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**THE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE
PRINCIPALS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION WESTERN AUSTRALIA
(CEWA) COMPOSITE AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Maria Loreta Outtrim

Master of Education

Bachelor of Education

Bachelor of Arts

Diploma of Teaching

Graduate Diploma in Asian Studies

Professional Certificate in Instructional Leadership

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education



School of Education

Fremantle Campus

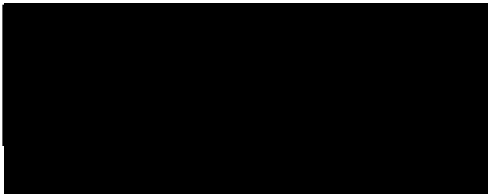
June 2022

Declaration/Statement of Sources

To the best of the candidate's knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published by another person, except where due acknowledgement has been made.

This thesis is the candidate's own work and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any institution.

Signed:



Date: June 20th June 2022

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It is with sincere and heartfelt gratitude that I acknowledge the invaluable contribution made by my supervisor at the University of Notre Dame, Associate Professor Shane Lavery towards the completion of this thesis. It was a privilege to have had the support and guidance of such a dedicated, knowledgeable, understanding, interested, and enthusiastic supervisor. Similarly, I wish to warmly acknowledge the wisdom and encouragement regularly afforded to me by my co-supervisor at the University of Notre Dame, Associate Professor Dianne Chambers. Their exemplary supervision not only enabled me to gain purpose, confidence, clarity, and inspiration in my exploration of the concept of values-led principalship but also ensured that this research study was a stimulating, beneficial and positive learning experience. Also, I am exceedingly grateful to the Executive Director of Catholic Education, Western Australia, Dr Debra Sayce for allowing me to conduct this research study within the secondary schools under her direction within the Archdiocese of Perth. Moreover, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the 14 participants in this research for their support, interest, and willingness to participate in my research study.

I dedicate this journey of learning to the memory of my late father, Virgilio Tersigni and my wonderful mother, Silvia my first educators. Their love, generosity, patience, and capacity to nurture the integration of life, culture, and learning is an enduring legacy. Finally, I thank my supportive husband, Kim and my daughters, Hannah, Olivia, and Genevieve, for their interest, understanding, and encouragement throughout the considerable time it has taken to complete this research study.

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to explore the personal and professional experiences of female principals in Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) composite and secondary schools. The study investigates factors that encourage female educational leaders to become principals, the expectations and demands of being a female principal, factors that support and sustain female principals, and the challenges that female principals face in CEWA composite and secondary schools (CCSS).

The review of literature highlighted four areas which formed the conceptual framework in this research. The four areas were relevant to female principalship in CEWA composite and secondary schools. These areas included Educational Leadership, Leadership in Catholic schools, Women in Leadership and Female Principals. The interplay among these four areas of literature directly influences the investigation into the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CCSS.

Constructivism was utilised as the epistemological approach for this research. Interpretivism was the chosen theoretical perspective for the research with a lens of symbolic interactionism. An instrumental case study design with fourteen female principals of CCSS was the methodology underpinning the study. In-depth semi-structured one-to-one interviews, a document search and researcher field notes were methods of data collection. The model used for data display, management, and analysis was the Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model of data management. This instrumental case study is guided by the qualitative research paradigm.

The fourteen participants indicated factors which they believed encouraged female leaders to become principals. These factors were direct encouragement from significant people; opportunities to undertake acting principalship roles; encouragement from family members and family role models; and a passion for education and a commitment to making a difference for students. The participants highlighted five issues associated with the expectations and demands of being a female principal in CCSS. These issues were the expectations and demands of internal stakeholders such as parents and staff members; the expectations and demands of external stakeholders such as state and national bodies; the demands of parish priests which were outside the responsibilities of the principal; balancing career and family; and high self-expectations and self-criticism.

The participants indicated four factors that support and sustain them as principals. These factors included significant people; suitable mentors; CEWA leadership programs; and

previous experience as a CEWA consultant. The study identified nine challenges that participants faced as female principals in CCSS. These challenges were insufficient time to deal with the multifaceted nature of the role; challenges around parental issues and staff concerns; challenges of safety, health and wellbeing of the school community; challenges of working in regional schools; lack of financial and property management skills and knowledge; compliance and regulation; principal preparation processes; gender discrimination towards female principals; and appropriate recognition of the value and effectiveness of the leadership characteristics of female principals.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Female Principals in Catholic Composite and Secondary Schools in Western Australia

Catholic composite and secondary schools in Western Australia require strong and committed leadership to flourish. Female principals exhibit a range of positive attributes when leading schools such as creating a collaborative working environment (Funk & Polnik, 2005), promoting people-orientated capability, and enhancing social equity and fairness (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). Female principals have the ability to support and empower others (Zacharakis, 2017), and demonstrate a commitment to building and sustaining professional relationships (Neidhart & Carlin, 2007). Female principals tend to engage with the instructional leadership role more than male principals (Hallinger, 2011). Even though there are many positive attributes that female principals bring to secondary schools, there are noted discrepancies in the number of female principals to male principals in international and national educational settings.

