Secondly, the findings from the study revealed that teachers' perceptions changed on how they viewed women principals. From the findings it was found that teachers valued and appreciated the leadership of their women principals. Female teachers even aspired for leadership because women principals became role models to them. Thirdly, the findings showed that within schools there are expectations and challenges that teachers face while under the leadership of women principals. This sometimes challenges the status of women principals and their leadership. Lastly the findings showed that there were leadership styles of women principals that were said to be effective and positive by teachers in this study. This study showed that both male and female teachers tended to appreciate the leadership and encouraged more women principals.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout my journey in writing this thesis there have been certain people who have influenced and encouraged me. Without the help and support of these kind people this thesis would not have eventuated. I can only make mention to a few here.

Above all I would like to acknowledge God for leading me and opening doors throughout my journey in writing this thesis. He has showed me that when the journey ahead looks dark and challenging at times, trusting him is the only answer. So I would like to humbly praise God for giving me the wisdom for accomplishing this thesis.

This thesis would not have been possible without the help, support and patience of my principal supervisor Frances Edwards. Thank you for giving me advice and knowledge needed to complete this thesis. Your help and knowledge passed will not be forgotten. Also, the good advice of my two previous supervisors will not be gone unnoticed; thank you Dr David Giles and Associate Professor Jane Strachan. I would also like to thank my lecturers in the Department of Professional Studies in Educational Leadership who have passed on knowledge to be able to understand what leadership in education is all about. In addition, I would also like to thank the nine participants who participated in this study. If it weren't for your knowledge on this topic, this would not have eventuated.

I would like to acknowledge the librarians of the University of Waikato, particularly Alistair Lamb for helping me set up and compile this thesis document. Furthermore, I would like to thank the Student Learning staff of Pathway College in helping me learn the techniques of academic writing. I am also in debt to two people who have tirelessly worked hard in proof reading this thesis, Niki Crutchley and Alan Messenger; thank you so much. To the NZAID officers here

at Waikato like Matt Sinton our International Student Officer; and the NZAID finance Officers Jody Jackson- Becerra and Deonne Taylor, thank you so much for your help, advice and support throughout the two years I have spent here in New Zealand.

To the Seventh-day Adventist families and the Solomon Island Community Waikato Association, thank you so much for the support you have given my family when we needed help; your hospitality and kindness will not be forgotten. Also I would like to thank my close friends and relatives for giving me encouragement and support throughout. Particularly, I would like to thank my best friend Lanelle Tanaganda for the times we have shared in encouraging each other throughout our studies here at the University of Waikato.

To my wonderful parents, Kenny and Juanita Elisha; words cannot express how much I owe you for all the advice, support, prayers, encouragement and love you always have given to me as your only child. Even though the distance separates us I will not forget your faithfulness in ringing me and checking if I am fine. Thank you and I love you two.

Finally, to my husband. I am so thankful to have you as an understanding person who has stood by me throughout my studies here. I cannot express how much it means to me for your patience and love in looking after our beautiful daughter while I was studying. Thank you so much Rayner. To my one and only baby daughter Kylisha, mummy loves you! You have been my joy and inspiration throughout writing this thesis.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my beautiful daughter Kylisha Judith Paul.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Table of Contents	iv
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction	1
An overview	1
Statement of the issue.....	1
My profile.....	3
Significance of the study	5
Context of the study	6
The education system.....	7
Thesis framework.....	9
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review	10
Educational Leadership, Management and Administration	11
Effective leadership practices	13
The roles and expectations of principals	14
Women in educational leadership	16
Leadership Styles of Women in Education.....	16
Barriers that women face in educational leadership of developing countries	17
Women’s leadership in developing countries	20
Melanesian women in educational leadership.....	21
Solomon Island women in leadership	23
The Big Man Leadership.....	24
Patriarchal and Matriarchal System of Land Ownership	26
Teachers Attitude towards women leadership	28
Teacher Motivation	28
Elements that enhances teacher motivation	29
Leadership style	29
School Culture.....	30
CHAPTER THREE: Research Design	32
Introduction	32
Educational Research	33
Research Methodology.....	33
Research Paradigms	34

Interpretive approach	35
Qualitative Research	36
Talanoa Research Methodology.....	37
Validity and Trustworthiness	39
Ethical Consideration	40
Informed Consent.....	41
Privacy, Confidentiality and Anonymity	42
Reflexivity in the research	43
Semi- Structured Interview Strategy for Data Collection	44
Data Analysis	45
Research Process	45
Access to institution	46
Selecting Participants	46
Conducting interviews	47
Data transcription and participants checking	48
CHAPTER FOUR: Findings.....	49
Introduction	49
Teachers in this study.....	50
Cultural system of leadership and its impact on teachers	52
The influence of culture on beliefs and attitudes of teachers.....	52
Appointment and commencement of teachers to work under women principal	56
Changing Beliefs and Attitudes of Teachers.....	58
Role of gender in leadership	58
Valuing women principals	61
The Aspiration of Female Teachers towards Leadership.....	64
Expectations that teachers have of women principals.....	67
Presence of principals in school.....	68
Addressing Teachers' Needs and Welfare	69
Communication between teachers and principals	71
Challenges and issues working under female principals.....	73
Disciplinary Action	73
Assistance of man power for women leaders.....	75
Female Principals' Approaches to Teachers	76
The effective and influential quality leadership of women principals.....	77
Sharing responsibilities with work colleagues.....	78
Interpersonal relationships of women principals	80

Women principals' decision making style	83
Visionary Principal	83
Conclusion.....	84
CHAPTER FIVE: Discussion	86
Introduction	86
How culture influences perceptions of teachers.....	87
The influence of cultural roles and gender stereotypes on female principals	87
The influence of matriarchal and patriarchal system on teachers' attitudes and beliefs	88
The evolving perceptions of teachers.....	90
Changing attitudes and beliefs overtime	91
The perceived need of gender balance	92
Aspirations of female teachers	93
Expectations teachers had on roles of women principals.....	95
Challenges Working Under Female Principals	97
The effective and influential quality leadership of women principals	98
Sharing responsibilities with work colleagues	99
Interpersonal relationships with women principals	100
Decision making style of women principals	101
Visionary Leadership	102
Conclusion	104
CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion	106
Introduction	106
Limitations of the current study and further research	108
Recommendation.....	109
Conclusion.....	110
References	113
Appendices	125
Appendix 1	125
Appendix 2	127
Appendix 3	131
Appendix 4	132
Appendix 5	134
Appendix 6	136
Appendix 7	138
Appendix 8	139

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

An overview

In the Solomon Islands today, there is a growing concern that women are not fairly represented in the work force of government and non-government organisations particularly in schools organisations (Akao, 2008; Akao & Strachan, 2011; Malasa, 2007). In the education sector of the country, particularly in a school context (primary and secondary) more males hold principal positions than do women (Akao & Strachan, 2011). A study (Akao, 2008) has been conducted on the experiences of these administrative women and the challenges they have faced while holding administrative positions. One major finding of this study (Akao, 2008) shows that the traditional Solomon Islands culture and the role of women have significant effect towards women acquiring and being in administrative positions. Taking this information into account, I was interested to see what subordinates working under female principals had to say about the leadership of women as principals. I believe there is a need to explore the perceptions that teachers have of women principals in the Solomon Islands. From studies (Hudson & Rea, 1996; Lee, Smith, & Cioci, 1993; Shum & Cheng, 1997) conducted on the perceptions and attitudes of teachers towards female principals, they cite that principals' leadership is a crucial factor towards the school performance in shaping the attitudes, beliefs and work behaviour of teachers as well. Thus, in this study I will explore teachers' points of view of their women principals' leadership.

Statement of the issue

In a recent gender analysis report (Akao & Strachan, 2011) for the education sector, the disparity of gender inside the education sector of Solomon Islands is highlighted. The largest governmental ministry in Solomon Islands is the Ministry of Education and Human Development (MEHRD) with 7055 teachers employed (Akao & Strachan, 2011; Ministry of Education and Human Resource

Development, 2009) and some of the greatest disparities of gender can be found in the employment sector of education. The 2008, statistics show that 14.5% in primary and 7.3% in secondary schools were female principals. The recent statistical analysis showed the disparity of gender, specifically the under-representation of women in principal positions, and with the rapid increase of population there is a need of more schools in Solomon Islands. The MEHRD have plans to build more schools, but finding a principal to fill those schools is another problem (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, 2010). Furthermore, some of the national high schools in Solomon Islands do not have principals to fill those positions. One avenue in minimizing this problem is to encourage more women to take principal positions. Thus, special measures would be taken if there was to be an increase to the proportion of women principals (Akao & Strachan, 2011).

I have not been able to find any studies conducted on perceptions of teachers regarding women principals in Solomon Islands. For instance, studies on women in educational leadership in Melanesia have centred around the experiences of women in leadership, and the fact that cultural norms is the major barrier which results in the under- representation of women in Melanesia (Akao, 2008; Pollard, 2006; Strachan, 2009; Strachan, Akao, Kilavanwa, & Warsal, 2010; Vali, 2010; Warsal, 2009). In addition, studies in Solomon Islands into teachers' perceptions centre around school subjects, induction and community high schools. For example, perceptions of technology teachers on the use of information and communication technology (Pita, 2010); primary school teachers beliefs, knowledge, reported practices and professional learning experiences on numeracy (Alamu, 2010), explored perceptions of design technology education teachers in designed technology education professional development program (Sade, 2009) induction of beginning teachers (Bosamata, 2011), and exploring the teachers experiences in Community High Schools (Memua, 2011). Two studies have touched a little on women's experience with teachers in Solomon Islands (Akao, 2008) and views teachers have about women principals in Vanuatu (Warsal, 2009). However, investigating more the views of these teachers working under women principals is of importance to this study. Therefore, the following is the

research question: *What are the perceptions of teachers towards women principals in Solomon Islands?*

My profile

I would like to dedicate this section to women who have come through my life and impacted me in taking an interest in women leadership.

I would like to start with my grandmother. Since I was small, and while growing up, I really admired the dedication and commitment that my grandmother put into raising six children. Her husband died while most of the children were in their late teenage and early adult years. All six of these children have gone through education successfully, through the nurturing and prayers of my grandmother. The empowering and motivation to raise these six children on her own was one thing that stood out in her character. I can remember when we had family or tribe meetings, when she talked (we come from a matrilineal society) people greatly respected her. One reason being how she brought up her children to become successful in life. I saw her as a woman in leadership who was committed, dedicated and especially a spiritual woman. Her prayers brought out the success she had with her children.

Another woman who impacted on my life was my university registrar, Pele Alu. She is from Tonga, but married to a Papua New Guinea man. She has a quiet personality, yet is humble and dedicated to her work; always faithful to her job as a registrar. All students who have gone through the university would greatly admire her and appreciate how much she has helped most students to attend Pacific Adventist University. When administrators above her were not around due to overseas meetings, she would be the care taker. She has served Pacific Adventist University since the late eighties until the present time. The university would find it hard to replace a woman with such a wealth of wisdom and experience. Last year, 2011, she was awarded the Logahu Award (highest award) from the government and people of Papua New Guinea for service rendered to the

people of Papua New Guinea. I saw her as a woman in leadership; faithful, experienced and humble.

The last woman I would like to reflect on is a very renowned woman in Solomon Islands, Dr Alice Aruhe'eta Pollard. A brief biography: "She was a key figure in the Women for Peace movement at the height of the Solomon's civil conflict; a member of various boards and committees; Coordinator of Women in Government Strategic Programme (2008 -2010), and Chairperson of the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education Council (2009 -2011). She currently chairs the University of the South Pacific Solomon Islands Campus Advisory Committee and also the Solomon Islands Democratic Party where she is the Director of Leadership development program. Dr Pollard is one of only three Solomon Islands women with a PhD (One Just World, 2011). I personally do not know her, but I admire her writings about women in leadership in the Solomon Islands. However, I had an opportunity to hear one of her speeches during a graduation and that captured my attention about this woman. She spoke about her humble beginning and the motivation that led her to where she was. However what was outstanding, was the humble yet simple way that she presented the speech. Her speech gave me a different outlook towards women who have achieved. I saw her as a woman in leadership who was humble towards the achievements that she had gained and the experiences she has had with other women.

These three women have inspired me to take an interest in women leadership. The course of educational leadership that I have taken here at University of Waikato has also greatly influenced me to study more about women leadership in Solomon Islands. As a teacher myself who is aspiring for leadership, I was interested in finding out what perceptions teachers who have worked under women principals have about their leadership.

Significance of the study

The information gathered from this study will be useful for government organisations in Solomon Islands such as the Ministry of Education and Human Resource (MEHRD); National Council of Women, and the Education Authorities of the various schools in Solomon Islands. These are the five reasons for the significance of this study:

- 1) Identifies leadership qualities which teachers perceive as effective by women principals. In a way it helps improve women principals' leadership, and leadership styles that teachers perceive as effective.
- 2) Gives information to women who are aspiring to leadership, and encourages that women too can become effective leaders in a school organisation.
- 3) Gives information back to the MEHRD regarding women's leadership in Solomon Islands, and the potential that they have for future leadership in the country.
- 4) Support the policy of gender equity under article 4 of Convention on the Elimination of all form of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified by the Solomon Islands in 2002.
- 5) Gives information to the Education Authorities in selecting and appointing of teachers and administrators in schools.

Most of the research looking at Melanesian women in leadership looks at the experiences of women as Heads of Department, Deputies and Principals. However, none that I have found have really touched on the perspectives of teachers and how they viewed women principals. Since one essential aspect of an effective leadership of a principal in school performance is shaping the attitudes and beliefs of teachers for the success of the school, this study will try to highlight that teachers might have noted some leadership styles of their women principals which they saw as effective towards the success of the school. In addition, it will add to the body of research on women in leadership in our county and Melanesian countries as a whole. It will also serve as a base for future studies, especially for other women scholars from the Solomon Islands and Melanesia who want to

conduct research on women in educational leadership. The question lies as to whether perceptions of teachers are positive or negative towards women in leadership, since culture and social practices have an impact of how women lead effectively in schools.

The context of the study

Geographical Physical features

The Solomon Islands is a country that lies in the south west Pacific Ocean between Latitudes 5 to 12 degrees South of the equator and Longitudes 154 and 162 degrees (Stevenson, 1988). Its neighbouring countries are Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea that lie to the west (Papua New Guinea) and south east Vanuatu. It is one of the Melanesian countries in the South Pacific. It is a scattered archipelago stretching over 1500 kilometres. Its total land area is 28, 369 square kilometres. The country is comprised of six main islands Guadalcanal, Malaita, Choiseul, New Georgia, Makira and Isabel which have rainforest mountains made of volcanic origin. The smaller islands are comprised of atolls and raised coral reefs.

The climate is equatorial and is humid all year around. In certain months of the year, November through April there are expected heavy rainfall and cyclones. The temperature is about 27 C (80 F) in most times of the year.

Socio- cultural context

In the Solomon Islands there are diverse cultures, language, and customs. The statistics for 2009 shows that the population was about 515, 870 with a population growth of 2.3% (Palmer, 2011). The people are 93% Melanesian, 4% Polynesian and 1.5 % Micronesian. There are also a small percentage of Europeans and Chinese. There are eighty to ninety different languages that are spoken in the Solomon Islands. Most of the Solomon Islanders are Christians, who come from denominations such as Anglican, Roman Catholic, South Seas Evangelical, and Seventh- day Adventists. About 5 % of the population still hold on to traditional beliefs.

Most Solomon Islanders still hold on to the traditional Melanesian social structure. This means that 80% of the people still practice subsistence farming economy. The *wantok system* which recognises the bonds of kinship is very strong in Solomon Islands society. This system extends beyond the close family group; local and clan loyalties to extend to regional or national levels. The egalitarian relationships that require a person to be a leader, through the Big man leadership aspect, rather than inheriting is the common traditional political leadership practice in Solomon Islands. In addition, people have a strong connection to the land, thus landownership is passed through the matrilineal or patrilineal lineage of inheritance (Akao, 2008; Bosamata, 2011).

The education system

The early formed education system of Solomon Islands was impacted by colonization and Christianity that came into Solomon Islands. This early education system was a Eurocentric curriculum that focused on European/Western content, resources, language, perceptions and development (Alamu, 2010).

The current education system of Solomon Islands is governed by the Education Act of 1978 (Education Act, 1978). The role of the Education Act was to provide a legal basis that consisted of the structure and functions of the education system of Solomon Islands (Malasa, 2007; Pita, 2010). The Education Act acts as an umbrella that encompasses four educational institutions which are: Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development; Education Authorities; School Boards and the individual schools. Each of these educational institutions has its role in the educational system of the country. The Act decreed that decentralization of the administration of the country's education system was handed to the education authority of the nine provincial governments, churches and the Honiara City Council. Therefore the education authority had the authority

to select the school board members, principals and teachers for their various schools.

The process of decentralisation of the educational system's administration to educational authorities was because of the geographical isolation of schools, cultural diversity of people, communication and transportation (Sikua, 2002). These factors affected the provision for educational services such as school resources, administration and education authorities to monitor each school (Malasa, 2007; Pita, 2010; Sikua, 2002). Thus, the benefit of decentralisation was seen to be that issues of schools could be dealt with at local level, however this is not the reality seen in Solomon Islands. Most issues of the schools are directed to the MEHRD. For example teachers' salaries are always a MEHRD issue.

The present education system manages over 600 primary schools with an enrolment of 85,000 students, and 140 secondary schools with an enrolment of 29,000 students (Akao, 2008; Malasa, 2007). In 2008, the MEHRD employed 7373 people and 7055 of those were teachers. The educational ministry is the biggest ministry in Solomon Islands (Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, 2009).

The secondary schools in Solomon Islands are categorized into three main types. They are Community High Schools, Provincial Secondary Schools and National Secondary Schools. The Community High Schools are rural or community based which are administered by the churches or Provincial Education Authorities (Malasa, 2007). The second type of schools is the Provincial Secondary Schools that are located in the nine provinces of Solomon Islands. These schools are administered by the provincial government including Honiara city council. The third type of schools is the National Secondary Schools. These schools are controlled by the government through the Ministry of Education or churches (Malasa, 2007).

Thesis framework

There are six chapters in this thesis. The first chapter is the introduction that looks at the context of where the research was conducted. The second chapter surveys the literature which examines educational leadership, women leadership in developing countries and teachers' attitudes towards women principals. The third chapter describes the methodology and methods of data collection. The fourth chapter looks at the findings and highlights the themes that emerge from the results. The fifth chapter presents a discussion of the findings and their relation to the literature. Lastly, the conclusion provides a summary of the research, the limitations of the research and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review focuses on women in developing countries, particularly Melanesian women in educational leadership. According to Sepoe (2000, as cited in Kilavanwa, 2004), to be able to understand the context of a society, knowledge and understanding has to be drawn from the society's context. More importantly, the theories and strategies from research can be developed to help women in developing countries, especially, if the research was done on "grassroot experiences" (Strachan, et al., 2010). Most literature focusing on women in educational leadership has been sited in developed countries (Akao, 2008; Celikten, 2005; Oplatka, 2006; Strachan, et al., 2010; Warsal, 2009). More literature is found in Anglo- American countries, while less in developing countries. Thus, we know little about the lives of the women in developing countries, especially women in leadership, and the attitudes teachers have towards them

This chapter guides the scope of my inquiry into teachers' perceptions of women leadership. It begins by looking into educational leadership within what is means in comparison to management and administration, where it sits with effective leadership practices and the roles and expectations that are expected of leaders in schools. Secondly, the literature will look into the approaches of literature on women's leadership, and then narrowing the focus of literature to women in developing countries. Thirdly, the literature will draw on a body of research documents concerning women's leadership in Melanesian society and take a look at the Big men leadership practices found in Melanesian society. Lastly, the review will discuss teachers' motivation as an outcome of effective leadership and identifying that there is a lack of literature concerning perceptions of teachers towards women's leadership in Melanesian society.,

Educational Leadership, Management and Administration

Educational leadership, management and administration are interchangeable terms used in everyday conversations of school organisations. However, defining their differences helps in understanding where each sits. People in leadership require skills to become effective leaders. Developing leadership skills can enable principals to function comfortably and effectively. Some researchers suggest that there is no true definition of the concept of leadership; it is an exclusive, arbitrary and subjective term (Akao, 2008; Bush, 2003; Earley & Weindling, 2004; Yukl, 2002). Bush (2003) identifies key elements found in most definitions of leadership, and they are: Leadership is a process of influence; leadership should be based on personal and professional values; and leadership with a vision is an essential component of effective leadership. Cadwell (2006) defines educational leadership as “Leadership is a process for establishing direction, aligning people, motivating and inspiring, and achieving change” (p. 6). This process influences other team members inside the organisation towards aims and objectives of the school organisation itself (Luenburg & Orstein, 2008). Another author suggests that leadership centres on a person and the ability that he has to be able to lead as a leader just as much as what he does (Johnson, 2008). The reason for different definitions is because of one’s perception of leadership and its characteristics (Hoy & Miskel, 1991). The conflict between leadership and efficient management of schools is currently overshadowed by myriad definitions of leadership. Most theories of leadership view leadership as an influential process, whereas perceptions of management imply an element of control. Management, broadly defined, means the organization of people and processes to accomplish a goal (Park, 1980 as cited in Catano and Stronge, 2006).

Many scholars describe these terms as “indispensable” (Everard, Morris, & Wilson, 2004, p. 22). In the book *Theories of educational leadership and management*, Bush (2003) argues that leadership overlaps with the similar terms of management and administration. He states that the term ‘management’ is used in countries like Britain, Europe and Africa, while the term ‘administration’ is preferred in the United States, Canada and Australia. Researchers like Yukl (2002) acknowledge the fact that leadership and management interrelate,

illustrating that one can be a leader without being a manager, and one can manage without leading. In Solomon Islands most principals get confused with these two terms, thinking that they are leading when actually they are managing (Malasa, 2007). Other writers agree that when leadership and management overlap, it becomes a success for the organisation as a whole (Cuban, 1988; Earley & Weindling, 2004; Fullan, 2002; Malasa, 2007; Robertson, 1995). Thus Early and Weindling (2004) stated that:

Leadership tends to be more formative, proactive and problem solving, dealing with such things as values, vision and mission, whereas the concerns of management are more to do with the execution, planning, organizing and deploying of resources of making things happen. Management is focused more on providing order and consistency to organisations (p.5)

Other authors (Robertson, 1995; Schein, 1985; Sergiovanni, 1992) perceive management differently. They see that managing is not leading, but implementing, rather than deciding on one's decisions.

Some writers describe the term administration as being like an umbrella that encompasses the terms leadership and management (Robertson, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1992; Starratt, 2004). Administration can be defined as a process of working with and through others to accomplish school goals efficiently (Sergiovanni, 1992). According to Kedian (2006, as cited in Akao, 2008), there is a similarity between leadership and management. He mentions that the three concepts are on a continuum where management ends, administration starts and where administration ends leadership begins.

Most important to our study is the concept of educational leadership and where it stands with gender. Leadership at the present time is very challenging as new

reforms of education are being implemented. According to Cannon, (2008, p. 52) “ the demands on leadership are increasing;- social change, standard sedation and accountability, parental expectations, constant pressure for student achievement and the ever changing knowledge base on which learning is built” have an influence on schools and the leadership practices within. Educational leadership tends androcentric where male domination is considered the norm of the day. Defining the terms of leadership, management and administration can help in understanding educational leadership with gender. Leadership encompasses gender, education, cultures and collaborative ventures when one tries to understand the concept behind it.

Effective leadership practices

Effective leadership within schools is a great need in this century. Principals need to be more prepared, more informed, more accountable; and be flexible to adapt to the changes in education (Bandiho, 2009). For schools to become successful and attain high achievements they need effective leaders. These leaders are the head of the school who are principals. It is the principal’s role to set the direction of the school in creating a positive workplace for teachers and a positive learning environment for children (Davis, Hammond, LaPointe & Meyerson, 2005). In the late 1980’s two new theories of leadership evolved. These two leadership theories were transformational and charismatic leadership. Transformational and charismatic leadership describe the nature and capacity towards effective leadership. Both emphasized the emotions and values leaders needed to influence followers to make self-sacrifice (Yukl, 1999). Transformational leadership in particular has an “emphasis on setting direction, developing people, building relationships and significantly, culture- building, to transform the organisation” (Holmes, 2005, p. 46). The growing consensus today is that for school leaders to influence high student achievement they need the support and development of effective teachers and effective organisational process (Davis, et al., 2005). In a study of perspectives of teachers on effective school leadership, teachers pointed out that school principals “personal qualities (e.g honesty, security, compassion, respect for others) and competencies (e.g., listening skills, feedback skills, analytical and conceptual skills, problem- solving skills, and knowledge of

curriculum)” were perceived as effective leadership (Blasé, 1987, p. 608). According to Blasé’s study on teachers’ perceptions, there were two factors to consider that teachers highlighted as effective leadership. These were the task and consideration factors. Task factors included accessibility of the principal in the schools, consistency, knowledge, goal directions, ability to manage time, and being a problem solver. These personal traits related to principals being authentic, friendly, compassionate and open-minded (Blasé, 1987). Teachers also took in to consideration the factors of the leader being supportive, participative, fair, recognition of teachers work and willingness to delegate authority. According to Cranstone and Ehlich (2009) sharing of responsibility built the confidence of teachers which supported the study Blasé (1987) conducted. Leaders ability to show recognition towards teachers work and commending teachers was also highlighted as an effective leadership practice (Avolio & Base, 2002). Effective leadership practices that promoted a sense of caring and belief in staff towards creating relationships strengthened followers ability to see the directions that the leaders try to practice and help them move towards contributing to successful schools (Blase, 1987; Glanze,2006; McCabe, 2011).

The roles and expectations of principals

Researchers have discovered that the roles of principals today are drastically changing, and principals are no longer simply just managing; they have to effectively lead in the first half of the twenty first century (Bandiho, 2009; Gupton, 2010; Hayes, 2004; Rowland, 2008; Wilmore, 2002). In the context of this research, the definition of a principal in Solomon Islands is a person who is the leader in a secondary, community high or provincial high school in Solomon Islands. For primary school, he or she is recognized as a head master or head mistress. When primary and high schools are merged, these head masters or head mistresses could be sometimes seen as the deputy principal (Swain & Broadbent, 2010). In the early schools, principals were actually described as the teachers in charge of the classroom. Their roles were limited to only keeping the school organized and operating (Wilmore, 2002). However, in the twenty first century, principals were seen as leaders in instruction, and managers of school facilities. In

addition, the roles have changed, and the roles of principals are regarded as important in many studies and publications (Hayes, 2004; Wilmore, 2002). The school principal is the lead figure in a school organisation, he or she is someone who plans, monitors, implements and carries forth academic and non academic activities within a school organisation. The principal is an influential person who controls the day to day running of the school and has a crucial influence on the teachers. Instructional leadership seems to be the high priority, and the primary role of leadership for principals is to visit classrooms regularly, assess teaching, and offer feedback and advice. They support teachers and effectively facilitate learning (Johnson, 2008; Khalifa, 2011). With this complexity of task today, principals need to understand the new tasks and roles they have to accomplish.

For a principal to be able to understand his or her role, he or she needs to know what is required of them, to be an effective leader. Principals are the ones that pastor the wellbeing of staff and students, as well as seeing that effective teaching and learning are accomplished in the school (Johnson, 2008). The level of increase in bureaucracy, accountability and reporting have caused the roles of principals to be complex. Johnson (2008) points out that such role are like “good governance, setting appropriate folds and selection of suitable strategies to meet those goals” (p.72). Theoretically from literature, it was pointed out that there are three roles: Being an administrative leader, instructional leader and change agent (Sanga & Houma, 2004). However, two authors, Houmae and Sanga (2004) argue that there are too many demands on principals specifically in the Solomon Islands. Thus, to be able to define the role of principals is more complex then it seems, because it requires that demands of stake holders be fulfilled as well (Catone & Stronge 2006; Khalifa, 2011). Hayes (2004) described further the roles of principals as being : To set the tone of the infrastructure of the school and work with people to come up with a shared decision; they are responsible for the budgets, schedules and numerous reports; accountable for students’ progress and principals keeping a healthy school climate. According to Gupton (2010), literature on effective principals points out that most of the conceptual critical roles of the principal have shifted from what is managerial oriented to leadership

oriented. Expectations to meet these tasks, duties or roles are complex. According to Catano and Stronge (2006) “Expectations for school principals are often grounded in theoretical conceptions of leadership that compete with the day to day managerial functions associated with running a school” (p.223). All these roles are crucial as to how they can be fulfilled towards the success of schools.

Women in educational leadership

Current literature on women principals has indicated that whilst the number of women in managerial positions in the business world is increasing, this cannot be said in educational leadership (Celikten, 2005). The number of women who held administrative positions in schools in the past is unchanged in the present time. Comparison between women in the teaching field and administrators evidently sees an increase of women in the teaching field yet this is not reflected in administration positions (Celikten, 2005). Evidence can be seen in Korea where 14% hold administrative positions (Kim & Kim, 2005). Society and its stereotype of thinking pronounce that men lead better than women (Grove & Montgomery, 2000). Even though this may be the reality in some ways, women are just as important to leadership as men. Studies have shown that women lead differently to men, yet barriers exist that hinder them in excelling into higher positions.

Leadership Styles of Women in Education

As women gain access to leadership positions it is important to look into the leadership styles which each gender portrays, since women’s leadership style is different to male leadership styles, according to some studies (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). On the other hand, other literature states that there are no differences between how males and females lead: it is genders’ behaviours and not leadership styles that make the difference (Chapman, 1975). Some authors’ see that the difference between male and female leadership is that men view leadership as leading with authority while women see themselves as leaders that facilitate (Schaefer, 1985). According to Chiliwniak (1997) male and female leaders have different ways of leading. Females embrace relationships, and share and process. They focus more on instructional leadership, where they portray

supervisory practices concerned with students' individual differences and knowledge of curriculum teaching methods and objectives of teaching (Conner, 1992). Women exhibit more of a transformational leadership where they get their followers to transform their self interest into the interest of the group for the goal of an organisation (Rosener, 1990). Men however, are more concerned with the job of completing tasks, achieving goals and the hoarding of information. These characteristics demonstrate a more transactional style of leadership where job performance is a transaction with the subordinate and requires an exchange of rewards (Rosener, 1990).

Barriers that women face in educational leadership of developing countries

There are internal and external barriers which inhibit the progress of women aspiring towards leadership. A wide range of research in developed countries suggests why women are under represented in education (Oplatka, 2006). However, since literature in this study centres on developing countries, there are few research studies which highlight barriers that inhibit progression of women in their careers. Some of these barriers (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 majority of men in teaching positions) are unique to developing countries (Akao, 2008; Oplatka, 2006; Warsal, 2009).

Gender cultural and social values

The cultural and social values of a society influence how male or females acquire leadership. In countries like Turkey, China and Islamic countries, there are certain norms, tasks and responsibilities given out to each gender, thus one must behave to the expectations of society (Celikten, 2005; Sidani, 2005; Su, Adams, & Miniberg, 2000). The common norm of these societies is that males are in leadership positions and females are prohibited from attaining such positions. An illustration of such norms can be found in traditional Chinese society where women retain their role of being submissive in the home and in society (Su, et al., 2000). Sanctions are put in place if women fail to obey such norms, for example the chances of not being able to get married (Cubillo & Brown, 2003). Femininity

is defined in developing countries as women getting married, house –keeping; and child bearing and child rearing. These roles are influenced by the culture, religion and values found in the societies of developing countries.

Low women’s participation in secondary education

In developing countries it is typical to find low numbers of young girls in primary and secondary schools (Brown & Ralph, 1996). This has resulted in fewer women acquiring the skills and training necessary for professional or managerial positions in education. The concept of education in developing countries is of little relevance for young girls’ futures. In countries like Uganda (Brown & Ralph, 1996), young girls cannot attend schools since parents cannot afford school fees; poor sanitation and accommodation; and few role- models of women leaders for young girls to look up too. In Kenya there is a similar situation where girls are discriminated against if they are educated (Olser, 1997). Other countries such as South Asia (Jayaweera, 1997), Nepal (Schultz, 1998), Pakistan (Sales, 1999) and Solomon Island (Pollard, 2000) also have this same issue.

Gender Discrimination

Studies in developing countries have revealed that there is a variety of discrimination against women in educational leadership (Oplatka, 2006). In developing countries you will find that males are preferred by authority to hold administrative positions. This can be found in countries such as Pakistan (Sales, 1999) Uganda (Brown & Ralph, 1996), Turkey (Celikten, 2005), China (Su, et al., 2000) and other Asian countries. Brown and Ralph (1996) state that the reason for such discrimination is that males in administrative positions do not want to share their responsibilities with women. One reason for this mentality is that men try to find masculine characteristics that are only found in their male colleagues. Thus, women have to develop masculine characteristics to be able to acquire leadership positions.

Majority of male teachers in the educational system

In the educational system you will find that the majority of the leadership positions are filled by males, and only a few women hold such positions. For example, in Uganda which has 10,996 teachers 82.6% are males (Brown & Ralph, 1996b). Also this is a trend in Kenya where most teachers are male and only 15% are women (Olser, 1997). This has led to women feeling less motivated to aspire to leadership positions.

Low confidence and self esteem

Low confidence and self-esteem in women are big issues found in developing countries. Women's low confidence and self-esteem regarding their leadership capabilities has led to few women advancing to leadership positions. Most women lack confidence because they are unfamiliar with their environment. For example Uganda women lack confidence outside of their domestic roles (Brown & Ralph, 1996a). Similarly in Turkey, women having the same qualifications as their male counterparts, have negative self- perceptions and low esteem to advance further up the ladder (Turan & Ebiclioglu, 2002). Jayaweera (1997) argues that the media, educational material, curriculum and school environment creates a gender role stereotype, and girls feel intimidated to advance, thus losing their confidence and self-esteem.

Too many tasks at home

A few scholars have acknowledged that the major barrier towards women's advancement is the role of women in the home (Brown & Ralph, 1996b; Celikten, 2005b; Olser, 1997). In traditional societies, the role of women in looking after the family has influenced women in our century. For example this is why Turkish women do not seek leadership positions since they would take up their time, and their husbands also prohibit career advancement (Celikten, 2005b). Thus, traditional roles of women act as a barrier to women, therefore, fewer are seen holding leadership positions.

Women's leadership in developing countries

Most studies of educational administration have been conducted in the Anglo-American context, and developing countries have been marginalized (Oplatka, 2006). This can also be the trend seen in women's leadership in educational administration. Due to the disparities seen between the cultural and social context of developing and developed countries, this literature will be based on women in developing countries. When mentioning developing countries, these are often countries that were ruled by Europeans for a very long time; they have an agricultural based economy; high birth and death rates; high levels of poverty, and a large gap between the rich and poor. These exclude China, Thailand and Iran (Oplatka, 2006). In developing countries, women leaders are mostly found in religious and community work areas of society. Yet most times they are among the oppressed in societies of developing countries. In these developing countries you have differences between culture, political system and religion. To be able to understand women in developing countries Phendla (2007) states, "Black women's lives can only be understood through interlocking categories of various constructs including race, ethnicity , gender , class, language , culture, and traditional norms" (cited from Burley & Lenz (2009), p.42). Thus literature separates them into least and more economically developed.

In recent years, economic growth, and social and political progress in some of these developing countries has seen an advancement in the conditions of women. Places such as Costa Rica, Hong Kong, Singapore, the Philippines, China, South Korea and some parts of Islamic countries have experienced an increased percentage of young women entering into primary, secondary and tertiary institutions (Jayaweera, 1997; Sidani, 2005). However, Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea are more advanced economy countries. Going across the globe to poorer countries such as Cambodia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Uganda and Zambia, the government policies have slowly changed the conditions of working women. Other countries which have formed women's movements such as India, Lebanon, Egypt and Kenya have implemented programs on gender policies which have changed conditions for women in their countries. The United Nations Declaration of Universal rights states that:

“All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination” (Article 7)

In summary, most developing countries are trying to eliminate gender inequalities (Morris, 1999).

Melanesian women in educational leadership

Literature on Melanesian women in educational leadership is slowly developing with studies from a range of authors such as Douglas (2000), Kilavanwa (2004), Pollard (2000, 2006), Akao (2008), Warsal (2009), Pollard and Waring (2010), Strachan (2009; Strachan, et al., 2010) and Vali (2010). Melanesians are people that have a same “cultural area”. This is an anthropological term to mean sharing of the same traits (family structure, marriage rules, organization of society). The Melanesian countries are Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and New Caledonia (Warsal, 2009). This literature will specifically look at three of these countries: Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands, since they have some similarities in culture, and the language, pidgin is spoken (Warsal, 2009). Melanesian countries are said to be the ‘least’ or poorest countries in their economies in the South Pacific (Strachan, 2009; Strachan, et al., 2010). Women in a Melanesian society often face barriers towards accessing leadership and it is shared in the career experiences of these women in the literature (Akao, 2008; Pollard & Waring, 2010; Warsal, 2009). Thus the under-representation of women can be seen, not only in educational systems but also in government and private sectors of the country (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2010). The cause is in the traditional cultural expectation of women’s roles. As Strachan et al., (2010) states “gender is deeply embedded in culture” (p. 68).

Even though the government has policies in place to give a fair representation of women this cannot be seen as the reality of the situation. As Strachan (2009) puts

it “ Melanesia presents even more disturbing circumstances , particularly without efforts by the movement to identify the descriptors of culture for women however, there seems to be acceptance of women in informal leadership positions that complement and support the leadership of men” (p. 69). The church serves as a provider of knowledge and education services for women. Thus, women in religious groups are found working through the church, and when there is a peace process it is the women that are the peace makers (Pollard, 2006). Looking into educational leadership, there are very few female principals, and most will be found in primary sectors of the country. Strachan et al. (2010) suggests that “gender thus plays a larger role in women’s under representation in Melanesian” (p.103). For example, in Vanuatu the percentage of women principals was 8% (Strachan, 2005) then it dropped to 3.9% in 2008 (Warsal, 2009). There is a similar situation in Solomon Islands where in 2006 only 2.9% of principals being were female principals (Akao, 2008).

In most of this Melanesian research, women were appointed into leadership positions instead applying for the jobs. Most were put into these leadership positions, not because of an application they filled, but because of certain factors (work performance, qualification, experience); most times women did not want to be in those leadership positions yet they were appointed by men into these jobs (Strachan, et al., 2010). It is men who control how women are placed into these leadership positions, and women have no say in planning how they can be promoted up the ladder.

Religion also plays a big part in the lives of these Melanesian women in leadership. Douglas (2000) states that: “Religion is central to Melanesian individual and collective lives and is attributed practical efficiency as well as spiritual significance” (p. 39). From literature, (Pollard, 2006; Strachan et al., 2010) women base their strength to lead and their emotions in God. Christian prayer is one thing that is very important in the lives of Melanesians. It has become a “custom or tradition” in daily activities. Christianity has been adopted as a cultural element in Melanesian government (Douglas, 2000). Most feel that their appointment into those leadership positions is because God led them to be where they are today.

As a way of moving forward the governments have to be the leaders in recognizing a way of eliminating the gender gap in Melanesian societies. The governments have set policies such as those found in Solomon Islands yet this policies most times are not followed (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2010).

Solomon Island women in leadership

The current census proportion of females in Solomon Islands is 48%, which is still the same as in 1986 (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2010; Pollard, 2000). Traditionally, the roles of women in Solomon Islands were to be a housewife, mother to her children, a family bread winner; and the basis of kinship to the family or clan.

People living within Solomon Islands culture in the rural areas see women as the ones who secure and maintain the kin group of the tribe. They help the men in farming the land, using the subsistence techniques of farming. In addition they do the domestic chores of cooking, washing, caring for the children and looking after the aged. Fishing, collecting firewood and fetching water are additional work that they do. Women in traditional times were seen as the backbone to how a traditional family functions in the home.

In modern times the traditional roles of women have been questioned by women in Solomon Islands. Western influence through media and education has lead modern Solomon Island women to change their attitudes and values towards the traditional roles of women (Pollard, 2000). Urbanization is also a contributing factor towards changing roles of women. It altered the social conditions of gender (Griffen, 2006). The placement of females into different levels of the education system has seen a decrease in women attending to higher levels. Statistics for 2008 show that at primary level, out of the net enrolment rate of 98%, approximately 48% were females. At secondary level, the net enrolment rate decreased to 31% thus the female enrolment rate dropped to 17 %. In 2009, only 30% of scholarships were given to females to attend tertiary level institutions,

while 70% were given to males (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2010). Seeing the reality of inequality in these figures found in education, does not mean that this is caused by government policy or bias of gender yet “it is the consequence of people’s traditional world view, which includes notion that women’s place is at home” (Pollard, 2000, p. 6). The Ministry of Education has created a “National Education Action Plan 2010-2012” which aims at eradicating inequalities based on gender especially in rural areas. However there are no special plans or strategies in place to aim at providing for the special needs of female students (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2010). This could reflect in the near future where fewer females aspire to high levels of education. Not only in educational leadership can less female administrators be seen. In 2008 -2009 there were no females in the decision -making world of government (seats in parliament and ministerial positions) or the private sector (managers and professional and technical workers) (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2010).

Even though there are changes seen in the attitudes of women towards the changing roles of women, there are still some that hold onto the traditional roles of women. The factors that instigated changes towards the roles of women were education, employment and the availability of cash. Pollard (2000) states 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. Equality of gender in the Solomon Island society can only be rectified when Solomon Islanders diminish the stereotypical ideas of female subordination” (p. 15).

The Big Man Leadership

A lot of research has focussed on the traditional leadership “chiefs” and “big men” in addition other various leadership power in the community (White, 2007). There are two assumed types of leadership in the South Pacific. The first type of

leadership is found in Polynesian islands that is based on hereditary rank (ascribed status) and the second leadership is predominant in Melanesia, this leadership is based on achieved status through egalitarian and competition (Douglas, 1979). This leadership central to Melanesian countries is what is called Big men leadership, which is a local political unit (Scheffler & Larmour, 1987). According to Narokobi (1983), from his experience in Papua New Guinea, one influential leadership structure towards shaping people's behaviour, attitude and values is the "big man" leadership. Big Man leadership is defined as a person who has status through wealth and an attitude of care towards his own people (Narobi,1983). As a result of their generosity they gain respect and status, thus having power and influence over others (Douglas, 1989; White, 2006). It is argued that the big man leadership is associated with the masculinity, strength power and wealth thus these leaders are required to be men (Pollard, 2006). For a big man leader to be able to gain his title and dignity he has to prove it by his strength, capabilities of leadership, knowledge in culture, his wealth and achievements (Kabutaulaka, 1998). A big men leader gains his title for who he is and his achievements.

There is less mentioned in literature about women's leadership culturally in Melanesian, or as Pollard (2006) put it "big women" leadership title. However, she states that in different cultures of Melanesia this does exist, make mentioning the 'Are'Are people of Solomon Islands who title women in their dialect. She argues that women play a crucial role also in cultural leadership in the feast giving, warrior and priestly roles. As Sinclair (1998 as cited in Pollard, 2006) points out women do lead yet are invisible to be seen in leadership. The Big man leader, when it comes to land issues and decisions do not have title to the land yet because of their political ability they act as custodians of their lands (Scheffler & Larmour, 1987). The Big men leadership characteristics are similar to the norms found in a patriarchal society. Thus, this is why there is a strong impact on the cultural gender roles in Solomon Islands since the big men leadership is practiced in most islands. Inside the big men system of leadership we have two leadership practices dealing with land ownership however both had influence on people's belief and attitudes as well.

Patriarchal and Matriarchal System of Land Ownership

In Melanesian societies these two systems, patriarchal and matriarchal system are visibly seen especially when it comes to the right of land ownership. In a patriarchal system land ownership is decided and passed through the males while in a matriarchal system land ownership is decided and passed through the women's line. In a chiefly system the land ownership is traced through the first born son however in a big man system land rights is traced either through males or female links to a common ancestor. Here land is not owned by an individual but collectively (Whittington, Osipina and Pollard, 2006). Especially in a big man leadership society land is seen as a social security particularly by women. In Solomon Islands there are nine provinces. Out of these nine provinces, five of these provinces practice a patriarchal system while four of these provinces practice a matriarchal system. The provinces practicing a patriarchal system of land ownership are Choiseul, Malaita, Temotu and Rennell and Bellona. On the other hand the provinces that practice a matriarchal system are Western, Isabel, Guadalcanal and Makira (Maetala, 2008). In Solomon Islands these patrilineal and matrilineal societies pass land which is a main asset down through the male or female line. Land is owned communally in each society by the clans and can dictate how it is used. But when it comes to decision making process of the land, the status of women in these two societies greatly differ.

In a patriarchal society women can hardly speak when it comes to decision making of the land. The land is owned by the men thus they decide on land issues. Women have only the task to convince their husband what is best for their sons. However this is not easy at times in a patriarchal society where men make the decisions about everything (Koian, 2010). According to Koian (2010) in some patrilineal society land can be owned by women. This happens when the family does not have any males. This usually means land goes to the eldest daughter but she has the responsibility to pass make the land to a male child when she is old. She depends on her male cousins and uncles when it comes to making decisions on land issues.

On the other hand in a matrilineal society women have the right to the land. Thus, any decisions regarding the land are made through the women for the clan. That makes the status of women in this society much higher to women from a patriarchal system. Automatic ownership of the land is given to women and men who are born through land owning women.

However, the succession of the land is given to the descendants of the first born daughter who are the heads of the clan. They inherit and administer the land. Maetalia (2008) describes the process of land ownership by stating

When the first-born female's time comes to pass on land she chooses her oldest daughter, but she also appoints a male child or brother to be the spokesman for all land-related issues. In cases where a woman is barren, land is generally passed to the next woman in line (usually it would be her sister). If there is no sister in that family her brother can take the responsibility of managing the land until another female in that family is old enough to take on that responsibility as successor of the land in question. A woman's ownership is inclusive of her tribe – meaning that her brothers have access rights. However, her brothers' children cannot inherit land. When a male child is born to a woman from Guadalcanal, Isabel or Makira, he can claim secondary (i.e. usage) rights to the land, through his mother's primary rights. However, when he matures and marries a woman from another line, his rights to the land in principle end with him they are not passed on to his children. (p 44-45).

Women in the matriarchal society do not have to leave the land like in a patrilineal society. Over time these women have studied and come to understand its value as well. In a way they maintain their relationship with their land thus this gives them power and chief responsibility to use the land in a way that is beneficial for the clan (Koian, 2010). However, even though in a matrilineal society women have rights to the land men still have the power in decisions within the society. Literature (Akao, 2008; Kilavanwa,2004; Vali, 2010;Pollard, 2006) on the impact of patriarchal norms on the matrilineal society is seen. According to Vali (2010) states that “In matrilineal societies because of this belief and value system, although women have rights over resources (the land), men (husbands)

have the power within their family to make decisions”(p.14). Therefore, from this we can see that decisions that women make are not as effective when in a matrilineal community of land ownership. As noted by Maetala (2008), though women’s role in decision making in a matrilineal society is crucially important, it is not prioritized as important. Thus, as decision makers they are suppressed by male domination. Though respected as of right, women cannot override the traditions that are thought to be normal in society. Thus, decision making in a matrilineal society by women is slowly becoming less common in society today.

Teachers’ Attitudes towards women leadership

Teacher Motivation

Motivation is a very complex concept, yet is important for the teachers’ efficiency and professionalism. The human resources of a school when utilised well determine the quality, commitment and effectiveness of the school (Heynes, 2000). One of these human resources most importantly is the teacher. There are many definitions of motivation. Some dictionaries define motivation as “the reason or reasons one has for acting or behaving in a particular way or it can be the general desire or willingness of someone to do something” (Online Dictionary, 2011). According to Tracey (2000), motivation is defined as “all those inner striving conditions as wishes or urges that stimulate the interest of a person in an activity” (p. 5). More importantly for this study, we concentrate on teacher motivation, and how teacher motivation is important towards effective leadership.