The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) provides comparable data on the working conditions and learning environment of teachers and principals in schools across the world (OECD, 2019). By 2018, the total number of countries involved in the TALIS survey increased to 48 countries and economies (Ainley & Carstens, 2018). Although female teachers make up the majority of the teaching workforce for all TALIS 2018 countries, they are in the minority among school principals in about half of these countries, including Australia (Thomson & Hillman, 2019). Both primary and secondary school staff participated in the TALIS 2018 survey. There were 6603 teachers and 453 principals involved (Thomson & Hillman, 2019). In Australia, 60% of secondary principals were male and 40% of secondary principals were female (OECD, 2019). The national trend was reflected in the Catholic secondary schools across Australia, with only 35% of principals being female (Fitzgerald, 2017).

In the local context, the 2019 data provided by the Catholic Secondary Principals' Association of Western Australia (metropolitan and regional schools with composite and secondary enrolments) indicated that 40% of principals of Catholic composite and secondary schools (CCSS) schools were female and 60% were male. Moreover, the percentage of female principals in CCSS had slightly declined since 2019 (D. Moolla, personal communication, September 15, 2021). In 2021, data provided by the Catholic Secondary

Principals' Association of Western Australia (metropolitan and regional schools with composite and secondary enrolments) noted that 37% of principals were female, and 63% of principals were male. (D. Moolla, personal communication, September 15, 2021). In 2021, there were 46 principals in CCSS, of which 17 were female and 29 were male, despite the greater number of female secondary teachers compared to male teachers.

1.2 Personal Statement

The original incentive underpinning my motivation for this research was drawn from a drive to explore why there is a lower number of female principals compared to the number of male principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools (CCSS). As a Catholic educator with over thirty years of experience in teaching and leadership at both CEWA school and system level, it was noticeable that the majority of CCSS principals were male. However, out of this initial incentive came a greater desire to move beyond examining numbers of female principals to investigate the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CCSS. The opportunity to interview fourteen participants highlighted that female principals in CCSS were courageous and had to endure many challenges, not only to become CCSS principals but also during their principalship journeys. Hearing the voices of the participants' personal and professional leadership journeys has inspired me to be proactive in supporting female educators to become educational leaders in CCSS.

1.3 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research was to explore the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools (CCSS). In particular, this study investigated factors that encouraged female educational leaders such as Heads of Department, Heads of Year and Deputy Principals to become principals, the expectations and demands of being a female principal in CEWA, factors that support and sustain female principals, and the challenges that female principals face in CCSS. These considerations shed light on why female educators choose to become principals, and what measures need to be adopted by stakeholders and authorities to ensure that female educators are provided the best assistance and encouragement whilst in principalship of CCSS.

1.4 The Research Questions

The overarching research question was: What are the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools? There were four specific research questions:

1. What factors encourage female educational leaders to become principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools?
2. What are the expectations and demands of being a female principal in CEWA composite and secondary schools?
3. What factors support and sustain a female principal in CEWA composite and secondary schools?
4. What challenges do female principals face as leaders in CEWA composite and secondary schools?

1.5 Context of the Research

The use of context is important in assisting the researcher to understand the ‘life world’ of the research participants and the myriad of influences upon this ‘life world’ (Wicks & Whiteford, 2006). There were four dimensions of context underpinning the nature and place of this research. These were:

1. The geographical setting of schools in Catholic education in Western Australia
2. The governance of Catholic education in Western Australia
3. Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA)
4. Catholic school principalship in Western Australia