Teacher motivation can be defined as the attitudes that teachers have towards their work performance (Rowland, 2008). In enhancing the improvement of the school one key element is teacher motivation. Teacher motivation can be influenced by the school culture or school environment (Rowland, 2008). Motivated teachers have the passion and enthusiasm to be enthusiastic to their profession. According to Steyn (2002) there are some high morale signs which are related to effective motivation: excellent performance, and the consistent achievement of results, and a positive attitude regarding problem solving and willingness to accept

responsibilities and accommodate change. These signs are the results of teacher motivation. Thus, when we have well motivated effective teachers it leads the teacher to realise the school's vision, mission and goals, thus creating an effective teaching and learning environment.

Elements that enhances teacher motivation

There are a number of research papers that acknowledge that there is a close relationship between the way principals lead and the job satisfaction of teacher (Bogler, 2001). Due to the educational reforms that were implemented in the late 1980s and early 1990s, reforms have been significantly focusing on the way leaders are able to lead. Leithwood and Jantzi (1997) acknowledged that effective principals who were successful in their job had variety of mechanisms to motivate and lift up the moral of their staff towards bringing a change. These mechanisms in particular were the leadership styles and school culture that enhance motivation.

Leadership style

Transformational leadership is the style of leadership which can influence teachers directly and indirectly. Transformational and transactional leadership were two styles that were proposed by Burns (1978). Transformational leadership is defined as “raising followers’ awareness to the importance of achieving group goals, transcending self interests for the sake of the team, and developing followers’ needs to high levels in areas such as achievements” (Barnnet & McCormick, 2004, p. 407). Transformation is a leadership style that is strongly advocated for schools, since it is one style by which leaders are able to cope with the new reform changes happening in the educational realm of organisations (Barnnet & McCormick, 2004). Researchers who have advocated for this have empirical evidence to support that transformational leadership has led to organisational outcomes such as motivation, commitment and developing new learning for teachers (Leithwood, Janti, & Steinbach, 1999; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1997; Silins, 1994). Bass and Avolio (1997) argue that leaders that are transformational in leadership style have increased commitment towards achieving the organisational goals.

School Culture

On the other hand there are some researchers who argue that it is not the leadership style that influences motivation, rather it is the school culture (Barnett & McCormick, 2004; Hallinger & Heck, 1998). There has been weak empirical evidence to suggest that leadership leads to changes in students' outcomes of learning, and teachers and school organisation. Motivational researchers (Machree & Anderman, 1993; Maehr & Fyans, 1989 and Maehr & Midgeley, 1991 as cited in Barnett & McCormick, 2004) suggest that there are some aspects of school culture that influence the commitment of teachers to their profession, and students to their learning. Stolp and Smith (1995) state that positive school cultures result in high achievement, improved teacher collaboration, and improved attitudes of teachers towards their profession. In addition, evidently it is the role of the principal to implement a positive school culture (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1997). Creating a positive school culture leads to teacher motivation that evidently is the result of effective leadership.

Very little literature based in developing countries discusses the perceptions that teachers have towards women in educational administration. Research into teachers' attitudes and behaviour shows variations that female and male teachers have towards women principals. Women principals sometimes face the big challenge of female teachers not supporting them. This was found in case studies of Trinidad and Tobago (Morris, 1999) and Turkey (Celikten, 2005b). Other women, because of envy, may not cooperate with women leaders. In other cases, women principals found male teachers threatened by their leadership (L. Cubillo, & Brown, M, 2003). On the other hand in the developed world, for the last twenty years researchers have analysed a lot of literature on both the differing attitudes and behaviours that teachers have to both sexes. Reviewing the literature that surrounds the attitudes and behaviour of teachers towards either sex, implies that there is dissimilarity between the popular held beliefs and empirical studies (Pottker, 1997; Hudson & Rea, 1996; Love, 2007; Shum & Cheng, 1997). A comparison of literature from developed countries and the little literature from developing countries shows a similarity of the attitudes and behaviours of teachers. However, as some researchers argue, to understand women leadership, it

has to be undertaken in a “diverse cultural context” where indigenous researchers feel comfortable to their own context (Strachan, et al., 2010).

In conclusion, this literature has identified that effective leadership enhances teacher motivation. There is slowly an increasing amount of literature which reports on research undertaken in developing countries, and a number of these reports focus on women, why they are under- represented in society, and the barriers they face. However, only a few studies touch on the attitudes of teachers towards women in leadership. There has been no literature that has been found on the perceptions of teachers towards women principals in a Melanesian context.

So my next chapter will look into the process as to acquire data of perceptions that teachers have towards women principals in Solomon Islands.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

For a researcher, an important aspect of any investigation research is the research design. Research designs are plans and procedures in which researchers decide on how they will acquire information for the purpose of the research (Creswell, 2009). The research design is a way of answering four research aspects: what questions to study; what data is relevant; what data to collect; and how to analyse the results (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2009). Research is based on the theoretical, analytical and practical aspects underpinning the nature of the research problem, the researchers experience and the audience of this research (Akao, 2008; Creswell, 2009; Memua, 2011). Research in education is a discipline of addressing questions or solving problems (Anderson, 1990; Creswell, 2009) through the process of collecting data and analysing for the purpose of understanding the topic of research or issue (Creswell, 2008). In understanding social phenomena, the researcher can find meaning through exploring people's behaviour; what they think or feel, and their experiences of what happened through certain paradigms (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 2002). This research design is guided by qualitative methodology and the talanoa research paradigm. The data gathering approach used was semi-structured interview within the talanoa research approach. The focus of this research is based on this research question:

What are the perceptions of teachers regarding women principals in Solomon Islands?

In this research design, I will firstly explain the theoretical perspective and characteristics of the research methodology approaches, namely qualitative research and the talanoa research paradigm. Secondly, I will look at the ethical considerations underpinning this study. Then I follow this by describing the

method used for gathering the data, and the analysis of data. Finally, I will describe the procedure of acquiring information for the purpose of this study.

Educational Research

In the discipline of education, to be able to acquire new knowledge means to be able to research. Educational research is defined as a systematic process of exploring and investigating why and how people behave in an educational setting. Thus, this generates new knowledge to add to the latter in understanding and solving of educational problems (Anderson, 1990; Bell, 2005; Burns, 2000; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The main purpose of educational research “is to provide principled bases for ‘knowing’ to guide practice and policy” (Freebody, 2003, p. 20). For example, empirical inquiry of testing theoretical ideas is to improve, advance and inform practices and policies in education. It also helps to share our own worthwhile practices with other educationists to help in improving teaching and learning in education (Morell & Carroll, 2010). Educational research in a nutshell is important in that it adds to knowledge, information towards a solution of educational problems and issues; and it suggests improvement for practice. It also creates conversations about important educational issues for policy makers to debate and create improved educational policies (Creswell, 2008). Overall, educational research involves stakeholders, teachers, students, principals, parents and educationists who have passion towards improving and adding new knowledge towards education of today.

Research Methodology

Research methodology is described as the “approaches to kinds and paradigms of research” (Kaplan, 1973 as cited in Cohen, et al., 2009). The aim of methodology “is to help us to understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself” (Cohen, et al., 2009, p. 47). In understanding the process, other researchers could if they wanted, replicate the methodology. Inside research methodology there are some key elements which help in the process of acquiring new knowledge. These are: the general approach;

procedure; framework; research questions; sources of data; instruments; analysis and limitations Research methodology in a nut shell is an approach to examining a research question, and the method that the researcher tends to apply as described as “fitness for purpose” towards the research issue (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 47). According to Memua (2011) “Different research approaches provide different perspectives and parameter for what constitutes relevant data gathering methodologies based on the research purpose” (pp. 34-35). Thus, deciding on the appropriate methodology is crucial. Various (Anderson, 1990; Maynard & Purvis, 1994; Sprague, 2005) have pointed out that there is a difference between the terms methodology and methods. Research methodology encompasses the approaches and theory used in addressing the research question, while research methods refer to the tools used in administering, gathering and analysing information collected (Anderson, 1990; Maynard & Purvis, 1994; Sprague, 2005). Thus, the background and strength of the research methodology has to be examined to apply it successfully to the research problem (Anderson, 1990). To be able to obtain trustworthy data, I gathered qualitative data while using a talanoa research methodological approach.

Research Paradigms

The concept of paradigm was proposed by Thomas Khun, who pointed out that paradigms are a collection of concepts, variables and problems with corresponding methodological approaches and tools (Dash, 2005). Some call it a worldview (Creswell, 2009) as it explains how researchers see their perspectives of the world and the nature of the research, while others perceive it as being guided by a set of beliefs that researchers hold about the world and how it should be understood and studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). A simple definition is “a basic set of beliefs that guides action” (Guba, 1990,p.17 as cited in Creswell, 2009). A paradigm describes how a researcher understands the world; in viewing the world, their understanding of how it is and what they perceive as the purpose of understanding (Cohen, et al., 2009). The beliefs a researcher holds frame and guide them to embrace certain approaches and methodologies for their research. According to Dezin and Lincoln (2003) paradigms have their “own ethics

(values), ontology (view of reality, epistemology (way of knowing), methodology (method of acquiring knowledge and form of evidence” (p. 245). Thus interpretive –constructive paradigm fits the purpose of this research.

Interpretive approach

The interpretive approach is a theoretical framework to guide this research. It is defined as a paradigm in understanding the world by held beliefs through human experience (Cohen, et al., 2009). Researchers using this paradigm attempt to get inside the mind of the person and have an understanding from within. The purpose of this paradigm is to be able to get a perspective of how the participant views the situation being studied. Thus, it is the objective of the researcher to develop subjective meaning out of the complexity of views from participants (Creswell, 2009). Other authors (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) see interpretive paradigms as researchers asking questions and creating interpretation from the data collected. The four major interpretive paradigms in qualitative research are: positivist and postpositivist, constructivist- interpretive, critical (Marxist, emancipator), and feminist-post- structural (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). This paradigm takes into consideration that people’s views and conceptions about the social reality differ from each other’s (Memua, 2011). Thus, for this study, perceptions that the teachers hold of their women principals differ depending on how they make sense of their natural and social world.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a methodology of inquiry traditionally used in social sciences. In general, qualitative research can be used when examining experiences of people in a particular context and how they define social reality, thus understanding is created about a certain social or human problem (Cohen, et al., 2009; Creswell, 2009). The aim of qualitative methodology is to seek an in-depth knowledge of understanding human behaviour and the reasons behind such behaviours. Researchers investigate the why and how decision making, not just what, where and when things occur (Cohen, et al., 2009). According to Bell

(2005) “Qualitative perspectives are more concerned to understand individuals’ perceptions of the world and seek insights rather than statistical perceptions of the world” (p.7). In a way qualitative research itself does not belong to a single discipline. This was pointed out by Denzin and Lincoln (2003):

Qualitative research is an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and sometimes counterdisciplinary field. It crosscuts the humanities and the social and physical sciences. Qualitative research is many at the same time. It is multiparadigmatic in focus. Its practitioners are sensitive to the value of the multimethod approach. They are committed to the naturalistic perspective and to the interpretive understanding of human experience. At the same time, the field is inherently political and shaped by the multiple ethical and political positions (p.11).

Qualitative research focuses more on smaller samples rather than large samples. However, in-depth rich information can result from a small sample. Apart from this, there are certain characteristics that (Creswell, 2012) has identified in qualitative research. This research approach firstly tries to answer research questions of the study. Secondly, a set of procedures are used systematically as a guide to answer the questions. Thirdly, it collects evidence, thus helps to produce findings. Lastly, the produced findings help to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves.

Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours and social contexts of particular population (Luttrell, 2010). In Solomon Islands, where culture influences leadership is important. Qualitative research addresses a research problem in which you do not know the variables, and need to explore them. The literature in a certain area may be scarce but through the exploration, through exploration of participants’ views you obtain information (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative research is useful for this study because it enables aspects of teachers’ experiences under women principals to be studied. This is achieved by looking at individual experiences of teachers who have worked under a female principal.

Thus, there can be sharing of in-depth knowledge as individuals share their experiences. Working with this methodology helps participants not to be restricted to share what they want in their own way and words (Lichtman, 2006). In applying this research methodology the researcher promotes the active involvement of teachers in this study as they can freely express their perceptions and expectations to the subject of study. As a researcher of this study, constant reflexivity towards my data assisted in reducing my bias. Reflexivity will be discussed later in this chapter.

Talanoa Research Methodology

Since this study is focused on a Pacific island country, Solomon Islands, it was considered best to choose a methodology which best fit the context of study. This allowed a more authentic set of information (Memua, 2011; Vaioleti, 2006). In Pacific research different approaches are used and their role is to generate new knowledge and understanding about the lives of Pacific Islanders (University of Otago, 2011). One of these Pasifika approaches to Pacific research is the Talanoa research methodology. The Talanoa approach can be both a method and a methodology (McFall- McCaffery, 2010). According to Vaioleti (2006), the Talanoa belongs to the phenomenological research family. Phenomenological approach looks at understanding through the experiences that participants have gone through (Patton, 2002). Vaioleti (2006) points out that the “Talanoa’s philosophical base is collective oriented towards defining and acknowledging Pacific aspiration while developing and implementing Pacific theoretical and methodological preferences for research” (p.25).

Over the past decade, Indigenous Research Methodology (IRM) has promoted more focus on indigenous people and their issues. Thus a recent development of IRM approaches was the Talanoa approach (Vaioleti, 2003 as cited in Halapua, 2000; Otunuku, 2011). Talanoa is a Tongan term in which *tala* means to tell and *noa* means something ordinary, not particular. It means a group of people who are engaged in a conversation the purpose of the talanoa approach is that the

conversation over a time period and the nature, direction and place of conversation is all up to the participant (Otunuku, 2011). However, at times some direction should be given by the interviewer. It is noted that Solomon Islands still has a strong oral tradition where traditionally beliefs and customs were passed down orally (Malasa, 2007). Thus this highlights the appropriateness of this approach because most communities in Solomon Islands still emphasize and practice the art of oral story-telling (Memua, 2011). Bishop and Glynn (1999) state that “integral to this movement has been the realisation of the importance of meaning and interpretation of people’s lives within their cultural context” (p.105). It removes the barrier between researcher and participants in a way so that participants feel that they can relate more easily (Vaioleti, 2006). For this research teachers felt more comfortable when involved in informal conversations apart from the interviews questions.

The characteristic of the Talanoa is that it consists of mostly talking or conversation that can be carried out formally or informally. In this conversation, an exchange of ideas occurs. These conversations are done face to face. Researchers such as Mara (1999, cited in Mutch, 2005) support face to face conversation in that it brings authentic and trustworthy information. The conversations are flexible, which is similar to the concept of semi-structured interview in that the Talanoa approach provides opportunity for the “probing, challenging, clarify and re-align” of conversation (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 25). As Burns (2000) highlights, one of the characteristics of semi-structured interviews is that greater flexibility is given to the respondent or participant of an interview. Authors like McFall-McCaffery (2010) support Talanoa as a “data-gathering interviewing method which can be used in one-on-one interviews or focus group discussions, and is also a useful method/ methodology to use across disciplines” (p.3).

However, this methodology has its limitations as well. Firstly, if conversations are conducted in an inappropriate manner culturally (e.g., protocols being ignored), the research data can be unreliable (Otsuka, 2006). In a study conducted by Sharma

(1996) he pointed out a limitation was during focus groups where some people dominated the session more than others. Also he found that data analysis was time consuming, yet the qualitative data from the conversations outweighed these limitations. Even though this methodology had its limitations it is an essential approach to use in a context that has a strong orally based tradition, and where verbal communication of important messages is still strong in a society like Solomon Islands.

Validity and Trustworthiness

These two terms are very important concepts that are included in a research design especially on the conclusion, validity of the data and the trustworthiness that it demands. Validity is a very complex concept. It is defined as “the design of research to provide credible conclusions; whether the evidence which the research offers can bear the weight of the interpretation that is put on it” (Bell, 2005, p. 117-118). However, on the other hand, validity can mean “ how well a test measured a given area, under certain circumstances and with a given group” (Burns, 1994) or “ the degree to which all the evidence points to the intended interpretation of test scores for the proposed purpose” (Creswell, 2012 p 10.). For example, in qualitative research, validity can mean the “honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the research” (Cohen et al., 2009, p. 113). Also, validity can be when the participants of the research recognise its authenticity (McCormick & James, 1983 as cited in Cohen & Manion, 1994). In each methodology and technique used to acquire data, validity has to be maximised. I also had to be careful in how I interpreted the information provided since evaluation was done on the leadership of women principals by the participants. This could have caused a threat to the participants. Moreover, establishing a trust relationship between the teachers and the researcher helped to ease the tension between each. According to Strachan (1993) establishing yourself as an insider is a prerequisite to sharing personal experiences. I, being a Solomon Islands female researcher and an advocate of recognising the leadership styles of

women principals, could help them to value the need for recognition on their leadership styles; thus, creating validity in the information provided from the data.

The concept of trustworthiness is always questioned by positivist researchers, since it does not line up with validity and reliability, from their perspective. Yet, four criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability) are used to support qualitative researchers so that their work is up to academic standard (Shenton, 2004). The researchers Lincoln and Guba (1985) highlighted four issues that surround trustworthiness. Credibility is an evaluation of whether or not the research findings represent a “credible” conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participants’ original data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability is the degree to which the findings of this inquiry can apply or transfer beyond the bounds of the project. Dependability is an assessment of the quality of the integrated processes of data collection, data analysis and theory generation. Conformability is a measure of how well the inquiry’s findings are supported by the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These issues that Guba and Lincoln have explained are now accepted by many researchers.

Ethical Consideration

Literature points out that all human behaviours are subjected to ethical principles, rules and conventions, which can either be socially accepted by society or not be acceptable (Anderson, 1990). Most universities have an ethical review procedure before any research can be undertaken. For my research, before I could go and collect my data, I had to follow the Waikato University’s Research Code of Ethics regulated by the University’s Research Ethics Committee. A submission of an ethics application had to be submitted to the university ethics committee and approved before the commencement of my research.

The nature of research ethics involves being clear about the agreement that you have with your participants or contacts. It includes the informed consent of your

participants that you are going to interview, question or take documents from, as well as agreements about the uses of the data and how the data is to be analysed, reported and disseminated (Bell, 2005). The research purposes, content, process and outcomes have to abide by ethical principles and practices (Cohen et al., 2009). As a result, I, as an educational researcher, had to anticipate the ethical issues that could arise in the research process of collecting data, and in writing and disseminating reports (Creswell, 2012).

Guidelines are put in place to ensure that human subjects are informed and protected from harm. Bogdan and Biklen (2007, p. 48) suggest guidelines ensure that:-

1. Informants enter research projects voluntarily, understanding the nature of the study and the dangers and obligations that are involved.
2. Informants are not exposed to risks that are greater than the gains they might derive,

Even though there are guidelines in place, there can be complications and expectations in many cases that are difficult and undesirable. In such, it is in the researcher's hands to decide and make judgement. Punch (2005, as cited in Bogden & Biklen, 2007) states that "As a researcher you have to know yourself, your values and your beliefs, and be familiar with the principles other researchers have used in making such decisions" (p.52). That is why, in your ethical application a literature review has to be made to justify why you wish to research a certain topic of interest.

Informed Consent

Obtaining the consent of subjects is an important process in ethical research. The reason for this is that it may expose the participants to stress, pain, the invasion of privacy, or loss of control during the collection of data. Getting the consent of subjects varies from strict protocols in some cultures to not so strict in others. Yet,

social research requires the consent of subjects (Cohen et al., 2009). The principle of informed consent that it is the right of the participant to give consent before participating in the research. (Luttrell, 2010). Anderson (1990) gives six elements to informed consent: (1) an explanation of the procedures used in the experiment and their purpose, (2) a description of any reasonably foreseeable risks and discomforts to the subjects, (3) a description of any benefits that may reasonably be expected, (4) a disclosure of any alternative procedures that might be advantageous to the subject, (5) an offer to answer any questions concerning the procedures, and (6) a statement that participation is voluntary and that the subject is free to withdraw from participation at any time. (p. 30).

Privacy, Confidentiality and Anonymity

The right to privacy is: “An important right and implies that the individual concerned should decide what aspects of their personal attitudes, opinions, habits, eccentricities, doubts and fears are to be communicated or withheld” (Anderson, 1990, p. 24). The nature of privacy gives subjects the right to not take part in the research; not to answer questions, and not to be interviewed. The tools that are used to record information, for example, tape recorders or video cameras have to be agreed to by the participant. This is because these devices are threats to privacy. For my research, there were codes put in place to signify the name of each school and the teachers within the school. The information regarding the use of codes for the names of participants are also contained inside the informed consent letter. The codes that were put in place were the strategy of privacy in not linking the data to the participant concerned (Anderson, 1990; Cohen et al., 2009).

Confidentiality is about researchers knowing about the information and the identification of the participants and keeping this information private. Researchers must not make any connections public and there are boundaries on the information provided. The concept of confidentiality helps protect participants' privacy. Protecting the identification of participants means obtaining permission for the subsequent use of data (O'Leary, 2004); the deletion of individuals' data

(Cohen et al., 2009); and, when quoting and reporting information, protecting the identity of the individual (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). However, there is also an issue concerning confidentiality, when some people are able to work out who the respondents are (O'Leary, 2004). This can happen in small countries, such as the Solomon Islands where the population is small (Akao, 2008).

Anonymity is when the researcher or another person cannot identify the participant or the informant who provided the information. A participant's privacy is guaranteed when this happens, even though sometimes the information is personal or sensitive. Questionnaires are a good example of anonymity, in that there are no "identifying marks- names, addresses, occupational details or coding symbols", while with an interview, a promise of confidentiality is made. "Non-traceability is an important matter and this extends to aggregating data in some cases so that an individual's response is unknowable" (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 64).

Reflexivity in the research

In qualitative research, reflexivity is one aspect to consider. Reflexivity is a process by which an investigator makes a self-reflection. This is by looking at one's bias, theoretical predisposition and preferences (Luttrell, 2010). In this research I constantly reflected on my questions and interviews, data collection and transcription to reduce my own bias in the research. The author Luttrell (2010) states that "Understanding one's "self" and stake in one's project is crucial for knowing both the limitations and the strengths of the "instrument" (p.3). It is very important that a researcher does a critical self-reflection of their social backgrounds, relationship to the field site and theoretical and political leanings, since these all can contribute in some way to the bias of the researcher (Cohen et al., 2009; Luttrell, 2010). That is why several authors suggest that "researchers should acknowledge and disclose their own selves in the research, seeking to understand their part in, or influence on, the research" (Cohen et al., 2009, p. 171). Since I am a Solomon Island female and studying female leadership, I had to be conscious of this with my participants, some of whom were males. I had to

ensure that my personal background did not jeopardize my relationship with my participants. The main characteristics of bias had to be negated when reflecting on each stage of this research.

Semi- Structured Interview Strategy for Data Collection

This data collection method is one of the most common and widely used methods in research. If correctly and skilfully used it can be a rich source of information (Anderson, 1990). Interview is defined as “a specialized form of communication between people for a specific purpose associated with some agreed matter” (Anderson, 1990, p. 222). The process of an interview is the researcher asking open ended questions of the participant or participants, obtaining valid information and recording the information accurately (Burns, 2000; Creswell, 2012). A semi-interview uses open and closed questions to extract information. There are some advantages when using this method. According to Burns (2000) there are several advantages:

Flexibility; response rate; a face –to-face interaction; a useful method when extensive data is required on a small number of complex topics; probing may be used to elicit more complete responses; observation of the respondent’s non- verbal communication and environment are possible; greater flexibility is afforded to the respondent; and the interviewer is able to control the sequence of the items. This response is useful in obtaining responses from people who would find a written response impossible and individualised appreciation can be shown to the respondents (p. 361-362).

Some of the limitations to this method are that it is:

More expensive and time consuming; limited number of respondents may be interviewed due to time and financial considerations; finding skilled and trained interviewers with appropriate interpersonal skills maybe difficult; an interviewer effect may result from interaction between the interviewer and

respondent; respondents may feel that they are being 'put on the spot'. (Burns, 2000, p. 361-36)

Semi-structured interviews are relevant to use in this research since participants will be willing to respond and interact verbally, also freely openly express themselves instead of writing it out. This fits in well with the talanoa approach. In addition, interviews "are seen to provide the route through which intersubjectivity and hierarchical relationships between women researchers and women participants can be developed" (Maynard & Purvis, 1994, p. 34).