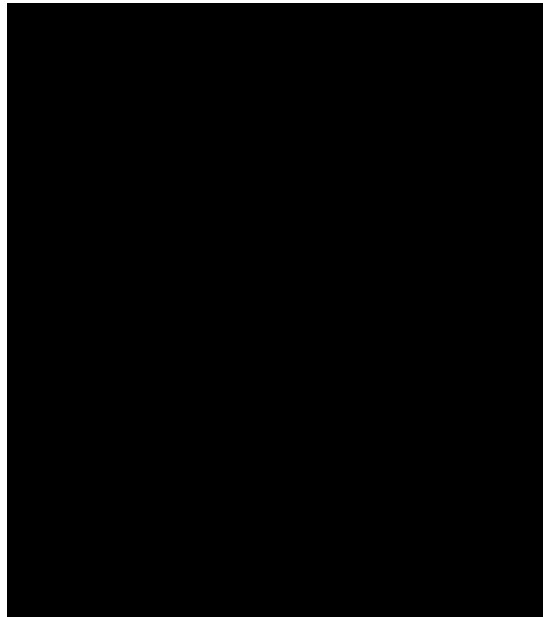
1.5.1 The Geographical Setting of Schools in Catholic Education in Western Australia

With an area of more than 2,500,000 square kilometres, 12,500-kilometres of coastline and spanning 2,400 kilometres from north to south, the state of Western Australia occupies one-third of the continent and is considered the largest state in Australia (Landgate, 2021). The Perth metropolitan region is the administrative and geographical area of the Western Australian capital city of Perth. Perth is Australia's fourth-most populous city, with a population of 2.1 million living in the Greater Perth region in 2020 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). The Bishops of Western Australia combined Catholic schools across their four Dioceses (Perth, Broome, Geraldton and Bunbury) into one state-wide system in 1971,

with the establishment of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA) (CEWA, 2020). Figure 1.1 shows the division of the dioceses of Western Australia.

Figure 1.1

The Western Australian Catholic Diocese (Diocese of Geraldton, 2020)



1.5.2 The Governance of Catholic Education in Western Australia

Governance of Catholic education in Western Australia is through the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA) via Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA). The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia was established by the Bishops of Western Australia to ensure the *Bishops' Mandate for Catholic Education in Western Australia* is enacted throughout the state (CEWA, 2019). The Commission is representative of all groups involved in Catholic education. Members of the Commission serve a three-year term, and are appointed by the Bishops of Western Australia. The governance work of CECWA is convened by five committees. These committees are: Aboriginal Committee; Curriculum; Audit and Risk; Finance; and Catholic Education Community. CEWA is guided by the Commission to develop Catholic schools as learning communities as outlined in the Bishops' Mandate Letter (CECWA, 2009). The Commission fulfils its responsibilities in partnership with Catholic Education Western Australia and under the leadership of the Executive Director of Catholic Education (CEWA, 2019).

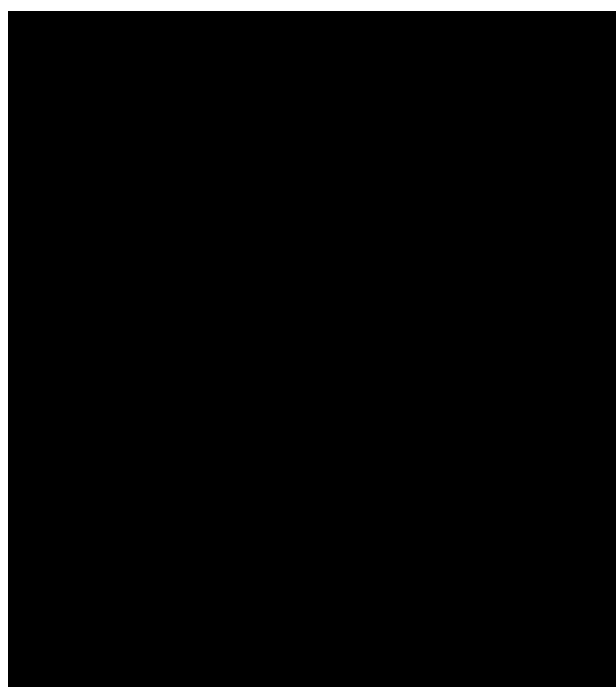
1.5.3 Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA)

Catholic Education Western Australia commenced in 1971. The decision of the Bishops and heads of religious congregations in 1971 to establish a Catholic Education Commission in Western Australia was a significant event. Bishop Quinn became Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia's first Chairperson in 1972, Father James Nestor, the first Director and in 1972, Dr Richard McSweeney was the Chief Research Officer. A Mandate and Terms of Reference were established as management and accountability of schools was to now be through a board, not the Parish or Religious Order (CEWA, 2020).

As a state-wide system, CEWA oversees the education for the four dioceses within the state. In 2019, Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) became a Limited company. CEWA oversees 162 schools and serves more than 76,000 students across the state (CEWA, 2020). Figure 1.2 shows the number of schools in the dioceses (note that the Perth and Bunbury dioceses have combined their school numbers). CEWA educates 18% of all school-aged children and is the second largest education provider in Western Australia (CEWA, 2020). The system employs 6,200 teachers and 4,800 non-teaching staff (CEWA, 2020).

Figure 1.2

The Number of Catholic Schools throughout Western Australia (CEWA, 2020).



1.5.4 Catholic School Principals in Western Australia

Principals of Catholic schools in Western Australia are entrusted by CEWA to oversee the running of the schools. As recorded in the Bishops' Mandate Letter for all Catholic schools, principals in all dioceses in Western Australia are called to lead the school community and promote its evangelisation purposes. Principals are responsible for developing a faith community, as well as the outcomes of curriculum, including the Religious Education program (CECWA, 2009). The CEWA principal is responsible for the school's effectiveness as a community of evangelisation (Catholic Education Commission of Western CECWA, 2009). The principal is primarily responsible for the delivery of the educational program to each student and for building relationships with students, staff, and the school community (Catholic Education Western Australia, 2019), and reports to the Executive Director. Spesia (2016) stated that Catholic school principals, like their public-school counterparts are responsible for the organisational and educational leadership of their school communities, however, foremost, Catholic school principals are servant leaders within the wider Church community. The Bishops' Mandate Letter for all Catholic schools in Western Australia, also highlights the importance of the role of Catholic school principals in relation to servant leadership (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia [CECWA], 2009).

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this research is twofold. Firstly, it is important to explore the personal and professional experiences of female principals in Catholic composite and secondary schools (CCSS) as a means to gain an insight into what motivates, supports and sustains female principals in CCSS. Secondly, examining the expectations and demands of the role may provide new knowledge to understand the challenges female principals encounter in their daily personal and professional journey. Identifying and understanding what motivates, supports, sustains CCSS female principals, together with their daily challenges, may highlight appropriate support measures.

1.7 Research Participants

Out of the seventeen female principals in CCSS who were invited to take part in the research, fourteen agreed to participate. In this study, the fourteen research participants were

located in CEWA metropolitan and regional schools. The principalship experience of the participants ranged from beginning principals with less than two years of experience, to those with 10+ years of experience. Most of the participants in this study had held one principalship position, however, a small number had been principals of two or more schools.

1.8 Outline of the Design of the Research

A constructivist epistemological approach was used for this research as it allowed the researcher to explore the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools (CCSS) through building in-depth knowledge derived from the data collected. The theoretical perspective adopted for this research was interpretivism. Crotty (1998) defined interpretivism as “culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world” (p. 67). Interpretivism is associated with a constructivist epistemology (Crotty, 1998). Using an interpretivist lens, the data collected from the female principals enabled the researcher to explore, interpret and understand the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CCSS.

Methodology is a process to research complex, information about a topic and provides a rationale for the purpose of the research (Cohen et al., 2011). The methodology used for this research was a case study, in particular, an instrumental case study. The instrumental case study provided insight into specific factors that motivate female leaders to become principals, the expectations and demands of female principals, what supports and sustains female principals, and the challenges female principals face in CCSS.

Methods of data collection included in-depth, semi-structured one-to-one interviews with fourteen participants, document searches and researcher generated field notes. The researcher undertook a semi-structured one-to-one interview with each of the female CEWA principals. Interview guide questions were used as the basis for the interviews. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim by an external contractor. A document search was employed to provide an initial description of the context of each case. Researcher generated field notes were used in this research to describe the physical setting and the communication patterns, both verbal and non-verbal, of participants in the semi-structured interviews. Researcher generated field notes were taken during and after the interviews. This process offered additional information to participants’ responses.

The data analysis was undertaken by using the Interactive Cyclical Process strategy as described by Miles and Huberman (1994). The data analysis process included data

condensation, data display, and conclusion and drawing verification. There were four stages in the interactive and iterative processes: before data collection begins; during the research design and planning phase; during data collection and post data collection. Data display for this study incorporated transcripts of the one-to-one interviews and Word Clouds, a data visualisation representation comprising of a collection of words which are frequently mentioned. Using transcripts of the one-to-one interviews, the researcher was able to identify the initial coding from the participants' responses and then refine the coding. Using the displays, the researcher was able to identify the themes under each of the four research questions.

1.9 Definitions

1.9.1 Catholic Bishops Mandate

The Bishops Mandate for the Catholic Education Commission Western Australia 2009-2015 establishes the importance of the Church's mission, and the overall vision for Catholic schools which reflects developments in Catholic education and in official Church teaching (CECWA, 2009).