Data Analysis

Data analysis is about making sense of the information provided by the participant during the data collection process. Its role is to define the "situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities" (Cohen, et al., 2009, p. 184). This research adopted the qualitative thematic analysis. Thematic analysis focuses on identifying themes in qualitative research, and is identified by the use of coding schemes (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Creswell, 2012; Cohen et al., 2009). It is a common approach used in this type of research, generally treating accounts as a resource for finding out about the reality or experiences to which they refer to (Burns, 2000). In a thematic analysis the researcher has a choice of using hand analysis or computer analysis of qualitative data. Adopting hand analysis, where the researchers mark or code data by hand and divide it into different themes, was suitable in this research (Creswell, 2012). Thematic data analysis is suitable when analysing and reporting personal qualitative interview data.

Research Process

In this section, I will explain and describe the process that was used to collect my data. These were the following: access to the institution, selection of the participants, conducting of interviews, data transcription and participant checking.

Access to institution

To conduct a research in the Solomon Islands I had to write a letter to the Ministry of Education and Human Research Development. The letter was forwarded to the Permanent Secretary and the Under- Secretary for the Ministry of Education (Appendix 1). This was done two months before the initial collecting of data. The purpose of this letter was to make them aware of the research and also to acquire a research application form to conduct research in the country (Appendix 2). An approved permit was given to me from those concerned (Appendix 3). A letter was also given to the principals of the four schools to be studied (Appendix 4). The reason for this was that, upon arrival, I was made aware of which schools had agreed for me to collect my data from them. Letters were sent to a person that I corresponded with from the Solomon Islands and he notified me the results as to which schools agreed for me to conduct research. Education authorities of the four schools were notified by letter upon my arrival in the Solomon Islands (Appendix 5).

Selecting Participants

The selection of my nine participants was done in three ways: By principal's selection, voluntarily, or handpicked by myself. The participants were chosen from the four schools that had women principals. The four schools were a primary school, two community high schools and one national high school. I had to wait two weeks, since the first week was induction week for each school, and during the second week there was a cyclone. Thus schools were closed for some time, but towards my third week, I was able to start my interviews with the participants. Upon arrival I had to meet up with my correspondent person to get an update from the four letters sent to the principals. After getting my information, I went and saw the principals from the four schools. However, two principals commented that they had not sighted the letter for conducting research in their school. Explanations were made, and a second letter had to be given to them before they agreed to the participation of their schools. The principals from these two schools voluntarily asked that they be the ones to select my participants. Their selection criteria were based on age and gender. Thus, at one school I had one elderly and one young female participant and at the other school I had a female and male

participant. The rest of the participants, I had to ask if they would voluntarily like to participate.

Letters of invitation were given to each participant through their principal or face – to –face with them, including the interview questions to be asked (Appendix 6). This was to help participants to be prepared in advance for what they would be asked in the interview. The interview times were set by their principal or themselves. All participants agreed to be interviewed. However, one particular participant agreed but did not turn up on the scheduled time for interview. A reschedule was made for another interview with her. However, it did not eventuate. Thus, I had to ask a male teacher to replace her. This was to give a representation of gender in my research. Thus, six participants were females and three were males.

Conducting interviews

As stated earlier, each participant viewed the interview questions two days before the initial interview was done (Appendix 7). This was to give them time to know what they would be questioned on. All participants were happy that the interview questions were given to them in advance, as they said they would feel nervous if they did not know what the interview questions were. Interviews were conducted at the various schools selected for research. Each interview lasted for one to one and half hours. Most interviews were conducted during recess or after school, when participants were free from teaching. Before the interviews were conducted, a consent form was signed showing their agreement to be interviewed (Appendix 8). The interview questions were guided by the main research question and five sub research question (Appendix 9).

The main research question was:

What perceptions do teachers hold of women principals in Solomon Islands?

The five sub- research questions were:

- 1) What are the attitudes and beliefs of teachers concerning women principals?
- 2) To what extent do women leaders' leadership traits influence teachers?

- 3) What expectations do teachers have of women principals' roles?
- 4) What specific interactions do teachers experience that influence their conceptions of the leadership of women principals?
- 5) What do teachers see as effective leadership in how women principals lead?

To make my interviewees comfortable, I introduced myself and gave a brief background about myself. Then I invited my participant to do the same. This helped in stopping the nervousness that some participants might have had, especially the female participants. Each interview was conducted in pidgin (the *lingua franca* of Solomon Islands) since participants felt more comfortable about expressing themselves through this medium of communication. Also, a tape recorder was used for the duration of the conversation. Each participant was happy to be recorded by a tape recorder.

Data transcription and participants' checking

For this stage, the interviews were transcribed and translated into English simultaneously. This was a tiring task that took a maximum four hours for each interview. Each transcription was written out as precisely as possible of what had been said in pidgin. Therefore, some grammar was not corrected when handed back to the participants. However, it was explained to them to check the main ideas of what had been said; to make comments, add information if necessary, clarify and validate each transcript given to them. This was done by each participant. However, one participant was not clear about the transcribed interview format and looked to disagree with the structure being used in the transcription. Thus, it had to be explained to her before she was satisfied with her transcription. All transcriptions were verified by the participants in the Solomon Islands before I came back to New Zealand. Thus, upon arrival, data analysis commenced.

The following chapter will describe the findings of the research, using the methodological process explained in this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter explores the thoughts, perceptions, beliefs and attitudes that teachers have of women principals through interviews with nine participants that were conducted in Honiara early in 2012. The primary aim of the research was to explore the perceptions that teachers have of women principals in both primary and secondary schools in the Solomon Islands. The main research question was: what are the perceptions of teachers towards women principals in the Solomon Islands? The research question was then developed into five sub- research questions which were:

- 1) What are the attitudes and beliefs teachers have concerning women principals?
- 2) To what extent do women leaders' leadership traits influence teacher perceptions?
- 3) What expectations do teachers have on the role of women principals' role?
- 4) What specific interaction do teachers experience that influences their conceptions of the leadership of women principals?
- 5) What do teachers see as effective leadership in how women principals lead?

The interview questions were guided by these five sub research questions above. Five themes emerged from the interviews of these nine participants. These were: How cultural systems of leadership impacted on teacher beliefs and attitudes; the changing beliefs and attitudes of teachers towards women principals; expectations of teachers; challenges faced working under a woman principal, and the effective and influential quality leadership styles of women principals.

Under each five major themes, sub themes emerged to describe how teachers perceived women principals. Firstly, under cultural systems of leadership and the impact it has towards teachers' beliefs and attitudes, findings revealed that cultural systems of leadership influenced the beliefs and attitudes of teachers. Another finding focused on teachers' appointments to position where they were working under a women principal. Secondly, the underlying themes surrounding the changing beliefs and attitudes of teachers were: the role of gender in leadership, valuing women principals, and teachers changing aspirations towards leadership. Thirdly, themes under expectations of teachers were: involvement and interaction of principals in the daily programme of the school, addressing teachers' needs and welfare; principal's administrative role, and the communication between teachers and the principal. Fourthly, under the challenges that teachers may face when working under a female principal, themes cited were: disciplinary action; assistance of man power for women leaders, and female principals' approach to teachers. Lastly, effective and influential quality leadership traits of women principals were identified in the conversations with participants. These were: delegating responsibilities; the interpersonal relationships of women; decision- making style, and lastly, the concept of a visionary leader.

I begin this next section by introducing each participant who was interviewed in this study. To maintain confidentiality I have used pseudonyms for teachers and school names so that anonymity is maintained.

Teachers in this study

This study involved nine teachers from four schools around Honiara, the capital city of the Solomon Islands. Each of these schools have pseudonym names, we have Riverside School, Lakeview School, Greenville School and Northview School. The four schools selected included a primary, two community high schools and a national high school.

Nine teachers were selected for this study. Six of these teachers were female and will be known as: Pauline, Betsy, Rachel, Ivy, Hazel and Florence. The other three were males and will be known as: Samson, Lance and Clyde. The following taught at these schools: Pauline, Rachel and Lance taught at Riverside school, Besty, Ivy and Samson taught at Lakeview School, Hazel and Clyde taught at Greenville School and Florence taught at Northview School. Eight of these participants were married. Their ages ranged from early thirties to late fifties. There was a contrast in the cultural backgrounds with respect to land ownership that each teacher came from, as the Solomon Islands have provinces within that adopt either a matrilineal or patrilineal system of leadership. Therefore, in this study teachers either came from a matriarchal or patriarchal society and included those who were bilineal descended. Lance and Samson came from a matrilineal society; Rachel, Hazel, and Florence came from a patrilineal background; and Betsy, Pauline, Ivy and Clyde were bilineal descended.

Each of these nine participants either taught at primary or secondary level. Six of these participants were primary teachers while three were high school teachers. Their qualifications ranged from five teachers holding a Diploma in education, two teachers holding a Bachelor degree in education, and the last two teachers holding a Masters in educational administration. Their teaching experience ranged from four years to twenty-seven years of teaching. Eight of the participants had experienced working under a male principal, and only one had worked under a female principal throughout her teaching career. Therefore, in this study most teachers were able to share their experiences and compare the leadership of women and men principals. The majority of the teachers had worked under a female principal for three years while others had one year, seven years and thirteen years under female leadership. Thus, with an understanding of the teachers' background, I will now look into the first theme on the cultural system of leadership and its impact on teachers.

Cultural system of leadership and its impact on teachers

The teachers in this study came from different parts of the Solomon Islands. Each individual person had either a matrilineal or patrilineal background, or way of organising themselves based on where they came from. The provinces from which these teachers came from were Malaita and Western Province. The cultural systems for land ownership for these two provinces are different. Malaita Province practises a patriarchal system while Western Province practises a matriarchal system. Teachers who came from a patriarchal background had different perceptions about women leaders to teachers who came from a matrilineal background. The socio cultural systems of leadership greatly influenced perceptions that teachers initially had of women principals. The influence of the social system of leadership initially caused positive or negative perceptions from participants in the study. The cultural norms of leadership that were believed and valued by each participant are described in this section.

The influence of culture on beliefs and attitudes of teachers

In this study it was quite clear that all participants were initially influenced by their cultural beliefs and attitudes when they first started working under a woman principal.

The patriarchal norms had a much stronger influence on participants from a patrilineal background. All participants from a patriarchal background, and those who were bilineal in descent had the mentality that initially leadership was a man's role and not appropriate for women to question. Thus, initially working under a women principal brought a lot of questions and challenges to these participants. Ivy stated:

Coming from a province like Malaita where they practise a patrilineal system it was always hard for me to approach men. I always felt nervous when I needed help from men. So when I first worked under a women principal it affected my judgment at first, why a woman was holding a leadership role.

Clyde raised this issue when he got appointed to teach at Lakeview School:

Coming from a patrilineal society when I got appointed to come and work under this female principal I said “How come a woman is principal up there?” This was one thought running through my mind. For some of my colleagues especially from Malaita this might be their thoughts also because I am from Malaita too. And Malaita we practice a patrilineal system. I also was saying to myself “I think this other person should be up there and not this female...”

Ivy, who came from a patriarchal society shared that she thought leadership was meant for men and not for women. This was because she did not think that women had the necessary skills in leadership to run a school. Thus, there was the perception with the participants from a patrilineal society that men have the leadership skills to become a principal. Being accustomed to seeing men holding principal positions had a very strong influence on the beliefs of these participants.

An influence on the acceptance of women as principals seemed to be the educational experiences of the participants themselves. This was expressed by female participants who came from a patriarchal system. They said that being educated broadened their minds, so they could accept and appreciate female leadership. The dominance of males in decision making and leadership meant that they thought that male decisions were only the right decisions to follow. Hazel expressed this:

Most decisions are done by men. We may discuss but the last thing they will have to make whether we like it or not (sic). Traditionally when we have the chance to share our thoughts we hold back to share it or we do not want to show it. Yet when educated I appreciated women leaders. I come to think that not only men are wise; women too are good decision makers... If I did not overcome this feeling of following the patriarchal norms

then I will not accept women as leaders. This is because I don't have women leaders in my village.

Florence also shared the same sentiments by stating:

...When I was educated, I then realised that even though men may dominate the leadership field women can be leaders too...when I became educated I did away with this cultural idea. I did not question why that lady is up there. I just wanted to see what challenges I would face under her leadership.

For the participants who had a strong matrilineal background including participants with a bilineal background, they were more accustomed to seeing women as leaders, thus it did not affect their initial thoughts of women principals.

Lance stated:

At the first place when I was informed I would be working under a woman principal and coming from a matrilineal background I saw this as normal. Since women in our village were involved in decisions concerning land issues.

Clyde also supported this by stating:

Coming from Rannogah Island that has women dealing with land matter, I don't find a difference when it comes to women holding leadership positions in schools.

The participants from a matriarchal culture saw that leadership roles can be held by women from the lowest level of society, which they refer to as grassroots, to the highest level. Participants from the matrilineal background saw that women were very important when it came to land matters in the village setting; it was the

custom that men were there to support the decisions that females made. One male participant, Samson, commented that he was interested to see that in a school situated in a matrilineal society it was the females who came to the school to discuss matters concerning their children's personal situation such as school fee problems and placement of their child in the school. However, the patriarchal norms of Big man leadership still have influence on people in the matrilineal system. Lance elaborated on this:

...You don't really see women showing leadership in other areas of the community. Only in land decisions are women called for in a meeting. This is the matrilineal custom. However, from where I come from I see males are the ones that show leadership. But, really it should come from women to show leadership.

So for most participants, gender and culture were not isolated but merged particularly when it came to leadership roles. However, one participant in the study thought that culture should be kept separate from the role of females as a leader. Most female leaders commented that culture is a barrier, however Rachel states that:

...Don't blame your culture. Your work should not be blamed for your culture. Your work is different from the culture that you come from. I find that some female principals blame culture as a barrier towards their leadership. However, I do not believe in this. When you are a leader you should practise your role as a leader. Unless there are some things like how you relate to your teachers then maybe culture has to be respected. But your focus must always be based on your educational leadership role and not your culture. This is because the more you focus on culture as a barrier it becomes an obstacle towards your leadership role. Thus don't blame culture as a way of stopping you in your leadership.

There were other participants who came from a bilineal background that fitted in well with either male or female leaders. Their cultural background did not influence how they viewed women principals.

These findings show that the culture of a society contributes to how teachers have viewed women principals. These perceptions were mainly based on the traditionally cultural stereotype of women's role: that a women's place is at home. This resulted in positive and negative perceptions of how teachers perceived women principals. In addition, people from a matriarchal system are still strongly influenced by patriarchal norms. However, it was found that being educated seemed to facilitate female teachers (from a patriarchal background) accepting women as principals, in this study.

Appointment and commencement of teachers to work under women principal

In this study the appointments of teachers to their positions at schools were made by education authorities. The majority of the participants experienced working under a male principal before moving to work under a female principal. Appointments of the participants in this study were made by either the Honiara City Council or church education authorities. Participants had various positive and negative reactions when appointed to work under a female principal. In addition, these teachers admitted to have stereotypical perceptions and thoughts about women as leaders.

Overall, a positive reaction towards working under a female principal was more evident in female teachers compared to male teachers. Most female teachers said that they were happy to work under a female principal. Clyde supported this when he said *"most of these females here go along with her because maybe she is a*

female therefore it is easy for them to talk to her". According to participants, their initial perceptions were because they thought the female principal would be nice to them; she would be easy to approach with their needs and problems; she would be easy to interact with and learn from; she would not be hard or be a dictator, and she would understand their problems and needs, especially with some female teachers' extra role as a mother outside the classroom.

Hazel elaborated on this when it came to understanding female teacher's needs:

Female principals will understand especially when we female teachers come late to school because of our duty as a mother in the home.

On the other hand male teachers had both positive and negative reactions towards working under a female principal. Lance said that he would not be scared to approach a female principal and she would listen to his needs more. As described by Pauline, other male teachers when appointed did not turn up at the Riverside School because of the notion of working under a female principal. She stated:

..Last week for posting of teachers when the men saw that the primary school had a female principal they did not want to come because their decisions may not be heard from a women principal.

This suggests that female teachers were more accepting about working under a female principal compared to male teachers. Most of the positive comments given from females were because of their experience while working under a male principal. They thought that their immediate problems and needs would be understood more by a female principal than a male.

Changing Beliefs and Attitudes of Teachers

Over a period of time participants working under women principals have pointed out that the beliefs and attitudes that they initially had have changed. This included their views on role of gender in leadership, valuing woman principals, and the changing aspirations towards women in leadership that all female teachers had.

Role of gender in leadership

In this study each participant acknowledged the fact that their beliefs and attitudes had changed since working under a female principal over a period of time. In the research, participants also pointed out that becoming a leader should not be overly influenced by aspects such as cultural background or gender. The participants said that anyone could take up a leadership role and lead if they have the skills of a leader. Their ideas of only men having the skills in leadership have changed. Ivy stated that:

My attitude has changed since I can see that there is a difference in that as ladies, we can have leadership skills that not only men but we ladies too have these skills. If men can do it as principals, ladies too can do it.

Furthermore, Betsy elaborated further on this point by saying:

I think any female teacher can be a principal if she is a proactive person.

Florence supported this notion by stating:

It does not matter if you are a man but if you don't have the leadership quality then you are not a leader. That is what I believe in. It's true you men , as long as he is a male he can do it but there is a different look if you don't have the qualities of a leader, of how to lead then you are not really capable to lead. While females even though you are women she can do the work of a male . Because she has these qualities of leadership. It is

not because he or she is a male or female they can lead. As long as this person has the qualities of a leader within him or her that person can lead.

Leadership capabilities of a leader to be able to lead also came with leadership skills. It was pointed out in the study that women principals had leadership skills that were not thought of initially when working under a woman principal. Clyde, a teacher with a patrilineal background, acknowledged that after working under a female principal over a period of time he had built up his confidence to work with women principals. Clyde pointed this out when he said:

At first I had no confidence in her. I also thought leadership and responsibility was for administrators up there. However, as she delegated responsibilities it built up my confidence in holding leadership roles also I had confidence in her.

Samson elaborates further that

Yes. Working with this female principals, I feel my thinking and mind set of women principal has totally changed.... It has given me the opportunity to be there to support my female principal. It has also given me more courage in doing assigned task that I could not have done in other schools. In a way she has given me this opportunity to explore my hidden skills. Thus this has given me more skills to at least do other things. It has also helped me to developed more skills to help in other areas in the school.

Delegating responsibilities developed confidence and courage in some of these teachers. It helped in empowering teachers to recognise their skills and contribute to the running of the school. The delegating of responsibilities was an aspect towards changing perception of teachers in women principals' role.

Decision making was also a point that was brought up by most participants. Most thought that decision making was only done by males, however this thinking has

changed over time. By working under a female principal they found that women too are good decision makers. Participants pointed out that women principals are flexible in their decisions, shared decision-making, and others highlighted that women were firm and wise in making decisions. Hazel stated that:

However, when I compare the leadership of women I come to realise that we women too are good decision makers. I like it when our woman principal gets the opinion of us teachers before making her decision. Most times I see us women when we have the chance to share our thoughts we always hold back in sharing it. I have concluded that not only men are wise in making decisions; women too are good decision makers.

All together the style of decision making that women principals practise has changed the cultural stereotypic notion of only perceiving men as the decision makers in leadership. Perceptions pointed out confirmed that women had the potential to exhibit the same practice of decision making as men in leadership.

The change of attitude in educated people is not only reflected in schools but also in the home as well. In the study it was mentioned that wives are also making decisions where once it had been the male's role. Husbands who are educated start to understand that women who have been educated have a right to make decisions in the home too. Hazel shared that:

...For myself, realising that women can make wise decisions, it has changed my attitude in the home too. I am married and some of the decisions made by my husband I would have a say in it too. My husband who comes from a patriarchal society has learnt to appreciate the decisions that I make. Sometimes my husband would say I am a man but I would say sometimes your decisions are not always effective. Thus, sometimes he acknowledges and appreciates that women are wise just like men in making decisions.

The once-held perception that women's role was in the home has changed in women's attitudes towards leadership. Teachers in this study saw the leadership role not based upon gender but on an individual's potential and capability to lead. Women's leadership styles in sharing responsibility and their style of decision making convinced participants that women could be leaders as well. In actual fact, assessing one's leadership capabilities was more crucial than the gender of a leader.

Valuing women principals

It is not common to see women being principals in schools, however the findings showed that teachers valued the leadership of women principals. Valuing the leadership of women principals came because of the perceived need for gender balance in education and the potential leadership styles that women principals practised in their schools.

Gender balance is an on going issue that the Solomon Islands faces and this was pointed out in the study. Particular participants also raised this in their interviews that the gender balance was needed to support the Millennium Development Goals that the Solomon Islands has adopted. Hazel stated that:

As a developing nation it is the priority of our education system to try and promote gender equality in our country. This is to support the Millennium Development Goals and the increase of unemployment of our youth especially females who are at a disadvantage to continue on into secondary or tertiary level. In addition, our education system does not look at men as the only leader.

Since there is an under-representation of women in formal and non-formal organisations, participants agreed that there should be a gender balance in

education. Participants have also explained that through their experience working under a female principal they have witnessed that success has come out of the school. Success was described through the development of infrastructure, disciplinary system, the grades of students and financial control of money. Betsy stated that:

Working under two female principals in my teaching experience I have seen a success .We successfully go through the year and I don't see any reason why we should not have women principals in schools. I think it's good that there is a gender balance... especially in the Solomon Islands where we do not have plenty women holding principal positions. However, through my experience women principals are doing a good job.

Other participants also pointed out that gender balance was needed to understand the needs of teachers working under them. This was reinforced by Rachel when stating:

Since there are male and female teachers working under a principal, it would be good that there is a male principal and a female as a deputy principal. This could be vice versa too....so that issues that affect women they must go through the women leader...if they have all men then all the women's issues at times cannot be raised. So when women are up there as principal, and women teachers say 'can you put this in your agenda?' they can take note of it. These are some things that is why we need women principals too.

In all, gender balance was seen to be needed for the teachers to express their personal needs and be understood more by people of the same gender. They identified that it helped teachers to be able to freely interact and communicate openly when there was a balance of gender in leadership.

The second reason why most participants supported having a female principal was because of her leadership skills that met the teachers' needs and expectations. A female principal was considered open and supportive to teachers by the participants. Lance commented on this:

I think our nation should have a lot more women principals. Since they are supportive to us teachers and also listen to our needs.

Pauline further elaborated that:

I would like to see women principals in our schools too...I see that when I work under women principals they are good organisers...they come and manage the admin well...you will find them when you are in need.

Samson also supported this notion of her leadership skill of organisation by explaining that:

..Women should be given the opportunity to hold that position as principal of the school because women have creative ideas that they can use to help young people especially in classroom setting. They are more organized especially in classroom setting. Organized in terms of book keeping and resources that are set inside the classroom example reading materials and work book. Its just organized.

Even though these were the two main reasons given why we should have women principals in the Solomon Islands, Samson stated that:

...It takes the initiative and courage of women to want to take up the role of principal. If they do not have the courage then you will find an under- represented number of females taking up this role.

Therefore, from these findings, there was positive support in having women principals as they can be a way of giving confidence to women who would then be willing to take up this job.

The Aspiration of Female Teachers towards Leadership

A theme that became evident in all female teachers was their aspirations towards leadership. Each recognised the fact that seeing leadership skills that their women principals had, influenced them in their aspiration to leadership. Most of the female participants who aspired to leadership interestingly came from a background that was strong in its patriarchal norms. These women were not allowed to make decisions in the home and the community. Men looked down on them as someone whose role is to look after the children and the home.

Three key aspects were highlighted which influenced their desire to aspire towards being a leader themselves. These were being educated, desiring the leadership qualities of their principal, and having female principals encouraging and promoting leadership to these female teachers.

These six female participants have all had the experience of tertiary education. Three hold diplomas in education; two have degrees in secondary education and one has a master's qualification in administration. They see that being educated has helped them break out from the patriarchal norms of society, concerning women's roles. As stated earlier, most of these participants who aspire to leadership come from a patriarchal background. Being educated has given them the courage to speak out. Florence stated that:

When I was educated, then I realised that even though men might be dominant in leadership women too can be leaders . Traditionally it's true but when I became educated I did away with this cultural idea. So that is how I come to accept that there is a female principal.

Hazel had a different outlook, when she viewed the pressure of patriarchal norms on her. She suggested that culture and education should be separated. When culture is separated from education or career she was then encouraged to pursue being a leader herself. She states:

For myself there is the patriarchal system. But for me, personally, on the education side, I appreciate women leaders. For myself I like it too. I am encouraged too when I see them pursuing leadership roles.

Participants said that being educated has led them to appreciate women leaders and it has also led them to aspire to leadership.

The female teachers also suggested that it the example of the leadership qualities and skills shown by women principals that made them aspire to become a leader. They shared their experience of seeing how their female principals stood firm on decisions made. The admiration of how female principals endured challenges made a positive impact with each of these female participants. These female participants saw that they could become leaders themselves if they could apply the leadership skills that their female principal portrayed. Pauline shared her experience of her female principal when it came to being firm on the decisions she made:

During our staff meetings or approaching her with some suggestions, teachers would come and try to persuade her to change her mind, however she would stand to her decisions and she would be firm. When she says no it means no. Sometimes male teachers would hit the table in front of her however she would stick to her decisions. Other times men would want to override her decisions this is especially during meeting times however she would be firm. We teachers sometimes need certain amount of money for the weekend. However, when the decision is no then it means no. Thus, it makes me see and want to follow that type of leadership.... Thus this challenge me that I would want be like her too in being firm on decisions.

Hazel also supported this point, telling of the influence that her female principal's leadership skills had given her when she came to teach at Fairview School. Hazel stated that:

...When I came here and saw how the female principal does her work and carries out her decisions, it has helped in encouraging and motivating me in pursuing the dreams that I might have in becoming a leader like her. I said to myself if I want to become a leader like her I would have to be firm in the decisions that I make like what she has displayed to us as a teacher...

These female participants revealed that it was their female principal's leadership which has set an example for them. The oldest participant, Rachel, had a dream of building an early childhood school after retiring. This was because of her admiration of the leadership skills of female principals; and because of this she would one day have her own school and be a principal herself.

Female principals are also promoters for female teachers to help inspire them towards a leadership role. In Riverside School, I had an interesting conversation with the female principal there. In the Solomon Islands there is currently a

promotion of women in leadership going on towards the United Nations Millennium Goals. One of these goals is to promote equality and empower women. Thus, she has been encouraging young female teachers to take up leadership roles. She has helped teachers by sending them for training and then when they come back they are able to hold leadership positions. She has also sent teachers to join leadership workshops to broaden their professional learning. Female principals promoted and encouraged potential female teachers towards leadership. Florence, in North view School supported this by stating that:

...I have been given the privilege to get a leadership course while currently teaching. This was done by my female principal and I am so happy about this. My female principal has been looking at me and saying that I have the potential of becoming a leader thus it encourages me because she has this view that females have potential too.

The female teachers in this study expressed that their aspirations for leadership came about because of three key aspects. Being educated brought about the change in women's role in society. Female teachers broadened their minds to desire leadership qualities of their women principals. Most times these qualities were being appreciated because of the success that it gave them and also the school as well. Furthermore, women principals were promoters in encouraging potential female teachers for leadership. Women principals became role models for female teachers aspiring towards leadership.

Expectations that teachers have of women principals

In any school organisation teachers hold expectations of their principals and these expectations can be very demanding of the principal. In this research most teachers pointed out that around half of their expectations are met by their principal. Sometimes, as some participants said, when some of their expectations are not met their motivation to teach decreases. If not addressed quickly some teachers move out of schools because of this factor. In this study there were three

important expectations that were addressed by each of these participants. These were the presence of the principal in the school; having the needs of teachers addressed, and the need for communication between teacher and principal.

Presence of principals in school

The visible presence of their principal was a major concern amongst all participants. Each participant felt that it was very important that their principal was seen around the school. Two participants described this as the principal being an overseer. When each participant said they wanted to see the principal in school, they meant that at times the principal should come and meet with teachers; see what they are doing; visit the classes and build a good relationship with teachers. When the principal does this, they feel that the principal recognises the importance of his or her teachers. This was what Betsy said:

When my principal recognises my work and the importance of it just by saying “you’re doing a great job” I feel motivated to teach.

Clyde supported this when he said:

With this lady here we produce a lot of good results because she motivates us and encourages us.

Florence stated:

Sometimes I feel that at times please do recognise our work too. Everyone here is hard working but sometimes she does not want to give credit to us. If only she could come up and say “thank you Florence I’m happy about what you did“. For me that means a lot. As a teacher I will know that I have done something successful.

Some participants said that it was the lack of relationship with teachers that then became a barrier for the principal when trying to establish a one on one friendship with them. Participants said that most of the time their principals stayed in their offices and looked after the administration side of things. Other participants said that maybe it was due to the demand of accountability of the school running that their principals had no time to socialise with their teachers. Yet participants pointed out that it was expected that the principal's presence be felt within the school.

Addressing Teachers' needs and welfare

According to the participants, the teachers' expectations of principals to provide for teachers' needs and their welfare was a great concern, especially when it came to the need of resources such as textbooks, chalk, dusters, learning materials and stationary for teachers. It becomes hard and frustrating at times when principals do not address such concerns. Participants said that lack of these resources occurred because most female principals are very strict when it comes to the budgeting of money. Others pointed out that money allocated for such needs is diverted to other school needs that are more of a higher priority. When expectations are not met, teachers take their own initiative to find resources for their students; they photocopy textbooks and exercises for their students, and buy materials needed for experiments. Like Clyde with his experience:

I like to use coloured chalk in the subject I'm taking. However, they did not buy it so I had to meet that cost.

Pauline stated:

...at times the principal does not trust in handing out money to heads of department to buy materials thus she does the purchasing herself. At times it is the wrong materials to be used

thus it becomes very frustrating when your next class needs those materials.

Apart from the need for learning materials, an incentive given to teachers was another expectation that teachers had. Solomon Islands' teachers expect at least some incentives be given to them for their teaching. The incentive that most teachers expect is their transport to and from school. The average salary that the majority of the teachers are getting does not accommodate the high cost of transport to school. Thus, the participants expect the incentive of bus fares being given to them. Incentives are given to teachers, but not on a regular basis. One participant acknowledged that their principal gives incentives, which are expected each quarter, yet when it came to the second quarter there was no money left for incentives. Other participants had alternative way of receiving incentives. Florence stated:

Our incentives was put into the school fees of our students thus when teachers are present in all classes and gives class work this is marked by the class captain. Then given to the deputy who keeps all the records. At the end of the ten weeks of school, teachers who have been faithful in fulfilling the requirements of being present in class are then given incentives. This sometimes motivates us but at times this does not work for some teachers.

The expectation of teachers that principals will liaise with the education authority was a point that participants addressed during the interview. On the whole this expectation was not fulfilled, especially with regard to the registration of teachers who have worked longer than eight years. Participants said that it was the principal who has to push the education authority to work with the education ministry and register all teachers. This was addressed by Betsy:

...many of us here are not registered teachers and have worked for many years. I think it's the responsibility of the principal to go and fight hard with the authority so that teacher could get their teachers registration.

The teachers in this study conveyed that one important expectation that women principals have to meet is to do with the needs and welfare of teachers. It seems that teachers had to go the extra mile in providing particular teaching resources for their classes. The concept of incentives provided motivation to teachers to meet some of their personal needs. Expectations also included liaising with the education authority in seeing that teachers are being registered as well as promoted. In sum, teachers' expectations were aligned with their view that principals should value the effort and hard work that teachers put in the classroom.

Communication between teachers and principals

Communication is an important leadership skill that principals need to adopt. Some participants pointed out that principals being open with teachers helps in building up a good relationship. This is an expectation of teachers; they expect to be informed of decisions made, plans for the school, and the latest happenings around the school. Participants stated that when they are not informed they become frustrated.

Clyde pointed out that:

She should inform us what is happening and link us with our education authority. When she does not inform and something happens in the school we become frustrated.

Betsy also supported this by saying:

Another thing is everything in the school, that the decisions that are made, we are a small school so at least we must know about these decisions. And also before any changes happen we must know.

Good communication not only allows teachers to be aware of decisions in the school, but for principals to recognise that the teachers are her team. Thus it is important that decisions made be communicated with the teachers as a team. Betsy stated that:

I expect my principal pulls us together and say that “For this year we look back at what was being done and how can we do better this year?” Like we brain storm...we try to build on what has been done last year. If we need change then we need to do it in a way that overall it’s a team work...

Participants agreed that informing teachers and getting them involved in plans and decisions for the schools are a crucial part towards the success of a school. It is the principal’s role to recognise that success of a school lies also in the teamwork with teachers. If this is not recognised by principals sometimes this could result in frustrated teachers not performing in schools.

Even though half of teachers’ expectations are being fulfilled, participants have learnt to compromise and understand that not all of their expectations can be fulfilled by their principals. This was stated by Florence:

...For example supervision: This is one of my expectations from my principal. I expect as a principal she has overall supervision of the school. Thus, I expect that she should come and talk with us.....she might have a lot of work in her office also as an

administrator that she does not have time to come out... but I as a teacher expect as leader you should come out and see the day to day running....however I come to understand her and accept that she stays in. I find a way to make me think positive, rather than I get frustrated by her not fulfilling my expectations.

Compromising by teachers in this study was a solution to some of their unfulfilled expectations. This sometimes can put strain on teachers as well, but the findings show that teachers' expectation is tied with their performance in teaching. When expectations are fulfilled, teachers feel that their leaders value their contributions, thus are motivated to teach.

Challenges and issues working under female principals

In this research each participant had their own challenges while working under a woman principal. There were six challenges that were identified in the research; these were disciplinary actions, age difference, the need of a man's power, approaches towards teachers and favouritism of women over men.

Disciplinary Action

Two participants in the research commented on the disciplinary style that female principals had. They mentioned that the usual style of disciplining a student when he or she breaks a rule is not adhered to. Female principals are seen to be more compassionate towards the student. Take for example Florence's statement:

When the student breaks a rule and the teacher reports it, this student needs to be suspended or sometimes expelled. However, with my principal she looks at this situation like a mother and her family. She would say to us teachers "If it was your child and we expelled that child how would you feel"? Or she would

say “If you don’t have a child that has been disciplined you then won’t feel what it’s like with those parents that have a child that is disciplined.” She is more lenient, especially when it comes to disciplining students. I would say she wants to understand more the reasons why they behaved that way then the rule punishing these students for their actions.

When asked whether this style of discipline was successful she responded positively, stating that giving students a second chance had really changed them. The particular participant said it is not the rule that changes students but the help given to change that student.

Florence states that:

She took with her a counsellor and that counsellor is a priest from the church... she does not see that this rule is final for a child. Another person can still help that person to develop who that person is. She believes in that.

The two participants saw this as a challenge since the student had misbehaved and he or she should be suspended for this behaviour. The participants felt that disciplinary action should take place for such misbehaviour. To them, they felt that students would abuse the privilege of a second chance, thus the rule becomes ineffective. Not only did the participants question their female principal’s disciplinary action but so too did other colleagues. Florence stated:

Teachers would get on her and say “That student is already suspended why has that particular student come back?”. To her that is an opposing line. With her we give that student a second chance.

Clyde in Greenville School stated that:

Disciplinary action should have been carried out but it is not done. Maybe because she has a heart of a mother.

However, Lance opposed this by experiencing a change in Riverside School with the disciplinary system. He described the disciplinary system of the school as being very poor in the past, yet, when this female principal took up the job she strengthened it. According to Lance, this has brought success to the school.

Assistance of man power for women leaders

Half of the participants suggested that when there is a female principal a male should work alongside her. Firstly, Ivy looked into the development of the school. When a female tries to build classrooms or other infrastructure she needs the assistance of a man to be able to make decisions. It becomes a challenge for her and also all female teachers working under her. Thus Ivy suggested that having a male working alongside her helps in the infrastructure and development of the school. Samson supports this by stating

I am a male figure so I do much of the heavy jobs that female principals cannot do. So the challenge I face is that I have to be there especially with the development to give a hand. Because I am the only man in the school, so she looks to me to support her with this concerning developments in the school.

The second reason is during decision making. Clyde said that during decision making female principals are good, however they need the support of a male to work alongside them. There are sometimes hard decisions to be made that require the input of men. Lance stated that:

She needs the male support since she cannot stand alone to face these challenges on her own.

The male teachers thought that the assistance of men is required when there is a female principal; particularly when small maintenance jobs needed to be done. In addition, decisions made required the support of males at times because women are strained emotionally by the demands of their leadership role. Male support should be seen as a way to assist and not to undermine a woman principal's leadership.

Female Principals' approaches to teachers

Three participants found it difficult to approach their principals because they were not used to their ways. The approaches that are shown at times are not appropriate, and seemingly are challenges for teachers. Florence stated that she had an experience with her principal but she (principal) went and approached another teacher to share the problem with. The approach was misinterpreted and not handled in a professional way. Florence shared that:

I think she should have talked to me because I am the one that did something wrong. I did not want her to go and tell another person. Come up and we have a face to face conversation. I expected her to call me. When I worked with male principals they would call me. So I expected her to call me, not because she was a female but it was her role. I feel that teachers are very important. You should treat them well. This is one challenge I faced while working under a female principal.

Thus, the approach the principal took with regard to making private problems public was an issue for this participant. Rachel also supported this when she said that her female principal would talk about Rachel's issues in public to expose her errors and she felt this was a challenge for her. She stated that:

My challenge is how my woman principal approaches me. Like even though she is the leader she has to approach me as I am a staff. She must not be a person that orders people around. She has to respect my rights too. As a teacher "you don't approach

me as if someone who is a nobody. Even though you are my principal you must call me into your office then you approach me. Something like that. I find that. You don't come and say "Rachel you did something like this or that..." in public for everyone to hear...but I guess it's her attitude.

Lance also supported this by stating:

If she sees you she can say good or bad comments to you on the spot. So sometimes the male administrators disagree with her attitude and tell her that she should not talk like that to her staff members...another challenge I face is sharing my personal problems with her which is hard for me. I feel that if I tell her she might go and tell another person. I don't really trust her. She's my principal but I see her sometimes sharing people's personal problems with other colleagues of mine, especially women teachers. Things like discussing students she will go and tell it to the other teachers. With the other male principal he is more private. Thus I put more trust in him.

Therefore from these three participants' conversations there is a marked difference between their views of male and female principals and how they approach their teachers. According to these participants the way male principals handle sensitive issues is more favourable when compared to how female principals approach teachers.

The effective and influential quality leadership of women principals

In this study, participants have highlighted that there are some unique and influential leadership styles of their women principals that they admire and that have also brought about success to their schools. These leadership qualities have

influenced them in their teaching and how they relate with their students. Others have highlighted that it has changed and motivated them in their teaching and it has also given them courage to take up leadership roles in their schools. These qualities were sharing responsibilities with teachers, relational approaches given to colleagues and students, firm decision making, organisation of the school, transparency in funds and being a visionary leader.

Sharing responsibilities with work colleagues

When asked what were some unique leadership styles of their female principal most suggested her style of delegating responsibilities. Most times delegating responsibilities was a result of schools lacking human resources such as secretaries, bursars or registrars, so women principals tended to turn to teachers for help. The way they do this is by sharing the task or roles with those teachers who they see have the potential and skills to be able to accomplish the task. Sometimes, women principals don't have the skills to be able to accomplish the task, thus teachers have to step in to assist them. To some participants who have experienced this, it has built up their courage and also confidence to take up any leadership roles assigned to them. Clyde was very pleased when his principal gave him the responsibility to create the timetable for the school; he states:

...when I came here she said to me "What if you did a timetable for us, or create a daily programme timetable for us"...for myself I did not know I had these skills but when she gave me these responsibilities I just knew my potential. I am now capable and confident to do things for the school.

Betsy also supported this delegation of sharing responsibilities. Her principal had a quiet personality and was not so outspoken. Thus, most of the roles that her principal could not do were given to Betsy, such as chairing the Parental and Teachers Association (PTA) meetings; running the logistics for school programmes, and development, and retiring European Union grants. Thus, when

her principal was absent she already had the courage to take up the role of principal. She states:

...It gives me the courage when the principal is not around, because she is a women, and I have seen what she has done, when she is away it has given me the courage to take her role no matter the circumstances, when she is away or she is around and cannot do some things, I step in to help.

Sharing responsibility is an important role for any leader. Participants acknowledged that if women principals delegated responsibilities and worked as a team, success would come out from their leadership. Betsy emphasised that:

I as a teacher, I think she shares responsibility to us which is an important role of the principal. If she wants to do it on her own, it will be hard, thus delegation of responsibility is important.

Success of the school also lies in the delegation of responsibilities, especially if you are a woman principal and working with males that have patriarchal background; delegation of responsibilities to them helps them to feel that they have a leadership task to do for the school. Clyde stated this:

...When you are up there and you do not delegate responsibilities especially female principals and you have male teachers who come from a patriarchal society they will definitely want to put you down. Thus, delegation is important.

Samson also supports this by explaining

There are a lot of experiences of leadership of my principal. The unique thing about my female principal is ..I see that my female principal gives opportunity for me to do things that in my previous school I would not be able to do. Some of the work that I could not do in other schools she gives opportunity for me to do. At first I was scared to take up the challenges to do those work . She gave me

opportunity to explore those things . The unique thing is that she does not keep the work to herself . When she sees that there is a need for things to be done she shares it to us .

Delegation of responsibility comes sometimes with team work. Some participants mentioned that teamwork is very important to the success of a school. Female principals need teamwork to support them in their leadership. A lot can be done as a team if responsibilities are shared with colleagues and by doing this it will lead to success in the school.

However, when delegation is not shared amongst work colleagues the result can be teachers sitting back. This becomes a burden and stress to women principals, especially if they do not delegate responsibilities. Florence shared her experience:

Here in Northview School I experienced this when decisions were not passed through her she will not recognise you. Sometimes delegation of tasks are not found in her. Thus, when she does not delegate and we sit back, in the end she is the one that is frustrated.

Therefore, one unique quality identified by participants and found in women principals is the sharing of responsibilities. Participants have given positive responses when tasks are being shared. However, they also mentioned that the strength of women lies in the delegation of responsibilities.

Interpersonal relationships of women principals

It is an important role of the principal to build her relationship with teachers. Through the interviews, teachers described their principal's relationship with them. A good working relationship is something that principals should have with her teachers. Some participants perceived a gap between them and their principal, while others spoke of the emotional characteristics shown by their principal. These emotional characteristics stated in the research were the openness, caring

and understanding reflected by their principal. Thus this created a positive relationship between teachers and their principal. Clyde stated that:

...My first year under her I naturally felt a bit scared because she was the boss. But as time goes by she has opened up and given me responsibilities which has created a relationship to an extent that I have trust in her. Now I see her more like our mother in the school.

A positive relationship builds up trust in teachers. It would be easy for teachers to share their personal problems when there is a positive relationship between the principal and the teacher. Trust builds up confidence in teachers to be able to approach their women principal; some participants expressed that their female principal was open for teachers to share their problems with.

Teachers also stated that their women principals were influential in encouraging them to excel in their career and motivated them in their teaching. Motivation of teachers resulted in good marks for Fairview School at the end of the year. Clyde expressed this:

...We produce a lot of good results because she motivates us and encourages us. I see that there is a difference when it comes to academic side. Sometimes talk is very powerful. Last year and the following terms we pushed hard for incentives and it was given to us because she was happy with our results for the school. Thus this has motivated us...

However some participants commented that they needed that motivation and recognition from their principals. Recognition for the hard work of teaching was an expectation by teachers. By recognising teachers' efforts it builds a good relationship. Florence commented on this:

...It's the relationship with her staff that is sometimes a challenge. We do all the work but she got the name. Sometimes I feel that at times please do recognise our work too. Everyone here are hardworking but sometimes she does not want to give credit to us....Sometimes I feel that I want her to make her teachers happy.

Thus, encouraging talks given to teachers and commending them for their hard work motivates teachers. In addition, incentives that are provided as a reward for the teachers' effort of teaching also resulted in motivating teachers. Samson supports this by stating

Well one thing outstanding I see that my principal make sure that my needs are met especially with the resources for teaching. And accommodation and well being of the teachers are met. And she hears the needs of the teachers. It influences me that female principal are always there to listen to our teachers needs. She make sure to come and check us. She does not wait for us to come and share our problem she comes around and checks us to see if we have problems . She make sure that we are o.k. Or anything that we need she make sure that she comes and communicates with us. I see that communication with us and her is very good. And it shows that we have a good relationship with her.

Thus, female principals promote interpersonal relationship as a strength of their leadership which in turn is seen as a positive outcome of their leadership that participants in the study have identified.

Women principals' decision making style

Five of the participants in the research addressed decision making. A female principal has to prove that she is a leader, and one quality that teachers see that is effective in female principals is that they are firm when it comes to decision making. Some participants think that the reason for this must be because principals would like to prove that are a leader. One participant said that their female principal is firm with her decisions, especially when it comes to the financial matters of the school. She said they have to work according to what is budgeted. Florence also supported this by stating:

She is strong in her thinking that and you cannot bend her when it comes to financial part of the school. She is firm. It has become a reality since a lot of development has been done for Northview School since she is firm in allocating money to projects. It is only through developments of buildings that I see her leadership style strong in.

With female principals' bold leadership skills, this has made female participants aspire to gaining these skills too. They admire how their female principal is firm in the decisions she has made.

Visionary Principal

All participants in this research addressed a sense of improvement in their schools, which was to do with developments done. This shows that their female principals are visionary people. Thus, participants either admired their vision or acknowledged the fact that developments that have happened in their schools are to do with the visionary person that their principal is. Having a vision for the school and planning it with teachers has brought about successes to the school. In all the schools that I interviewed, every participant acknowledged that the development side of the school had improved under her leadership. Some of the participants like Betsy, stressed that it is very important that principals plan three years ahead for the outcome of the school. She stated that:

I expect my principal to come to me and say o.k, she pulls us together and says that “For this year we look back at what was being done and how can we do better this year.” Like brain storm. Not just to come and sit down and say this is a new year...we try to build on what has been done last year.

This is the expectation that teachers have; they want a visionary person who looks ahead and sees what needs to be done to bring about the success of the school.

Florence stated:

The developments that are seen reflects who is the leader.

Thus, the developments that are seen around the school reflect a visionary type of leader. Florence also stated:

I really admire her to be honest. Especially to do with the development of this school. Like has the vision already, to do with developmental side of the school.

...But she has this moral spiritual outlook that is very strong. Where it has helped her develop this school.

It is found that participants feel that vision is related with development. When a leader has a vision you find development in the school and this is what teachers would like to see.

Conclusion

In this section I have presented the findings of the perceptions of teachers towards their women principals through their experience while working under them. The

findings show that the cultural patriarchal norms regarding women's place in the society influenced perceptions of teachers initially when appointed to work under female principals. However, over time these perceptions slowly changed as the leadership of women principals were valued and appreciated by the teachers in this study. Valuing the leadership of women principals came when teachers became educated and realized the capabilities that women also had in being a leader. Some of these teachers sought to see that gender balance of leaders be placed in school organisation. However, there were expectations and challenges that could be seen as a setback for women principals' leadership, but teachers pointed out that there were some effective leadership styles of women principals. These leadership styles influenced teachers to realise their skills and potential; also they influenced female teachers to aspire to leadership. Nevertheless, from the findings, women principals were perceived as good leaders capable of leading a school organisation. The next chapter will discuss the findings in relation to the literature concerning this area.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study explores the perceptions that teachers have of women working as principals in Solomon Islands schools. Extensive literature is available that discusses teachers' perceptions of women's leadership styles, and empowerment to teachers in developed countries (Hudson & Rea, 1996; Love, 2007; Shum & Cheng, 1997). A perception held by educators is that women's leadership styles are more favourable to the educational reforms of today (Lee, et al., 1993). This suggests that there may be some leadership styles seen in women principals in the Solomons. However, very little literature can be found on perceptions of teachers towards women principals in developing countries.

Another perception held by Melanesian society is, that in the Melanesian context the cultural norms have a strong influence on gender roles in society. Thus, we see negative perceptions of women taking leadership positions (Akao, 2008; Pollard, 2006; Strachan, 2009; Warsal, 2009). Other literature based in developing countries concerning women in educational leadership also reflects this notion of negative perceptions from subordinates working under women principals (Celikten, 2005; Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Morris, 1999). Yet, there is little literature in developing countries that suggests subordinates (teachers) appreciating women leadership in education (Oplatka, 2006; Warsal, 2009). A comparison of literature between developed and developing countries show similarity in the attitudes and behaviour of teachers. However, to understand women in leadership, research has to be undertaken in diverse cultural context (Strachan, et al., 2010). This research project aims to fill the gap in literature concerning the perceptions teachers' hold of women principals in Solomon Islands schools.