1.9.2 Catholic Schools

Catholic schools in Western Australia are educational learning institutions which support young people to be creative, innovative and critical thinkers, in order to influence the changing world in a positive way (Hickey et al., 2009). Catholic schools are faith communities based on belief in Catholicism and a Christian way of life (CEWA, 2020).

1.9.3 Catholic School Principals

Catholic school principals, under the direction of the Executive Director of Catholic Education, have the responsibility to lead in every aspect of the schools' ethos, life and curriculum. Catholic school principals promote the schools' evangelisation purpose (Hickey et al., 2009).

1.9.4 Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA)

The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia [CECWA] has the responsibility to govern Catholic education in Western Australia. The Commission is responsible to the Bishops who appoint the members (Hickey et al., 2009).

1.9.5 Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA)

As the executive arm of the CECWA, Catholic Education Western Australia [CEWA] is accountable for the operational responsibilities and activities delegated by the CECWA (Hickey, et al., 2009).

1.9.6 CEWA Composite and Secondary Schools (CCSS)

Composite Schools can be further divided into two types: Kindergarten to Year 12 schools and Years 4 – 12 (single gender schools). CEWA secondary schools educate students from Years 7 to 12.

1.10 Outline of the Thesis

The structure of the thesis consists of six chapters. Table 1.1 provides an overview of this structure.

Table 1.1

Overview of the Thesis Structure

Chapter Title
Chapter 1 Introduction
Chapter 2 Review of the Literature
Chapter 3 Research Plan
Chapter 4 Presentation of Results
Chapter 5 Discussion of Results
Chapter 6 Review and Conclusions

1.11 Chapter Outlines

Chapter One: The Introduction begins by introducing the background of the research, explanation of the research questions and the four specific research questions that underpinned the study, the researcher’s personal statement and an outline of the purpose and

the context of the research, in which the instrumental case study took place. The purpose and the context of the research is followed by the significance of the research. The fourteen research participants who were female principals of CEWA composite and secondary schools were located in CEWA metropolitan and regional schools. The participants' professional experience ranged from less than one year to those with more than ten years of experience. Furthermore, the chapter provides an outline of the research design including the data analysis. The chapter concludes with relevant definitions and provides a summary outline of the six chapters of the thesis.

Chapter Two: The Review of Literature, is comprised of four areas that informed this research. These four areas include Educational Leadership, Leadership in Catholic schools, Women in Leadership and Female Principals. First, Educational Leadership highlighted transactional leadership, transformational leadership, instructional leadership, and transcendental leadership. Second, Leadership in Catholic schools considered the purpose of Catholic school leadership, approaches to Catholic school leadership, and the role of the principal in a Catholic school. Third, Women in Leadership examined the leadership characteristics of women, positive attributes that women bring to leadership and challenges faced by women in leadership. Finally, Female Principals focused on the nature of female principal leadership, female principals' positive attributes and the challenges faced by female principals in schools.

Chapter Three: The Research Plan, outlines the approach that was used to explore the personal and professional experiences of female principals working in CCSS. The theoretical framework for the study elicited the epistemology from a constructivist qualitative approach and used interpretivism as its theoretical perspective. An instrumental case study design was the methodology employed in this research. Outlined along with the details of data analysis were the methods of data collection. The chapter highlighted various elements of trustworthiness, methodological rigour, and ethical considerations to enhance the authenticity of the research.

Chapter Four: The Presentation of Results, displayed the data from the study under the four specific research questions. These results were organised into four themes. The first theme highlighted three sub-themes regarding factors that encouraged female educational leaders to become principals in CCSS. The second theme highlighted four sub-themes pertaining to factors contributing to the expectations and demands of female principals in CCSS. The third theme highlighted four sub-themes relating to factors that support and

sustain female principals in CCSS. Finally, the fourth theme highlighted six sub-themes with respect to the challenges faced by female principals in CCSS.

Chapter Five: The Discussion chapter provides an interpretive and analytical discussion of the results provided in Chapter Four. The data presented for each of the fourteen female participants were analysed alongside relevant literature according to each specific research question. The discussion of aspects that encourage female educational leaders to become principals in CCSS focused on four factors: direct encouragement from significant people; opportunities to undertake acting principalship roles; encouragement from family members and family role models; and a passion for education and a commitment to making a difference for students. Discussion of the expectations and demands of being a female principal of a CCSS focused on five issues: expectations and demands of internal stakeholders; expectations and demands of external stakeholders; expectations of parish priests; balancing career and family; and high self-expectations and self-criticism. Discussion of the factors that support and sustain a female principal in CCSS focused on four factors: significant people; suitable mentors; CEWA leadership programs; and previous experience as a CEWA consultant. Discussion on the challenges that female principals face as leaders in CCSS focused on nine issues. Participants commented that there were challenges around insufficient time to deal with the multifaceted nature of the role; parental issues and staff concerns; safety, health and wellbeing of the school community; working in regional schools; a lack of financial and property management skills and knowledge; compliance and regulation; principal preparation processes; gender discrimination towards female principals; and a lack of recognition of the value and effectiveness of the leadership characteristics of female principals.

Chapter Six: Review and Conclusions, reviews and draws conclusions about the results of this study in light of exploring the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CCSS. A restatement of the research design was provided, which is followed by the results of each of the four specific research questions. The benefits and limitations of the research design are provided, together with the knowledge this thesis has added to the field of study. The results of the study have implications for the following groups or individuals: The Catholic Bishops of Western Australia, Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA); Parish priests' communities; and other researchers. There are six key recommendations drawn from the results of this study. Lastly, a conclusion is presented along with a personal statement from the researcher.

CHAPTER 2: Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to explore the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools. The overarching research question is: What are the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools? This review of literature will examine four areas of literature relevant to female principalship in CEWA composite and secondary schools. These areas include Educational Leadership, Leadership in Catholic schools, Women in Leadership and Female Principals. The outline of the review of literature is provided in Table 2.1

Table 2.1

Outline of the Literature Review

2.1	Introduction
2.2	Conceptual Framework
2.3	Leadership Models
2.4	Summary
2.5	Leadership in Catholic schools
2.6	Summary
2.7	Women in Leadership
2.8	Summary
2.9	Female Principals
2.10	Summary
2.11	Conclusion

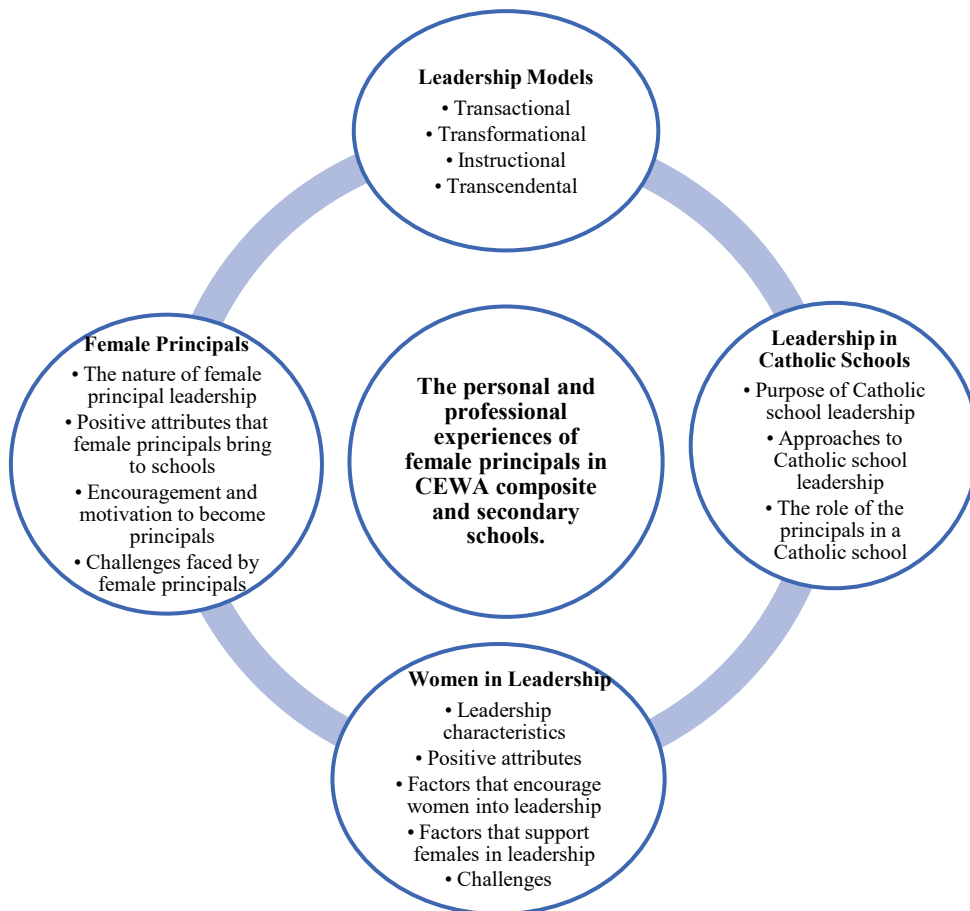
2.2 Conceptual Framework

The four areas of literature outlined in Table 2.1, Leadership Models, Leadership in Catholic schools, Women in Leadership and Female Principals bring into focus the conceptual framework that underpins this research. These areas directly highlight the central themes relevant to the current research into the leadership experiences and perceptions of