How culture influences perceptions of teachers

The influence of cultural roles and gender stereotypes on female principals

The findings in this study have shown that the perceived gender roles within Solomon Islands culture affects how teachers view female principals. In addition, the gender stereotypes that emerge from what is seen as the cultural roles of females and males also affect the perceptions that teachers have towards women principals. This finding supports previous research on Melanesian women that suggests culture as the main recurring barrier to women being involved in leadership roles (Akao, 2007; Warsal, 2008; Pollard, 2006; Strachan, 2009, 2010; Vali, 2010; Oplatka, 2006). Other authors like Whittington, Ospina and Pollard (2006, p.8) suggest that “gender roles are largely determined by the cultural context”. Thus gender roles can change but can be a sensitive issue.

The effect of perceived cultural roles and gender stereotypes were critical aspects that emerged from the findings when teachers were appointed to work under women principals. For example, the culture and gender stereotypical thinking 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’. These examples are typical of the stereotypical thinking that is common in Solomon Islands. Such perceptions would emerge because of the cultural beliefs that are still held by a majority of people. This is the major factor in the under- representation of women as leaders in Solomon Islands (Akao, 2007; Pollard, 2006). Also according to Elms (2002) the gender- role stereotype is due to the under-representation of women in administration. In addition, Brunner (2001) and Fenwick (2000) also recognize that the under- representation of women is due to the myths that define what masculine and feminine stereotype qualities are, instead of looking for leadership qualities irrespective of the gender of a person.

The stereotypic notion of only males holding leadership positions in education was common, and male teachers in this study to begin with, questioned why a female was principal. This finding is similar to that found in research done on stereotypic perceptions in other developing countries where people perceive that leadership positions “belong” to males in society, and females refrain from aspiring to these positions (Oplatka, 2006). Such gender stereotyping has led more men to aspire to such leadership roles, thus handicapping women who may also aspire towards such administrative levels of leadership (Whittington et al, 2006). In the findings of this study, female teachers aspiring to leadership however, had to gain their confidence to be able to aspire to leadership. Their confidence was boosted by the female principal being a role model for them. This will be mentioned later.

Therefore, the observed cultural roles and gender stereotyping in this study is consistent with literature that indicates that these influence and shape the attitudes and perceptions that individuals have of gender (Akao, 2008; Warsal, 2009). The assumption is that this could be a cause for the under- representation of women principals in Solomon Islands; thus also depriving females who would like to aspire for leadership.

The influence of matriarchal and patriarchal system on teachers’ attitudes and beliefs

The findings of this study also support the idea that the cultural background that teachers come from also influences how they perceive women principals. In Solomon Islands the title of leadership can be referred to as “Big Man”, “Great Man” or “Chief” (Pollard, 2006). The ascribed leadership type that is practiced in Melanesian society is the “Big Man” leadership (Douglas, 1979). The Big Man leadership “is based on achieved status through egalitarianism and competition” (Pollard, 2006, p.11). Inside the Big Man leadership we have two inherent systems in acquiring land which are matrilineal and patrilineal. Matrilineal looks at land ownership that is passed down the line from women. A woman’s female descendants will be responsible in deciding administration and land matters.

Patrilineal system is vice versa, where the land ownership passes down through the men.

Teachers in the study who came from a matrilineal background had already been exposed to women in leadership, thus were more willing take up leadership roles they were accepted women principals. They had respect for their women principals, because when it came to land issues women had power to make decisions in their culture. Some of the teachers from matrilineal backgrounds also acknowledged that women leadership can be seen in different levels of society: from *grass root* level to higher levels of leadership. This finding is supported by Pollard (2006) who acknowledges that there is also “Big Women leadership” culturally. Pollard (2006) points out that women leadership could be found traditionally in feast giving, warrior and priestly roles; and in modern times in church women’s groups; women’s roles in reproduction and food production; and through women’s influential position in society. However, little discussion on big women leadership can be found in literature. Sinclair (1998, as cited in Pollard, 2006) claims that women’s leadership is invisible.

In this study, a male teacher commented that even though in a matrilineal society women show leadership and are respected; men still make the decisions and convey them to the village. Maetala (2008) sees that women are interested in land issues yet their role in land matters is slowly diminishing. Pollard (2000) makes it clear that the reason could be

The patriarchal theological of the Christian missionaries harmonized neatly with the patriarchal power structure of the colonial government, and the two together formed an effective ideological basis for women’s subordination, submission and exclusion from the public decision –making process (p. 42-43).

Thus, men still make decisions in most things, even in a matrilineal society. This findings can be supported by literature (Akao, 2008; Kilavanwa, 2004; Vali, 2010; Pollard, 2006; Maetala, 2008) that state that the patriarchal norms of society has an impact on the matriarchal society. Thus, women are loosing their power in decision making when it comes to land issues today.

Teachers from a patriarchal background questioned and challenged why women were principals, when they were appointed into a school run by a woman principal. They commented that their background and the role of women in their society convinced them that women could not make wise decisions. Women were not to comment on the decisions made by the tribesmen of the patriarchal society. This is supported by literature (Koian, 2010; Maetala, 2008) on describing the patrilineal society, where women do not make decisions also in land rights. Some teachers in this study saw women as not being capable of ever holding leadership roles, especially in education. However, female teachers from this same background acknowledged that it was through being educated that made them realize and accept that women could hold leadership roles. Pollard (2000, 2006) supports this finding that education is an avenue to understand the inequalities that are visible towards gender roles. Moengangongo (1988) comments 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” (p. 15).

The evolving perceptions of teachers

Most studies in Melanesian context have looked at the problems that women have experienced in educational leadership. The most recurring theme that was found in most of these studies is that culture has suppressed the representation of women in leadership (Akao, 2008; Warsal, 2009; Vali, 2010; Pollard, 2000, 2006; Strachan, 2009; 2010). In the findings of this study it is worthy of note that perceptions of teachers are changing towards women in leadership. Pollard (2000)

commented that the root problem of the under representation of women is the traditional world view that a woman's role is in the home. However, Pollard (2000) and Strachan (2010) perceive that the changing beliefs, practices and attitudes on women's roles is a slow process that will take time to develop, and requires a basic change in various fundamental attitudes, values and beliefs. Thus, gender equality can be realized. According to Shakeshaft (1987, as cited in, Brown) change begins at the school level. Teachers and administrators have to be aware of the sexist attitudes, teaching materials and teaching materials that hinder young females. Also students must be allowed to learn in an environment that is non sexist. This is also supported by Tongamoa (1988) who stated that "development and change in the South Pacific is very recent and slow due to a general reluctance to be selectively divorced from traditions and cultures" (p. 91). In this study, findings show that perceptions from these teachers were changing over time on how they viewed the leadership of women principals. Three evolving themes that came out of these finding were the changing beliefs and attitudes, the acceptance of women principals, and the aspirations of female teachers to leadership.

Changing attitudes and beliefs over time

The findings in this study point out that a change of attitude and beliefs of teachers came when female principals proved that they could take up leadership. Teachers expressed that while working under women principals they built their confidence in trusting women principals' leadership. This confidence was built when women principals were able to handle and make decisions in a strong patriarchal environment. Porat (1991) found that acceptance resulted when women were able to lead as men led, which is the accepted norm of society. The findings in this study also are supported by Strachan (2009) who states that "some women found that in order not to be perceived as weak, emotional and irrational leaders, they needed to lead like men" (p 73.). In the study, when women principals showed cultural gender stereotypic traits (e.g weak, showing emotional reactions when men criticise them, not being firm on decisions made) when they were challenged, these would become a barrier. The firmness and flexibility of decision-making that these women principals demonstrated was a

common aspect that each teacher in the study admired. This comes back to the cultural view of women, in that their place was not to make final decisions. However, showing that they could make decisions was admired, especially by female teachers. The courage and confidence to make decisions may have been a result of the experiences that these women principals had encountered. Being educated also exposed both teachers and principals to the western cultural philosophy that emphasises gender- equality and the rights of women thus: “Educated women begin to question and reject the sex division of labour as unfair, degrading and biased against women” (Tongamoa, 1988, p. 89). Studies conducted in contemporary Tonga, support the findings that

Attitudes towards the traditional role and status of women have been changing not only among women themselves but in the society as a whole. These changes may be due in part to exposure of Tongan people to western influences such as education and overseas travel. (Moengangong, 1988, p. 59).

Scholarships such as the Australian Leadership Scholarship and New Zealand Aid are promoting more women to undertake leadership studies with the aim of promoting more women into leadership. If they were not exposed to western culture, women would not see that they have the right of decision making and leadership in school organizations.

The perceived need of gender balance

In this study some male and female teachers reported having “No Preference” in relation to the gender of the principal they worked for. My findings indicate that as long as the female principal has the required leadership skills then there is no reason to prohibit them from leading. This may be the case because both masculine and feminine stereotype qualities are important in leadership, regardless of gender (Hudson & Rea, 1998; Getskow, 1996). Thus, from my findings, teachers express that a gender balance should be visible in schools. According to some of the teachers, if a female is the principal then a male should be deputy and visa versa. The reasons behind this notion from the findings were,

to support new Millennium development goals of the education ministry of gender equality; understanding individual gender needs of teachers when there is a balance and that the support of male teachers is needed when working with women principals.

The Solomon Islands government has joined other countries in support of the Millennium Development Goals in emphasizing the achievement of gender equity by 2015 (Strachan & Akao, 2011). Thus a lot of workshops are run to promote leadership for women in the Solomon Islands. This may be why slowly attitudes, practices and beliefs are changing. However, Pollard (2006) argues that even though policies are there to promote gender equality, it is not evident in Solomon Islands society. In this study, two teachers commented that having a male person as a deputy was necessary to support the female principal and to give male opinions on decisions made for the school. Therefore this finding suggests that these male and female teachers do not mind which gender holds principalship, as long as the person has the leadership qualities, and there is a gender balance at the administrative level.

Aspirations of female teachers

This study found that female teachers were aspiring to leadership. Even though women were living inside the patriarchal context, there was evidence of their aspiration towards leadership. There were three factors in the study that influenced these female teachers to aspire to leadership. These were: being educated; having female principals as role models and mentors for them; and the opportunity for promotion to leadership. Female teachers made it clear that understanding western society's views on women leadership through their education made them realize that there is under representation of women in the Solomon Islands society. Participants said that being educated gave them the courage and confidence to speak out. Two female teachers also expressed the concern that only when culture was separated from education could leadership be accepted and practiced.

Female teachers in this research merged education and employment together as meaning the same thing. Therefore in the study when education and employment were separated from culture it resulted in 'breaking through the glass ceiling' as one author described it when women attend to leadership positions (Davidson & Cooper, 1992 as cited in Coleman, 2005). It was the belief of some participants that culture should be separated from job and career aspirations in a school organization. By this, they meant that cultural beliefs of gender role should not interfere when dealing with your career. Supporting studies that agree with this idea are the work of Akoa (2007) and Pollard (2006). However, both of these authors believe that some cultural practices should still be held. Some cultural practices should be kept while others that are a barrier, such as women's roles in society needs to be considered as social injustice (Aka0,2007; Pollard,2006).

In this study it was also found that female principals were role models and mentors for female teachers, thus helping them to aspire to leadership themselves. Female teachers in the study mentioned that they admired the leadership styles of their women principals. Some of the leadership styles that they admired were the principals' ability to make decisions and be firm in those decisions; being supportive; being open and good organizers; implementing development of infrastructure of the school; high achievements of students' grades; being strict with the finances, and using a redemptive disciplinary system. Throughout the study it was perceived by teachers that when women principals made decisions it was a new experience for most of the female teachers, especially those coming from a patrilineal society. That was the aspect that was admired and sought after by most female teachers. In this study, Bush and Coleman (1995) explain that women aspire to leadership because of the principal being a mentor to female teachers. Mentoring and role modelling can be used as a platform for women's advancement. This study does not support the statement that Strachan (2009) made when she said that "Melanesian girls lack women role models in leadership positions in education, in politics and to lesser extent, in community" (p.101). Some teachers in the study said that they did have women as their role models. However, Shakeshaft (1987, as cited in Brown & Ralph, 1996) acknowledge that the ways women aspire however are different to men. She (1987, as cited in

Brown & Ralph, 1996) suggests that traditionally, by male definition women would not be seen as aspiring to leadership because of the male role of leadership in society. In addition, organizational and societal barriers hinder women in acknowledging and acting upon their leadership aspirations. Strachan (2009) stated that women do not have role models because of the under- representation of women in leadership. Yet, in this study women in their own personal way do aspire to enter leadership roles.

Even though cultural roles and gender stereotypes had an influence on the participants in this study, they sought and anticipated female attributes that were lacking in the male principals that they worked under. Female teachers saw women principals as being more likely to address the needs than male principals. They had positive reactions to their women principals' leadership skills, and were happy to be working under their leadership. This supports the study finding that gender of the leader is crucially as important as the gender of those that follow (Lee, et al., 1993). Female teachers like to work in an environment that is led by female leaders (Lee et al, 1993). However, other researchers argue that when women are in leadership roles other females criticize and demonstrate negative attitudes towards them (Akao, 2007; Celikten, 2005; Warsal, 2009, Pollard, 2006). This is one aspect that can be a barrier to the advancement of women aspiring to leadership. On the other hand, male teachers who had had exposure to women's leadership culturally, because of coming from a matrilineal background, but did not have exposure to women leading in the field of education, had to gain confidence in their female principal's leadership.

Expectations teachers had on roles of women principals

The findings in this study highlight that teachers had expectations relating to the roles of their female principals. Most participants in this study commented that only half of their expectations were fulfilled. The teachers had accepted and become used to the fact that their expectations cannot always be fulfilled as wanted. Sometimes women leadership can be criticized when expectations are not

fulfilled. The traditional views of women make it more difficult for them when expectations are not met. In this study expectations of teachers related more to what roles their principals should be filling. Teachers also acknowledged that most expectations they have of female principals cannot be fulfilled so they have come to terms with this. The most frequent expectation is that principals take an interest in their teachers. However, there were three expectations common in the study. Firstly teachers expected that the presence of the principal be seen around the school, particularly in the classroom. Secondly, teachers see the need for communication between teachers and principal on decisions that are of benefit to the school. Lastly, participants had the expectation that needs and welfare of the teachers need to be met. The findings in this study support the research of Malasa (2007) on issues that are barriers towards effective leadership in Solomon Islands. Some of the barriers that were mentioned in that study were poor facilities and infrastructure of the school, poor qualities of teachers' professional practice and unfavourable conditions of service. They inhibited effective leadership to be practiced better thus result in teachers less motivated and principals challenged to meet the demands of each day.

In this study, one common expectation that teachers seemed to highlight was the physical presence of their principal around the school. Most of the teachers wanted to see that principals were visibly going around the school; communicating with teachers, teaching in classrooms that had no teachers or just being an overseer in the running of the school. Akao (2008) states that "To be a good leader does not mean that you have to isolate yourself all the time from those working under you. You need to share ideas and hear the opinions of others about issues" (p. 98). The reason for principals not being visible is that principals may be occupied in administration work and have less time to communicate with teachers.

In this study most teachers commended their female principal on the development of the school. The percentage of time spent on different activities can vary according to gender. For example some teachers in the study felt that male

principals spent more time and were more visible compared to female principals. Yet, most principals, irrespective of whether they are male or female spend more time in administrative work and less in being with teachers and students, as highlighted from Sanga and Houmea (2004) in their findings of Solomon Island principals. Ryder (1994) found that women principals spend more time in unscheduled meetings; being visible on school campus, and observing teachers than male principals. However, in this study, some women principals were not visible around the school campus. The reason could be cultural barriers which seem to isolate women principals. In seeing that she is a woman leader, teachers may not want to associate with her, or it may be that she isolates herself from teachers for fear of criticism from male teachers. Fulfilling the expectations of teachers needs in resources and welfare; accountability of finance, and communication between teachers and principals are found to be problems in most schools in Solomon Islands (Malasa, 2007).

Challenges in working under female principals

This study highlights that there were four challenges identified by the teachers, when working with women principals. These were: disciplinary actions taken by women principals, the approaches of female principals, and the criticisms that female teachers get from male teachers when working under female principals. Since this study focuses on women principals, two of these challenges are more significant to women principals. These two challenges were firstly, how female principals approached their teachers and male teachers working under female principals.

In the study, teachers commented on the approaches that their women principals sometimes had made to them. Sometimes these approaches were not appreciated by the teachers. At Fairview School, the principal had a habit of publicly humiliating teachers. Thus, teachers would focus on this when they compared leadership of males and females. Teachers from this school commented that their previous male principal would take them inside their offices to talk. These

teachers suggested that their women principal should respect her teachers at these times instead of publicly humiliating them. Thus this becomes a challenge for them. Researchers like Blase and Blase (2002) suggest the same, that sometimes principals in work places are abusive emotionally through verbal or nonverbal behaviour. According to Blase and Blase (2002) the (a) discounting of teachers' thoughts, needs and feelings; (b) isolating and abandoning teachers; (c) withholding resources and denying approval, opportunities and credit to teachers; (d) favouring "select" teachers; and (e) offensive personal conduct relates to the findings of this research. These behaviours that Blasé and Blasé (2002) point out apply to the context in Solomon Islands of these findings as well.

The trust needed when sharing personal problems also sometimes can be a barrier, especially for some male teachers who have female principals. They said that at times they could not share their problems because they did not trust their female principal. On several occasions they had seen their female principal sharing people's problems with other female teachers, thus they did not trust her at times. As a leader this is not a good practice. Confidentiality should be maintained at the level or position that leaders are at. Males also hesitate to talk in a female dominated environment.

The challenges that teachers have felt under their female principal are based on personal experiences that they have encountered with their principal and they may have become challenges for them. However, these challenges do not dispute the fact that teachers in the study want to see female principals in Solomon Islands.

The effective and influential quality leadership of women principals

In the findings it was discovered that there were some influential leadership skills shown by female principals that were appreciated by the teachers. The skills were identified as the principals' strengths. These particular skills brought success to

the school and teachers in this study were motivated when these leadership skills were practiced by their principal. These leadership qualities were: sharing responsibilities with teachers; relational approaches made to colleagues and students; firm decision making and visionary leadership. Growe and Montgomery (2000) states that “Good school administration is more attuned to feminine than masculine modes of leadership behaviour. Female attributes of nurturing, being sensitive, empathetic, intuitive, compromising, caring, cooperative, and accommodative are increasingly associated with effective administration” (p.1). This may be the reason why teachers acknowledge and admire some of these leadership skills in this study of the perceptions that teachers have.

Sharing responsibilities with work colleagues

In the study, the delegation of responsibility was seen as strength displayed by women principals; particularly when human resources were lacking in the school for certain roles. According to teachers, the ability to delegate responsibilities by women principals was an effective leadership tool which brought success to the school. The findings showed that it encouraged successful teamwork and support from teachers when responsibilities were assigned to them. Teamwork was emphasized in the study as an important aspect of effective leadership. It is argued that teamwork is empowering for members in a team, since all the ideas of the members are shared and discussed within a group (Cranston & Ehrich, 2009). It also built the confidence of teachers to lead when responsibilities were assigned to them. A teacher in the study stated that sharing responsibility in a patriarchal society lessens the criticisms of male teachers when they have a task assigned to them. When delegation of responsibilities is not made to teachers, sometimes the burden may fall back on female principals; and this may cause teachers to sit back and not cooperate. Cranston and Ehrich (2009) state that sharing responsibility in a team is more effective than working alone. This study shows that teachers did not have the confidence at first to be responsible for activities and developmental planning towards the success of the school. However, when teachers discovered that they had the skills they appreciate being given responsibilities. Avolio and Base (2002) state, “ The follower needs to feel valued by the leader, the follower needs to find meaning in what he or she is doing, the follower needs a sense of

ownership in what's being done" (p.6). However when no delegation of responsibility or teamwork is seen, sometimes teachers lose motivation. A teacher in this research also suggested that in a patriarchal society like Solomon Islands delegation of responsibilities would ease some of the criticisms that women principals face from male teachers. Delegating the responsibilities to these male teachers made them feel that they had leadership responsibilities as well.

Interpersonal relationships with women principals

In this study, some of the teachers acknowledged that their female principal showed emotional characteristics that helped in building relationships between teachers and their principals. Such characteristics were openness, caring and understanding. Ortiz (1982) suggests that increasing interpersonal relationships happens when teachers and the principal recognize the importance of fostering relationships.

Those teachers that experienced a good relationship with their principals found that they were able to share their problems, and this built their confidence to approach her. These teachers excelled in their careers as was seen in good grades that were produced from their school and this motivated them in their teaching. Such motivation produced good marks for a school. McCabe (2011) comments that being a leader requires you to facilitate open communication. She argues that complex educational issues cannot be solved if people are not open to communicate. McCabe (2011) also points out that teachers also may have their struggles which they would like to share however fear that they may be judged. Thus leaders need to listen to their problems "in a non- fault, non-judgemental way" and work together for a solution. This indicates that leaders have a responsibility to listen to teachers problems in a non-judgemental way, thus, helping teachers to be open to share and build a good relationship with principals.

Some of the teachers who were not confident, especially in approaching their principals were encouraged by their colleagues to get to know their principals.

From the study, in some cases at one school the teachers of this study found it hard to communicate with and maintain a relationship with their principal. In the end it was the teachers who tried to make an effort to communicate with them. Glanz (2006) pointed out “Principals who take the time to understand the school from the teacher’s perspective are better able to forge meaningful relationships with them” (p.23). As a result, in the findings the female principal slowly opened up to her teachers. This then made the teachers feel comfortable in confiding in her, and understanding her.

Recognition of hard work and commending of teachers were also emphasized by teachers as being needed. Encouraging talks given to teachers, and commending them for their hard work motivated teachers. In addition, incentives provided as a reward for the teachers’ efforts also resulted in motivating them. However, not recognizing teachers’ efforts due to a lack of socializing with them creates negative responses from teachers. Bogler (2001) points out that teachers are satisfied when principals recognize the efforts that they put into their teaching careers. In the findings it was also mentioned that sometimes principals need to recognise the hard work that teachers put into teaching. Not commending them sometimes makes them discouraged.

Decision making style of women principals

In this study decision making by female principals was admired especially by female teachers. In a society that suppresses the voices of women, it was seen as a challenge to have women making decisions. However teachers in this study described their female principal’s decisions as being firm, strict and wise. When these teachers described their female principal’s leadership they related it to the financial matters of the school. The teachers saw that their female principal, when it came to decision making involving finance, was firm and strict. This finding supports Aka (2008) who in her findings said that women were firm and also transparent in financial matters. As a result of this, developments of infrastructure are visible where women principals are present. Johnson and Kruse (2009) state that “ Leaders who are most successful in their decision making are those who

seek to make organisational sense and find meaning within the problems they wish to solve. By helping create an avenue for coherence among and between decisions-making opportunities, a shared vision can provide a litmus test for those decisions requiring priority action” (p13.) Teachers in the study also commented that they were happy that their women principal involved them in decision makings during staff meetings. Female teachers admired how their principal stood her ground when male teachers were against her. Research identifies that the decision making that women principals practice is decision- making that involves teachers and is the type of decision making that teachers desired more (Gieses, Slate, Brown & Delgado, 2009 ; Hudson & Rea, 1997). In other studies, women are seen more as being democratic and have a laissez fair style of involving staff in decision making (Nopsike & Oguzor, 2011). According to Morris, Guatin and Coleman (1999) female principals have a participatory style of management, 1999). Thus this research supports the study of female principals involving their staff in decision- making.

One thing to consider when female principals make decisions is gender bias. Male teachers can get an unfavourable impression if they see female principals taking more interest in female matters. However, in the study it was found that female principals take gender bias into consideration; therefore some teachers voice that they are fair when it comes to decision making. Gender criticisms can be encountered when decisions don't go according to the thoughts of teachers. This is where sometimes culture can be seen as a barrier.