female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools (CCSS). Literature presented on leadership models draws primarily on four leadership models. These models are transactional leadership, transformational leadership, instructional leadership and transcendental leadership. Leadership in Catholic schools considers the purpose of Catholic school leadership, approaches to Catholic school leadership, and the role of the principal in a Catholic school. The third area of the conceptual framework is women in leadership. This area of the literature relates to the nature of women in leadership and includes leadership characteristics of women, positive attributes that women bring to leadership and challenges faced by women in leadership. The fourth area of the conceptual framework is female principals. This area of the literature relates to the nature of female principal leadership, the benefits that female principals bring to schools, and challenges faced by secondary female principals in schools. The conceptual framework underpinning the literature is presented graphically in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1.

Conceptual Framework for the Review of Literature



2.3 Leadership Models

There are many diverse definitions of leadership. Such definitions initially perceived leadership in terms of trait theory, then as a behavioural approach and finally as a situational understanding of leadership (Avolio et al., 2009). Recent approaches or models have incorporated a more integrated perception of leadership as a combination of trait, behavioural and situational theories (Dalglish & Miller, 2016). These models include, Distributive, Transactional, Transformational, Charismatic, Instructional, Transcendental and Servant leadership. A common component of these leadership models is a process linking a group of individuals to achieve a goal (Northouse, 2019). Educational leadership is foremost associated with the improvement and strengthening of students' development and learning and is linked to the formal structure of leadership positions in a school (Kapur, 2021). This section draws on literature which relates to four main leadership models that are relevant in supporting principals as educational leaders. The leadership models are transactional, transformational, instructional, and transcendental leadership. These models are the most relevant models to research on women in leadership in Catholic schools (Dosen, 2016; Hyseni Duraku & Hoxha, 2021; Gumus et al., 2018; Lavery, 2012).

Transactional leadership is characterised by evidence of managerial leadership which encompasses organisational aspects necessary for all leaders (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership focuses on developing an environment where relationships can be formed and trust, along with the notion of shared vision, is emphasised (Bass, 1985). Instructional leadership refers to a leadership model that focuses on improving classroom practice and providing professional development for teachers (Hallinger, 2007). Finally, transcendental leadership emphasises the twin notions of service and spirituality. Lavery (2011) noted that the moral dimension of leadership is transparent through the transcendental lens of service and spirituality. These four leadership models are now considered.

2.3.1 *Transactional Leadership*

In his seminal work on leadership, James MacGregor Burns (1978) proposed the notion of transactional leadership. Transactional leaders focus on managerial leadership where the organisational structures of the organisation are negotiated and accepted by the followers of existing systems by maintaining the status quo (Bass, 1985; Hackman & Johnson, 2009). Burns (1978) suggested that transactional leadership may contain an element of rewards or punishments in exchange for performance. Transactional leadership can be seen

as being concerned with the “everyday transactions involved in the running of an organization” (Lavery, 2011, p. 4).

Transactional leaders provide followers with rewards and praise in order that followers achieve a commitment to the leader and to the needs of the organization (Bass, 2000). Transactional leaders are negotiators and understand the importance of the negotiation that occurs between the leader and follower in order to arrive at a specific reward (Northouse, 2019). Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002), commented that transactional leadership entails, “a bargaining over the individual interests of people going about their own separate ways” (p. 186).

There are various advantages associated with the transactional model of leadership. These advantages include positive employee motivation, achievable goals and clear structure (Miller, 2020; Notgrass, 2014). Transactional leadership is an effective leadership model insofar as it motivates employees to become productive and efficient members of the team, primarily for self-interest (Hatcher, 2002). The practice of transactional leadership is centred on short-term planning and management that ensures the goals of the organisation will be achievable, clear and concise (Miller, 2020). The characteristics of transactional leadership entail, “honesty, responsibility, fairness, and honouring commitments without which transactional leadership could not work” (Burns, 1978, cited in Shields, 2010, p. 426).