Visionary Leadership

The findings of this study show that participants see women principals as visionary leaders. Teachers indicated that a lot of developments happened under the leadership of their female principal. The accountability and availability of funds made it possible for developments to eventuate. Women principals as perceived by the teachers, seemed to have goals in place to be achieved each year. Their vision for the school was focused at looking at long term goals to accommodate the future increase in the number of students. The increase in

student numbers suggests that facilities and infrastructure are available to assist in accommodating students and teachers. One key element that drives strategic leaders is that they see that changes need to be made to the present conditions within an organisation, and work on improving things for the future (Davis, 2011). Some teachers suggested that seeing the developments around their school described the kind of leader they had. The actions that create the vision come from the self-management of the individual as a leader (Montgomery & Growe, 2003). Research has suggested that high productivity in a school organisation comes from the leader. Having the vision for the school and communicating to others influence leaders' behaviour to empower others (Andrews, 1990; Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Thus a leader has to strategically plan the outcomes towards the vision for the organisation.

In this study teachers felt satisfied and happy when they could see developments happening around them. They admired the leadership of the female principal when they saw developments happening. The developments gave the teachers a sense of purpose and encourage them to become involved in achieving the goals, and in accomplishing the vision for the school. Johnson and Kruse (2009) point out that “visions are more than a desired future for an organisation. The vision sets forth the values organisational members have agreed to share and a philosophy about how they will go about their common work (p.) This is quite contrary to what Barnett, Marsh and Conner (2010) say about visionary leadership. In their study they cite no significant relationship between the principal's visionary style of leadership and teachers satisfaction.

Teachers in this study identified that to be able to fulfil the visions and goals of the school involved teachers, students, parents and community. Some teachers identified that parents are a key element towards creating the vision. This supports Montgomery and Growe (2003) who suggest that visionary leaders have a visionary team which includes administrators, teachers, students, parents and community leaders; and others who also embrace the vision. Visionary teams are there to “stimulate proactive questions instead of reactive decision making”

(Montgomery& Growe, 2003, p.6). Pasi (2003) also supports this by suggesting that “ visionary leaders know that together a group of individuals can use its creativity and imaginations incorporated with it large body of knowledge to problem-solve and construct solutions to challenges that have plagued schools in the past” (p.10)

Therefore having a vision for the school including a culture of teamwork is beneficial towards the success of the organisation.

Conclusion

Much of what is discussed in this section affirms the current literature in this discourse. The perceptions that teachers have of women principals is based upon their confidence and ability to be able to lead in a school organisation. In particular, I discussed the initial perceptions that the teachers had before working under their female principal; the change of attitudes and beliefs over time, while working under their female principal; what expectations and challenges they faced, and the effective quality of leadership that their female principals brought. The findings from this study are significant in two main aspects. They show that the leadership that women principals have demonstrated is greatly admired and accepted by teaches in this study. They also show that the leadership skills exercised by female principals have influenced the attitudes and beliefs of these teachers and their perceptions of their women principals.

Another significant finding is the effective leadership that women principals had. Teachers said that they greatly admired this and it influenced their teaching career. It also allowed them to be able to identify skills that they previously may not have seen. These principals’ leadership skills, including delegation of responsibilities, interpersonal relationships; their style of decision making and visionary leadership have brought positive influence and impacted on the success of the school. Teachers in this study expressed support for more women taking up principal

positions. This is because the leadership skills that women principals have brought have contributed to the success of their schools.

The social injustice of suppressing women's voices in society, and underrepresentation of women in the teaching profession is something that constantly needs to be attended to. If a female in leadership is able to prove and demonstrate that she is able to lead a school organisation then there is room for a change of attitude and beliefs about women principals. It is up to her subordinates to individually decide whether to make a change or to hold on to the stereotypic perceptions of women. The leadership of women is challenged when comparisons between male and female leadership are made by teachers, especially towards unfulfilled expectations and challenges in the school. However, teachers learn to cope and accept the unfulfilled expectations and challenges that can be found in all schools.

Thus it is challenging for women who are aspiring towards leadership to have confidence to take up principal positions. In addition, it is up to the Ministry of Education and government to promote gender equality in all sections of education. The contribution that this study has brought are recommendations for further investigations.

The following conclusion section looks into further suggestions for future research; highlights the limitations of this research and suggests further recommendations that arise from the issues that this study has brought to light regarding women leadership.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This study has shown that the cultural norms of society have a great impact on how teachers perceive their women principals. Teachers in this study expressed the view that the cultural roles and gender stereotypical notions of women's roles in society influenced how they initially responded to their women principals in their various schools. Furthermore, the matriarchal and patriarchal backgrounds they came from also influenced their attitudes and beliefs about women being leaders. Teachers coming from a matriarchal background tended to be more lenient in accepting women principals, while teachers coming from a patriarchal background at first questioned why women became principals. However, these perceptions held by participants have changed over time as they experienced the leadership of a women principal.

The most significant finding from this study about women principals' leadership at the organisational level was the participants views on the effective and influential leadership styles that women principals practiced. This was an important finding in that teachers perceived and valued some of the leadership styles of their women principal, such as delegating responsibilities to teachers, interpersonal relationships that female principals demonstrated, decision-making style and the visionary principal she was. The leadership styles of their female principals influenced most of the teachers in the study to become more motivated in their teaching practice. Some of these teachers even found that under a women principal they had certain skills and talents that they would have never discovered if their female principal had not delegated responsibilities to them. The interpersonal relationships that were built between teachers and their female principal created trust and understanding with some teachers in this study. The principal's style of decision-making and the ability to be firm in the presence of men during meetings developed aspiration in some female teachers, and

admiration and respect for her leadership. Lastly, her style of strategic planning brought a sense of female principals being visionary leaders. It was evident, in that all the four schools of this study had developments to do with infrastructure going on at the time of the study. Teachers themselves explained that developments were taking place around the school. Taken together, these findings suggest that even though a society's traditional culture about women's role is still strong, individual teachers' perceptions about women principals have changed over time. They have learned to appreciate and value the leadership of their women principals.

The second major finding dealt with women principals' leadership in the context of school organisation itself. Due to the demand placed on the principals' role in school organisation there are expectations and challenges that teachers face while working with women principals. This was highlighted in the conversations with teachers. Some teachers pointed out that only half of their expectations were met by their women principal, however they learned to accept such circumstances. One of the significant expectations expressed by all teachers was the presence and regular monitoring of their women principals of the classrooms in her school. The principal being visible each day around the school demonstrated to the teachers that she was interested in the students and teachers themselves. The challenges that some teachers faced while working under women principals were often to do with her approaches at times towards the teachers. This lowered the moral of teachers and made them feel insecure in trusting her leadership. Other additional challenges were to do with how discipline of students was carried out, and the need for man power in a school. However, these additional challenges were minor, and can be seen in schools with male principals as well.

Another significant finding was the changing perceptions that teachers had of women principals. Exposing participants to women in leadership led teachers in this study to change attitudes and beliefs they had initially held of women principals. Certain stereotypic notions such as that women could not lead and they could not make decisions, changed while teachers worked under women

principals. Most of the teachers learned to accept value and appreciate the leadership of their women principals. The experience of working with a woman principal created a different understanding by teachers as they perceived leadership to be based not on gender, but on the individual's capability and confidence in being able to be a leader. This leads to their ideas about the need of a gender balance of leadership. Gender balance is seen by teachers in this study to give the opportunity for more understanding of the needs of male and female teachers, and fairer balance of male and female perspectives in school life. Furthermore, the findings highlighted the changing aspirations of female teachers towards leadership. Leadership styles of women principals influenced female teachers' perceptions about women leadership. These findings suggest that even though the patriarchal norms of society are still strong, the experience of working under the leadership of women by the teachers in this study can change how some members of society view women principals.

The findings in this research add to the body of literature on women in educational leadership in developing countries; - especially Melanesian women in leadership and in particular women principals' leadership in Solomon Islands. The current findings will add more understanding as to how teachers perceive their leaders, especially women principals, and shed light on the leadership style of women principals as seen by teachers. As such, this study shows that in a society that is still strong in patriarchal norms, perceptions held of women in leadership do change over time. This study will serve as a base for future studies, especially for scholars who are taking up educational leadership, and in particular women scholars who are aspiring towards leadership, and who would like to look at women leadership in a Melanesian context.

Limitations of the current study and further research

On reflection, there were some limitations pertaining to this study. First, the current study included perceptions of teachers in urban schools. The perceptions of teachers in rural schools may be different to those teachers working in urban areas. A second limitation was that this study was a small sample of nine teachers,

therefore I cannot make a generalisation that all teachers have the same perceptions as these teachers in the study. It may be that other teachers from urban schools have either similar or different perceptions of women principals. The third limitation is the approach in interviewing male teachers. Male teachers at first hesitated to express themselves fully. I can speculate that there are two reasons for this: first because I am a female, and secondly I was seen as a researcher who might expose negative perceptions of their women principal. Using the Talanoa approach greatly helped to break the barrier between myself and the male participants. Therefore, further research needs to be done on perceptions of teachers in rural and other urban schools to get a clear picture of what they think of women principals' leadership. Also, further research should be undertaken on what male teachers thought about women principals, as there are many male teachers in Solomon Islands secondary schools. In turn, this could broaden the perspectives, and also give a clear picture of where women principals' leadership sits in education. In addition, it would give stakeholders and the education ministry a clear picture of the leadership that a woman principal can bring to a school organisation as a whole.

Recommendation

Based on findings of this study there are further important recommendations for future practices for women principals. These are:

1. It is recommended that gender balance of leadership be seen in schools around the country. There should be more emphasis put on promoting more women into administrative level positions. Even though it is set as one goal for equality in the education sector, this is not currently practised. This approach needs the voice of women in the education sector, and education authorities to give a chance for potential women to hold leadership positions.
2. It is also recommended that more mentoring and networking workshops, in service training opportunities and role modelling be given to female teachers who aspire to, and have potential in leadership. This is so that these female teachers can feel empowered and see that they have the

potential of being leaders. Women's groups, non-government organisations and the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs have been doing a lot to promote women's leadership through workshops. However, individual female administrators in respected schools need to mentor, train and recommend young females with potential leadership skills for in service training overseas.

3. It is also recommended that other women administrators see and value the potential that they have when it comes to leadership. In particular they should consider the delegation of responsibilities, where in a society that is strong in patriarchal norms, delegating responsibilities to men, especially who come from a patriarchal background makes them feel responsible for the task assigned to them. It is one way to minimize the negative attitudes that women leaders sometimes face in schools.
4. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development and various Education authorities see the potential leadership skills that women principals have and appoint potential female leaders for administrative positions such as principal. Evidence can be seen by the lack of female principals in National High schools in Solomon Islands, and maybe other schools. It is time to recognise the leadership of women and move towards their appointment to such positions.
5. It is also recommended that it would be useful to get the perceptions of other stakeholders such as school boards, parents and students about women principals' leadership helps to support as well as recommend more women to leadership positions. Women principals' leadership can be viewed from a wider perspective, so that those who are actually involved in school organisational programs are involved.

Conclusion

It is hoped that the findings from this study will be useful, especially for those who are decision makers such as stake holders, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, the Ministry of Planning, Education Authorities , National Council of Women, Ministry of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs, School Boards; School leaders, especially women administrators; as well as

teachers, students, parents and the communities who support and are involved in the running of school organisations. To be able to appreciate and value the leadership of women, particularly women principals, stakeholders to consider recommendations and to be aware of the potential that women principals can bring to schools. Perceptions of other people such as students, parents and stakeholders need to be sought when considering women principals' leadership. Thus, those who are there to decide and appoint principals can make valid judgement when it comes to recommending women to become principals. It is hoped that the key findings of this study can be a potential step towards changing the perceptions often those involved in decisions and help progress of women in schools.

Important changes could be made when recognition is given towards women in leadership positions. It would be valuable for the education authorities and the Ministry of Education to recognise the potential seen in women principals, and to appoint more women to become administrators. To be able to recognise these potential that women principals have, it would be useful to get the perceptions of those involved and who work under women principals. That means getting the perceptions of teachers, students, parents, school board and stake holders. This may be a difficult task to accomplish, yet this study can be seen as a start towards valuing what women principals can bring towards the achievement and success of schools.

Furthermore, it is up to the women who have leadership skills as to whether they have the confidence to take up the task of leadership. Most times, if they do not, it is because of fear of patriarchal norms that men would give to them, and in addition, maybe because of balancing the role of being a mother and also meeting the demands and expectations of schools. Also, other barriers exist such as those mentioned in some literature on Melanesian women (Akao, 2008; Strachan, 2010; Vali, 2010; Warsal, 2009). However, if women are aspiring towards leadership it all starts with them having the confidence and to be able to prove to themselves

that they can be a leader. To be able to do this takes the strength and courage within these potential women to be able to prove that they can lead in schools.

In Solomon Islands, changes of attitudes and beliefs regarding women can only take place when individuals themselves appreciate and value the leadership that women can bring to society. From this study it is evident that the small changes that took place within individual teachers and how they perceived women principals made a lot of difference in their outlook towards valuing the leadership of women. In the meantime it is still a struggle to recognise the potential that women have in leadership, however these findings can be a starting point in recognising women principal's leadership.

REFERENCES

- Altintas, F.C., & Altintas, M. H. (2008). The relationship between feminist womanist identity and leadership style of women managers in Turkey. *Gender Management: An International Journal*, 23(3), 175-193. Retrieved from Emeralds Journals database.
- Akao, S. M. (2008). *Seen but not heard: Women's experiences of educational leadership in Solomon Islands secondary schools* (Master's thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand). Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10289/2379>
- Akao, S. M., & Strachan, J. (2011). *A Gender Analysis of the Education Sector in the Solomon Islands (Unpublished Draft Document)*. Honiara, Solomon Islands.
- Alamu, A. (2010). *Teacher Beliefs, Knowledge, and reported practices regarding numeracy outcomes in Solomon Islands*. (Master's thesis, Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand). Retrieved from <http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10063/1314/thesis.pdf?>
- Anderson, G. (1990). *Fundamentals of Educational Research*. London, Britain: The Falmer Press.
- Anderson, G., & Arsenault, N. (1998). *Fundamentals of educational research*. Great Britain: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., & Razavieh, A. (2002). *Introduction to research in Education*. California, United States of America: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Avolio, B. J., & Bass, B. M. (2002). *Developing Potential across a Full Range of Leadership: Cases on transactional and transformational leadership*. Mahwah, NJ, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Bandiho, H. A. (2009). Status of Educational Leadership and Female Participation. In H. C. Sobehart (Ed.), *Women Leading Education across the Continents*. Lanham, United States of America: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Barnett, K., & McCormick, J. (2004). Leadership and individual principal- teacher relationships in schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 40 (3), 406- 433. doi:10.1177/0013161X03261742
- Barnett, A.M., March, H.W., & Craven, R.G.(2005). *What type of school leadership satisfies teachers?: A mixed method approach to teachers' perception of satisfaction*. Australian Association for Research in Education. Conference 27 , Nov 1. Retrieved from <http://www.ownersguidepdf.com/download-manual-ebook/bar05419-what-type-of-school-leadership-satisfies-teachers-a-pdf.pdf>

- Bass, B., & Avolio, B. (1997). *The full range leadership development manual for the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire*. Redwood City, CA: Mindgarden Inc.
- Blasé, J. (1987). Dimension of effective school leadership: The teacher's perspective. *American Educational Research Journal*, 24(4), 589-610. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1163181>
- Blasé, J., & Blasé, J. (2002). The dark side of leadership: Teacher perspectives of principal mistreatment. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 38(5), 671-727.
- Bell, J. (2005). *Doing your research project* (4th ed.). Berkshire, England: Open University Press.
- Bennis W., & Nanus, B. (1985). *Leaders: The strategies for taking charge*. New York, United States: Harpere Row.
- Bishop, R., & Glynn, T. (1999). *Culture counts: Changing power relations in education*. Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore Press Ltd.
- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods* (5th ed.). Boston, United States: Pearson.
- Bogler, R. (2001). The Influence of leadership style on teacher job satisfaction. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 37, 662-683. Retrieved from Google Scholar database.
- Bosamata, J. (2011). *Induction Experiences of Beginning Secondary Teachers in Solomon Islands*. (Master's thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand). Retrieved from <http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/5377>
- Brown, M., & Ralph, S. (1996). Barriers to women managers advancement in education in Uganda. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 10(6), 18-23. Retrived from the Emerald Research database.
- Brunner, C. C. (2001). New faculty member examines power and female school superintendents, Retrived from <http://education.umn.edu/alum/link/2001fall/female.html>
- Burley, J.E., & Lenz, P (2009). Desert, rainforest and growing oasis; Transversing challenges and opportunity in Africa. In H. C. Sobehart (Ed.), *Women leading education across the continents: Sharing the spirit, fanning the flame*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Burns, J. (1978). *Leadership*. New York, USA: Harper and Row.
- Burns, R. (1994). *Introduction to Research Methods* (2nd ed.). Melbourne, Australia: Longman Australia Ltd.
- Burns, R. (2000). *Introduction to Research Methods* (4th ed.). London, Britain: Sage.

- Bush, T. (2003). *Theories of educational leadership and management* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Bush, T., & Coleman, M. (1995). 'Professional development for heads: the role of mentoring'. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 33(5), 60-73..doi.org/10.1108/09578239510098536
- Caldwell, B. (2006). *Re-Imagining Educational Leadership*. Victoria, Australia: ACER Press.
- Cannon, H. (2008). Shared Leadership: Building productive relationships. *Leadership National Education Magazine*, 52-55.
- Catano, N., & Stronge, J. H. (2006). National association of secondary school principals. *NASSP Bulletin*, 90,(3), 221-237.
- Celikten, M. (2005). A perspective on women principals in Turkey. *International Journal Leadership in Education*, 8(3), 207-221. doi:10.1080/13603120500041835 .
- Chapman, J.B. (1975). Comparison of male and female leadership styles. *Academy of Management Journal*, 18(3), 645-650.
- Chliwniak, L. (1997). Higher education leadership: Analyzing the gender gap. *ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education*, 25(4), 5-138.
- Christians, C.G. (2005). Ethics and politics in qualitative research (3rd ed). In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp139-159). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cohen, L., & Manion, L. (1994). *Research Methods in Education* (4th ed.). London, Britain: Routledge.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education* (6th ed.). London, Britain: Routledge.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2009). *Research Methods in Education* (6th ed.). Abingdon, USA: Routledge.
- Coleman, M. (2005). Gender in educational leadership. In C. Davidson, M. Brundrett., N. Burton. & R.Smith (Eds.), *Leadership in Education* (36-52). Thousand Oak, California, United States: Sage Publication.
- Connor,N.L., (1992). Restructuring schools will there be a place for women?. *Clearing House*,65(6), 337-339.
- Cranston, N., & Ehrich, L. (2009). Senior management teams in schools: understanding their dynamics, enhancing their effectiveness. *Leading and Managing*, 15(1), 14-25.
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating qauantitative and qualitative research*. New Jersey, United States: Pearson Education International.

- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed Methods approaches*. California, United States: Sage Publication.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Boston, United States of America.
- Cuban, L. (1988). *The managerial imperative and the practice of leadership in schools*. Albany State University of New York Press.
- Cubillo, L., & Brown, M. (2003). Women into educational leadership and management: international differences. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 41(3), 278-291. doi: 10.1108/09578230310474421
- Cubillo, L., & Brown, M. (2003). Women into educational leadership and management: international differences? *Journal of Educational Administration*, 41(3), 278-291. doi: 10.1108/09578230310474421
- Dash, N. K. (2005). Module: Selection of the research paradigm and methodology. *Online Research Methods Resource for teachers and trainers*. Retrieved from http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/researchmethods/Modules/Selection_of_methodology/index.php.
- Davis, S., Darling-Hammond, L., LaPointe, M., & Meyerson, D. (2005). School leadership study developing successful principals. Retrieved from http://www.srnleads.org/data/pdfs/sls/sls_rr.pdf
- Davis, B. (2011). *Leading the strategically focused school* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California, United States: Sage Publication.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2003). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues* (2nd ed., pp. 1 - 46). Thousand Oaks, CA, United States: Sage.
- Douglas, B. (1979). Rank, power, authority: a reassessment of traditional leadership in South Pacific societies. *Journal of Pacific History*, 14(1-2), 2-23.
- Douglas, B. (2000). Introduction: Hearing Melanesian Women. *Development Bulletin*, 51, 39-42.
- Eagly, A. H., & Johannesen-Schmidt, M. C. (2001). The leadership styles of women and men. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(4), 781 -797. doi: 10.1111/0022-4537.00241
- Earley, P., & Weindling, D. (2004). *Understanding School Leadership*. London, Britan: Paul Chapman Publishing
- Education Act, (1978). The statutes of Solomon Islands, No. 26

- Elms, M. (2002). *Female Management*. Retrieved from <http://www.schoolzone.co.uk/leaders/jft/GoodPracticed/Managementfinance/Female.htm>
- Everard, K. B., Morris, G., & Wilson, I. (2004). *Effective School Management*. London, Britain: Sage Publication.
- Fenwick, L. T. (2000). *The principal shortage: Who will lead?* Cambridge, MA: The Principal's Center, Harvard Graduate School of Education.
- Freebody, P. (2003). *Qualitative Research in Education: Interaction and Practice*. London, Britain: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Fullan, M. (2002). *Change forces with a vengeance*. London, Britain: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Getskow, V. (1996). Women in community college leadership roles, from <http://www.ericdigests.org/1997-2/women.htm>
- Giese, T.H., Slate, J.R., Brown, M.S., & Tejada- Delagdo, C. (2009). Female high school principals: Leadership practices and individual trait. *Advancing Women in Leadership*, 29(5), 1-10. Retrieved from Ebsco Host.
- Glanz, J. (2006). *Cultural leadership*. Thousand Oaks, California, United States: Sage Publication.
- Griffen, V. (2006). Gender Relations in Pacific cultures and thier impact on the growth and development of children from http://www.unicef.org/eapro/Gender_Relations_in_Pacific_cultures.pdf
- Grove, R., & Montgomery, P. (2000). Women and the leadership paradigm: Bridging the gender gap. *National Forum Journals*, 17(E).
- Gupton, S. L. (2010). *The Instructional Leadership Toolbox: A handbook for improving practice*. California, USA: A Sage Company.
- Halapua, S. (2000). *Talanoa process: The case of Fiji*. Honolulu, Hawaii: East West Centre.
- Hayes, W. (2004). *So you want to be a principal!* Maryland, USA: The Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
- Heynes, M. (2000). Quality education: revival of staff induction in schools. *South African Journal of Education* 20(20), 160-168.
- Hall, V. (1996). *Dancing on the ceiling: A study of women managers in education*. Liverpool, London, Britain: Paul Chapman Pubshing Ltd.
- Hallinger, P. & Heck, R. (1996). Reassessing the principal's role in school effectiveness: A review of empirical research, 1980-1995. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 32(1), 5-44.
- Holmes, G. (2005). *Effective leadership. The Australian Educational leader*.

- Hoy, K. W., & Miskel, G. C. (1991). *Educational Administration: Theory, research and practice* (4 ed.). New York, USA: McGraw Hill.
- Hudson, J., & Rea, D. (1996). *Teachers' Perceptions of Women in the Principalship: A Current Perspective*. Kansas City, Missouri, United States.
- Japan International Cooperation Agency. (2010). Country Gender Profile: Solomon Islands, from <http://www.jica.go.jp/activities/issues/gender/pdf/e09sol.pdf>
- Jayaweera, S. (1997). " Women , education and empowerment in Asia". *Gender and Education*, 9(4), 411-423.
- Johnson, J. (2008). The principals priority 1. *The Positive Classroom*, 66, (1), 72-76. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept08/vol66/num01/The-Principal%27s-Priority-1.aspx>
- Johnson Jr, B.L., & Kruse, S.D. (2009). *Decision making for educational leaders: Under examined dimensions and issues*. Albany, NY, United States: State University of New York Press.
- Kabutaulak4 T. T. (1998). Deforestation and Politics in Solomon Islands. In P. Lamour (Ed), *Sate Society and Governance in Melanesia*, Canberra. National Centre for Development Studies, Australia National University.
- Khalifa, M. A. (2011). Teacher Expectations and Principal Behavior: Responding to Teacher Acquiescence. *Springer Science and Business Media*, 43, 702-727. doi: 10.1007/s11256-011-0176-2
- Kilavanwa, B. (2004). *Women leaders in schools in Papua New Guinea: why do women leaders labour in the shadows?* (Unpublished master's thesis), University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.
- Kim, S., & Kim, E. P. (2005). " Profiles of school administrators in South Korea". *Educational Mangament, Administration and LEadership*, 33(3), 289-310.
- Koian, R. (2010). Women in patrilineal and matrilineal societies in Melanesia, from <http://www.aidwatch.org.au/sites/aidwatch.org.au/files/Rosa%20Koian.pdf>
- Lee, V. E., Simth, J. B., & Cioci, M. (1993). Teachers and Principals: Gender Related Perceptions of Leadership and Power in Secondary Schools. *American Educational Research Association*, 15(2), 153-180.
- Leithwood, K., Janti, D., & Steinbach, R. (1999). *Changing leadership for changing times*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (1997). Explaining variation in teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership: a replication. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 35(3-4), 312-331.

- Lichtman, M. (2006). *Qualitative research in education: A user's guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA, United States: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA, United States: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Love, A. (2007). *Teacher's perception of leadership effectiveness of female and male (Unpublished master's thesis, Tennessee State University, Tennessee, United States)*.
- Luenburg, F. C., & Orstein, A. C. (2008). *Educational Administration: Concepts and Practices*. Belmont, CA, USA: Wadsworth.
- Luttrell, W. (2010). *Qualitative Educational Research: Readings in Reflexive Methodology and Transformative Practice*. New York, United States: Routledge.
- Maetala, R. (2008). Matrilinial Land Tenure Systems in Solomon Islands: The cases of Guadalcanal, Makira and Isabel Provinces In E. Huffer (Ed.), *Land and Women: The Matrilineal Factor ; The cases of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu* (pp. 35-72). Suva, Fiji: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.
- Malasa, D. (2007). *Effective School Leadership: An exploration of issues inhibiting the effectiveness of school leadership in Solomon Islands secondary school*. (Unpublished master's thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand) Retrieved from <http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz?handle/10289/2429>
- Maynard, M., & Purvis, J. (1994). *Researching women's lives from a feminist perspective*. London, Britain: Taylor & Francis.
- McCabe, C. (2011). *Leading the strategically focused school* (2nd ed.). Larchmont, NY, United States: Eye on Education
- McFall- McCaffery, J. (2010). Getting stated with Pacific research: Finding resources and information on Pacific research models and methodologies. *MAI Review*,, 1, from www.review.mai.ac.nz/index.php/MR/article/viewFile/332/367
- Memua, J. (2011). *The experiences , perceptions and expectations of teachers, students and parents of the Community High School model in Solomon Islands: A Case study*. (Master's thesis, Waikato University, Hamilton, New Zealand. Retrieved from <http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/5348>
- Ministry of Education and Human Resource Developemnt. (2009). The National Education Action Plan 2010- 2012. Honiara, Solomon Islands.
- Ministry of Education and Human Resource Devleopment. (2010). Draft Performance Assessment Framework 2007- 2009. Honiara, Solomon

- Moengangongo, M. (1988). Tonga. In T. Tongamoa (Ed.), *Pacific women: Roles and status of women in pacific societies*. Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific.
- Montgomery, P., & Growe, R. (2003). *Visionary leaders by design. Advancing Women Leadership, 1-10*. Retrived from <http://www.advancingwomen.com/awl/spring2003/MONTGO-LHTML>
- Morell, P. D., & Carroll, J. B. (2010). *Conducting educational research : a primer for teachers and administrators*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Morris, S. B., Guat Tin, L., & Coleman, M. (1999). Leadership Stereotypes and Styles of Female Singaporean Principals. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative Education, 29*(2), 191 – 202. Retrieved from ProQuest Education Journals database.
- Morris, J. (1999). Managing women: secondary school principals in Trinidad and Tobago. *Gender and Education, 11*(3), 345-355. doi: 10.1080/09540259920627
- Mutch, C. (2005). *Doing educational research: A practitioner's guide to getting started*. Wellington, New Zealand: NZCER Press.
- Narokobi, B. (1983). *Life and leadership in Melanesia*. Suva, Fiji: The Institute of Pacific Studies & The University of Papua New Guinea.
- Nosike, A.N., & Oguzor, N.S. (2011). Understanding school leadership and management in contemporary Nigeria. *International Journal Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 1*, 145-153. Retrieved from <http://www.hrmars.com/admin/pics/98.pdf>
- O'Leary, Z. (2004). *The essential guide to doing research*. London, Britain: Sage Publication, Ltd.
- Olser, A. (1997). "Teachers' biographies and educational development: a Kenyan case study". *International Journal of Educational Development, 17*(4), 361-371.
- One Just World. (2011). Dr Alice Pollard. Retrieved from <http://www.onejustworld.com.au/Speakers/Alice-Pollard>
- Oplatka, I. (2006). Women in educational administration within developing countries. *Journal of Educational Administration, 44*(6), 604-624.
- Ortiz, F. I. (1982). *Career patterns in education: Women, men, and minorities in public school administration*. New York, United States: Praeger
- Otsuka, S. (2006). Talanoa research: Culturally appropriate research design in Fiji. Proceedings of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) 2005 International Education Research Conference: Creative

Dissent-Constructive Solutions, from
<http://www.aare.edu.au/05pap/ots05506.pdf>

- Otunuku, M. (2011). How can talanoa be used effectively as an indigenous research methodology with Tongan people?. *The Journal of the Pacific Circle Consortium for Education*, 23(2), 43-52.
- Palmer, E. (2011, May 26). Our population hits 515, 870, *Solomon Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.solomonstarnews.com/news/national/10920-our-population-hits-515870>
- Pasi, R. (2003). Introduction to the special issue: Leadership with vision and purpose. *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, 87(637), 1-3.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA, United States: Sage Publications.
- Pita, S. V. (2010). *Technology Teacher's Perceptions of the Roles and Uses of ICT in Solomon Islands*. (Master's thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand). Retrieved from <http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/4381>
- Pollard, A. A. (2000). *Givers of Wisdom Labourers Without Gain: Essays on Women in Solomon Islands*. Suva, Fiji: Bluebird Printery.
- Pollard, A. A. (2006). *Gender and leadership in the 'Are 'Are society, the South Sea Evangelical Church and parliamentary leadership*. Doctoral thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand.
- Pollard, A. A., & Waring, M. J. (2010). *Being the First: Stories Blong Oloketa Mere Lo Solomon Aelan*. Auckland, New Zealand: Pacific Media Centre.
- Porat, K. L. (1991). Women in administration: The difference is positive. *Clearing House*, 64(6), 412-415.
- Pottker, J., & Fishel, A. (1997). Performance of women principals: A Review of Behavioural and Attitudinal Studies. In J. Pottker, & A. Fishel (Ed.), *Sex Bias in Schools* (pp. 289-299). New Jersey, United States: Associated University Press.
- Robertson, J., M. (1995). *Theories of leadership. Educational leadership: Issues and Perspectives (Lecture Notes)*. Hamilton, New Zealand: University of Waikato.
- Rosener, J. B. (1990). Ways Women Lead. *Harvard Business Review*, Nov-Dec(119-125).
- Rowland, K. (2008). *The Relationship of Principal Leadership and Teacher Morale*. Doctoral Thesis Doctoral Thesis (Unpublished Thesis), University of Liberty.
- Ryder, M. (1994). Women in educational administration: The difference is positive. *Clearing House*, 23(7), 28-35.

- Sade, D. (2009). *Professional Development for a New Curriculum in Developing Country: The example of technology education in Solomon Islands*. (PhD thesis, Hamilton, New Zealand). Retrieved from <http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/3290>
- Sales, V. (1999). "Women teachers and professional development: gender issues in the training programs of the Aga Khan education service, northern areas, Pakistan". *International Journal of Educational Development*, 19, 409-422.
- Sanga, K., & Houma, S. (2004). Solomon Islands principalship: Roles, perceived, performed, preferred and expected. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 26(1), 55-69.
- Schaefer, A. W. (1985). *Women's reality*. Minneapolis, United States: Winston Press.
- Schein, E. H. (1985). *Organization culture and leadership*. San Francisco, United States of America: Jossey - Bass.
- Schultz, L. Z. (1998). "Being and becoming a woman teacher: journey through Nepal; the path taken". *Gender and Education*, 10(2), 163-183.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1992). *Moral leadership: Getting to the heart of school improvement*. San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Sharma, A. N. (1996). A reflection on qualitative research methodology: A Fiji experience. *Directions: Journal of Educational Studies* 18(2), 31-44
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22, 63-75.
- Shum, L. C., & Cheng, V. C. (1997). Perception of women principals leadership and teachers attitudes. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 35(2), 165-186. doi: 10.1108/09578239710161786
- Sidani, Y. (2005). " Women , work, and Islam in Arab societies". *Women in Management Review*, 20(7), 498-512.
- Sikua, D. (2002). *The decentralisation of education in developing country. A case of community high schools in Solomon Islands*. (Unpublished PhD thesis), University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.
- Silins, H. (1994). The relationship between transformational leadership and school improvement outcomes. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 5, 272-298.
- Smith, W. E., & Andrews, R. (1989). *Instructional leadership: How principals make a difference*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD Press.
- Sprague, J. (2005). *Feminist methodologies for critical researchers, bridging differences*. CA, United States: AltaMira Press.
- Starratt, R. J. (2004). *Ethical leadership*. San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass.

- Stevenson, A. (1988). *Solomon Islands*. Auckland, New Zealand: Lahood Publications Limited.
- Steyn, G. M. (2002). A theoretical analysis of educator motivation and morale. *Educare*, 32(1&2), 83-101.
- Strachan, J. (1993). Including the personal and the professional: Researching women in educational leadership. *Gender and Education*, 5(1), 71-80.
- Strachan, J. (2002). A gender analysis of the education sector in Vanuatu. Port Vila, Vanuatu: Department of Women's Affairs.
- Strachan, J. (2009). Women and educational leadership in New Zealand and Melanesia. In H. C. Sobehart (Ed.), *Women leading education across the continents: Sharing the spirit, fanning the flame*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Strachan, J., Akao, S., Kilavanwa, B., & Warsal, D. (2010). You have to be a servant of all: Melanesian women's educational leadership experiences. *School Leadership and Management*, 30(1), 65-76. doi: 10.1080/13632430903509774
- Stolp, S., & Smith, S. (1995). Transforming school culture, ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.
- Su, Z., Adams, J. P., & Miniberg, E. (2000). "Profiles and preparation of urban school principals: a comparative study in the United States and China". *Education and Urban Society*, 32(4), 455-480.
- Swain, B., & Broadbent, A. (2010). Lighting a Fire: VSA's role in promoting educational leadership in Solomon Islands. Honiara.
- Tracey, R. (2000). Intrinsic motivation. *Teachers Net Gazette*, 1(6), 10-17.
- Tongamo, T. (1988). Overview. In T. Tongamo (Ed.), *Pacific women: Roles and status of women in pacific societies*. Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific.
- Turan, S. and Ebiclioglu, N. (2002), "A study of gender differences and leadership characteristics of elementary school principals", *Educational Administration: In Theory and Practice*, Vol. 31, pp. 444-58.
- University of Otago. (2011). University of Otago: Pacific Research Protocols, from <http://www.otago.ac.nz/research/otago028669.pdf>
- Vaioleti, T. M. (2006). Talanoa research methodology: A developing position on Pacific research. *Waikato Journal of Education*, 12, 21- 43.
- Vali, S. K. (2010). *Women Leading in Silence in Papua New Guinea Higher Education* (Master's thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand). Retrieved from <http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/4330>

- Warsal, D. (2009). *The Impact of Culture on Women's Leadership in Vanuatu, Secondary Schools*. (Master's thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand). Retrieved from <http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/2776>
- White, N. D. (2007). *Indigenous women's career development: Voices that challenge educational leadership* (Unpublished master's thesis). Australian Catholic University, Fitzroy, Vic, Australia.
- Whittington, S., Ospina, S., & Pollard, A. A. (2006). Women in government in Solomon Islands: A diagnostic study Honiara, Solomon Islands.
- Wilmore, E. L. (2002). *Principal Leadership: Applying the new educational leadership constituent council (ELCC) standards*. California, USA: A Sage Publication Company.
- Yukl, G. (1999). A evaluative essay on current conceptions of effective leadership. *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology*, 8 (1), 33-48.
- Yukl, G. A. (2002). *Leadership in organizations* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

8/7 Tralee Place
Hillcrest
Hamilton
New Zealand

Email: le17@students.waikato.ac.nz

Date 21/ 11/11

The Permanent Secretary
Attention to: Under Secretary- Administration
Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development
P. O. Box G28
Honiara
Solomon Islands

Dear Sir,

Re: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH ON TEACHERS IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

My name is Laisa Nadia Elisha and I have been teaching as a senior teacher at Betikama Adventist College. I have just completed a post- graduate diploma in Educational Leadership at the University of Waikato. Currently, as part of my master's thesis in Educational Leadership, I am required to complete a research project in educational leadership. I would prefer to do this in schools around Honiara.

My purpose of writing is to seek permission to conduct a research inquiry with some teachers in the Solomon Islands. The research focuses on exploring perspectives of teachers on women's leadership. Since, there is an

under-representation of women in leadership, my intention is to get a perspective of how teachers view this minority group. My research goes further to explore from the teachers perceptions whether there is success found in leadership of Solomon Island women principals that can inspire other young women towards educational leadership.

The research will be carried out with teachers in four schools around Honiara in January 2012 to mid- February. This research uses semi-structured interviews with the teachers. Interviews with each participant will take approximately one hour. The semi-structured interviews will be audio taped and transcribed. Participants will then be given the transcribed document for confirmation that the document is correct.

The research has ethical approval from the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee, University of Waikato. This research will seek to identify the perspectives of teachers and seek to identify attributes that women principals have which motivate teachers. The identification of the participant and schools involved will be concealed for the sake of confidentiality and anonymity. If a participant wishes to withdraw at any given time up until the data analysis, they can do so. I respect their right on this.

My primary supervisor in this study is Frances Edwards, Department of Professional Studies in Education, University of Waikato, New Zealand. She can be contacted on: phone +64 7 838 4500 or email: frances@waikato.ac.nz

On the receipt of your approval of this application, I will proceed by contacting and making arrangements with the responsible education authorities and schools.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Laisa Elisha

Appendix 2

SOLOMON ISLANDS

FORM RA

RESEARCH APPLICATION

1. **NAME** **(Underline Surname)**

2. **ADDRESS(es) (if more than one give all)**

3. **Curriculum Vitae – (attach separately and include previous research work)**

4. **Subject(s) to be studied. (brief synopsis, detail should be on the research proposal)**

5. Areas/locality where research work is to be conducted.

6. Funding

(a) Who is funding this Research?

(b) What is the level of funding?

7. Method of Research

8. My Research will involve Please tick

Filming		Collecting Sample/Specimen	
Recording			
Photographing		Others (Please specify)	

Others :

9. Arrangements for accommodation in the place(s) of Research

10. How will the research results be used? List

11. List benefits of Research to Solomon Islands.

12. Name and Address of any person/organization/institution who is willing to assist you while you are doing your research. (A letter from local host will be useful).

13. How long will the research take? Specify dates if possible.

- 14. Any additional specific information you consider useful for our perusal of your application may be described below.**

- 15. Give us two referees certifying your research application and background. (Two separate statements expected)**

Name _____

Address _____

Name _____

Address _____

- 16. Applicants Signature _____ Date _____**

Appendix 4

8/7 Tralee Place

Hillcrest

3216

Hamilton

New Zealand

Phone: 0211281041

Email: le17@students.waikato.ac.nz

Date: 21/11/11

Attention: Principal

Dear Madam,

Re: Permission to conduct a research in your school involving your teachers

My name is Laisa Nadia Elisha and I have been teaching as a senior teacher at Betikama Adventist College. I have just completed a post-graduate diploma in Educational at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. Currently, as part of my master's thesis, I am required to complete a research project in educational leadership.

The research is focused on exploring perspectives of teachers on women in leadership. Since, there is an under-representation of women in leadership, my intention is get a perspective of how teachers view this minority group. My research goes further to explore from the teachers perceptions whether there is success found in leadership of Solomon Island women principals, that can inspire other young women towards educational leadership. Currently, no research has been done in this field for our country.

This letter seeks your permission to involve two of your teachers as participants of this research. Participants should be asked on voluntary basis according to the ethics approval of this research. Therefore, I ask your permission to conduct a meeting with these teachers in your school. Explanation of the research and requesting for a voluntary participant will

be done during the meeting. The criteria of these is teachers who have worked under a male and women principal. Selection of venue for this interview will be agreed on by the participant of the research.

The research will be carried from the commencement of school in January, 2012, through to the mid-week of February. The research will use semi-structured interviews. Interviews with each participant will take approximately one hour. The semi-structured interviews will be audio taped and transcribed. Participants will then be given the transcribed document for confirmation that the document is correct. The research will not interfere with schools activities, conflict with religious beliefs, nor the participants' official duties.

All the procedures for this research have been ethical approved by the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee, according to their ethics policy. Hence the study will not harm the participants, disadvantage schools, nor discredit your school. The identification of the participants and schools involved will be concealed for the sake confidentiality and anonymity. The participants have the right to withdraw from the study. However, for any withdrawal, they will be asked to inform the researcher or supervisor. Their rights will be fully respected.

My primary supervisor in this study is Frances Edwards, Department of Professional Studies in Education, University of Waikato, New Zealand. She can be contacted on: phone +64 7 838 4466 or email: francese@waikato.ac.nz

On the receipt of your approval of this application, I will proceed with contacting and making arrangements with the possible participants.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Laisa Elisha

Appendix 5

8/7 Tralee Place
Hillcrest
3216
Hamilton
New Zealand

Phone: 0211281041

Email: le17@students.waikato.ac.nz

Date: 27/10/11

The Chief Education Officer

Dear Chief Education Officer,

**Re: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN YOUR EDUCATION
AUTHORITY**

My name is Laisa Nadia Elisha and I have been teaching as a senior teacher at Betikama Adventist College. I have just completed a post-graduate diploma in Educational Leadership at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. Currently, as part of my master's thesis, I am required to complete a research project in educational leadership.

My purpose of writing is to seek permission to conduct a research with some of your teachers in schools of your authority. The research focuses on exploring perspectives of teachers on women in principalship. Since, there is an under-representation of women in leadership, my intention is to get a perspective of how teachers view this minority group. My research goes further to explore from the teachers perceptions whether there is success found in leadership of Solomon Island women principals, that can inspire other young women towards educational leadership. Currently, no research has been done in this field in our country. Thus,

it would be interesting to explore teachers' perspectives on women in administration.

The research will be carried out with these teachers from January through to the last week of December. The research will use semi-structured interviews. Interviews with each participant will take approximately one hour. The semi-structured interviews will be audio taped and transcribed. Participants will then be given the transcribed document for confirmation that the document is correct. The research will not interfere with schools activities, conflict with religious belief, nor the participants' official duties. All the procedures for this research have been ethical approved by the University of Waikato Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee, according to their ethics policy. The identity of the participants and schools involved will be concealed. The participants have the right to withdraw from the study. However, for any withdrawal, they will be asked to inform the researcher or supervisor. Their rights will be fully respected.

My primary supervisor in this study is Frances Edwards, Department of Professional Studies in Education, University of Waikato, New Zealand. She can be contacted on: phone +64 7 838 4466 or email: francese@waikato.ac.nz

On the receipt of your approval of this application, I will proceed with contacting and making arrangements with the respective schools.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Laisa Elisha

Appendix 6

8/7 Tralee Place
Hillcrest
3216
Hamilton
New Zealand
Phone: 0211281041
Email: le17@students.waikato.ac.nz

Date

Address

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Re: Permission participate in a research project

My name is Laisa Nadia Elisha and I have been teaching as a senior teacher at Betikama Adventist College. I have just completed a post- graduate diploma in Educational Leadership at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. Currently, as part of my master's thesis, I am required to complete a research project in educational leadership.

The research will focus on exploring perspectives of teachers on women in leadership. Since, there is an under-representation of women in leadership, my intention is to get a perspective of how teachers view this minority group. My research goes further to explore from the teachers perceptions whether there is success found in leadership of Solomon Island women principals, that can inspire other young women towards educational leadership. Currently, no research has been done in this field for our country.

This letter seeks your participation in the study. This study will involve you in a semi- structured interview, for approximately an hour. The interview will be recorded and transcribed. You will be given an opportunity to confirm the written transcript within the period of four weeks. The research activities will not conflict with the school programme or your official duties. The interview will only be

done during your free time. Location of the interview will be chosen and agreed upon by you and the researcher.

All the procedures for this research have been approved by the University Of Waikato Faculty Of Education Research Ethics Committee, according to their ethics policy. Hence the study will not harm you, disadvantage nor discredit your school. The identification of you and the school will be concealed for the sake confidentiality and anonymity. You have the right to withdraw from the study up to the stage when I ask for confirmation of data. Your rights will be fully respected. This research will be published and also viewed as digital copy on the university website. The duration and security storage of non- identifying data (data sets and transcript) will be kept for a period of five years then destroyed.

My primary supervisor in this study is Frances Edwards, Department of Professional Studies in Education, University of Waikato, New Zealand. She can be contacted on: phone +64 7838 4500 or email: francesese@waikato.ac.nz

On receiving advice of your willingness to participate in this study, I will proceed with making arrangements with you.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Laisa Elisha

Appendix 7

Interview Questions

1. How were you appointed into the school where you are teaching at present?
2. Where do you come from?
3. Does your island practice a patriarchal or matriarchal system?
4. Does this system affect the judgement you have on women as leaders?
5. Do you think there should be women principals? Why?
6. How long have you worked under a women principal?
7. What was your first reaction like when you heard that you would be working under a female principal?
8. What impressions did your work colleagues have towards the female principal?
9. How did these impressions influence your attitudes and beliefs of women in leadership?
10. Has the thinking or attitudes changed since you started working with women principal's?
11. What leadership ways of your women principal influences you in your teaching?
12. What are some of you expectations towards your principal?
 - a. What do you expect your principal to do each day?
 - b. What are their key roles?
13. How were these expectations fulfilled by your principal?
14. What are some of the positive outcomes you had from working with the female principal? Give examples of these positive outcomes.
15. How has these positive outcomes influenced your perceptions of female principals?
16. What are some of the challenges you faced while working with the female principal? Give examples of these challenges that you faced.
17. How have these challenges changed your perceptions of female principals?
18. From your teaching experience, what is one thing unique about your principal's leadership style that has brought about a successful change to you school?

Appendix 8

Consent Form

Investigating the perceptions of teachers on women leadership in Solomon Islands

I of High School have read the introductory statement and understand that:

1)The information collected in the study will be kept confidential at all times. For protection of anonymity, pseudonyms will be used for the participant in the document. Neither the school, nor the participant will be made reference to in the document. The information collected in the study will only be used on what has been stipulated on the invitation letter and on this consent form.

2)Privacy and confidentiality of information on the interview is very important. All the instruments like tape, flash drive and written documents that are used for data collection in the research will be kept secure at all times. It will be securely stored and kept for a period of five years then destroyed according to the ethics regulation.

3)I will be given opportunity to review a copy of the transcript for confirmation of what I have said in the interview. I have a right to make changes on the transcript within the time frame if it is necessary.

4)I have ownership of the raw data of the interview which means, I have copy right on the raw data. The raw data is with the care of the researcher who can use it for her personal publications beside her research thesis in the masters in educational leadership.

5)I have a right to withdraw from the research up to confirmation of the transcripts. If I decide to withdraw my participation from the study, I must do so in writing or verbally to the researcher. If the reason(s) for my withdrawal is related to the researcher, then I can submit my letter to the researcher's supervisor.

6)There will be a digital copy of the research being published on the Waikato University's digital repository called Research Common. Access to this can be found on the university website www.waikato.co.nz

PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSE:

I am over 18 years old and eligible to participate in this study. [circle one]:

Yes No

I agree to be interviewed for this project. [circle one]:

Yes No

I agree to being audio taped during the interview. [circle one]:

Yes No

Venue_____

Time_____

Participant's signature

Date

I

Participant's name printed

Date