There are, however, potential disadvantages in transactional leadership. These include insensitivity on the part of the leader, the issue of sole accountability of employees and the lack of individual creativity (Miller, 2020). Transactional leaders tend not to attend to the individual needs of their followers and can be insensitive to their followers’ personal development (Northouse, 2019). Transactional leaders provide tasks to employees without necessarily giving compliments or praise when they do well (Sultana et al., 2015). Furthermore, within transactional leadership, the sole accountability for tasks often rests in the hands of the employees and not the leader. In such a way, employees can be left to fend for themselves and carry the blame if something does not go to plan. Being blamed for failure to meet demands can cause dissatisfaction and unhappiness among employees (Miller, 2020). On this point, Bass (1997) argued that an effective transactional leader needs to be ultimately accountable for the outcomes of employees’ performance and evaluation. Finally, transactional leaders, by assigning short term goals and tasks can discourage the creativity of followers and can hinder them from contributing to the betterment of the organisation (Sultana et al., 2015).

Within the school context, the principal has a transactional role to ensure appropriate steps are taken and guidelines are followed, in order for the organisation to function successfully (Marzano et al., 2005). School principals need to be focused on organisational, fiscal and political management, in order to provide organisational boundaries that are applicable in a school context (Daresh, 2006). The importance of transactional leadership cannot be underestimated. Walker and Qian (2006), for example, commented that the principal's sense of being overwhelmed is often caused by the "excessive paperwork, high degree of fragmentation and unpredictability, [and] many different unplanned and expected events" (p. 302) that are encountered daily. Sayce (2014) moreover noticed that beginning principals, in particular, often found the demands of the managerial requirements of the role challenging. For principals in general, transactional leadership is a key factor in motivating action; however, it is transformational leadership that is the outcome of the action (MacNeill et al., 2018). The next section will explore transformational leadership.

2.3.2 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a leadership model that is visionary and focuses on the beliefs, needs, and values of leaders and followers (Burns, 1978). Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002) observed, "transformational leadership is concerned with end values such as freedom, community, equity, justice, brotherhood" and "calls peoples' attention to the basic purpose of the organization, to the relationship between the organization and society" (p.186). A key focus of transformational leadership is the ability to define the vision of the community (Bass, 2000; Yukl, 2012).

Transformational leadership has the capacity to move followers, empowering members of the community in order to achieve an outcome that goes beyond the expectation of the follower (Bass, 2000). This process is often charismatic and visionary (Northouse, 2019). Transformational leaders are able to articulate a vision that builds followers' confidence by providing individualised attention, in order to achieve the vision (Bass, 2000; Yukl, 2012). Transformational leadership can have followers fully engaged and transformed within the organisational objectives (Steinmann, et al., 2018). Mason et al. (2014) suggested that transformational leaders garner influence and motivate followers through their ability to enhance follower self-efficacy and positive effect to gain a commitment to the shared vision. Transformational leadership enables positive gains both for the leader and for the followers (Northouse, 2019).

There are significant advantages associated with transformational leadership which include a leadership based on charisma that inspires others, a capacity to connect with others in a non-hierarchical manner and the ability to foster change (Dosen, 2016). A strength of transformational leadership is the impact of charisma as a behaviour in this leadership model. Charismatic behaviours are evident in a transformational leader who is competent, clearly articulates goals, communicates high expectations and radiates confidence that has a positive impact on followers' motivation, satisfaction, and performance (Northouse, 2019). Furthermore, hierarchy is not generally considered by transformational leaders, as they are able to connect with followers at a personal level. This approach to leadership is observed at all levels of management from the bottom to the top of the organisation's level of seniority (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Lastly, transformational leaders are committed to fostering change. A strength of transformational leadership is that the leader's ability to communicate is a key factor that fosters change (Chaudhry & Joshi, 2018). The transformational leader advocates change for others and provides future direction or a vision that appeals to people (Northouse, 2019).

There are also various disadvantages associated with the transformational model of leadership. These disadvantages include the potential for abuse of power, possible absence of moral virtue and the fact that charisma as a behaviour can misinterpret truth for reality. Northouse (2019) notes that one of the criticisms of transformational leadership is the potential for leaders to abuse power, especially when leaders lead their followers in the wrong direction or if human values are not taken into consideration. Transformational leaders who lack positive moral values have the potential for abuse of power in the use of their strong emotions to motivate followers (Northouse, 2019). Yukl (1989) describes the absence of moral virtue as the "dark side of charisma" (p. 226) as an element of transformational leadership, affirming that for every example of a positive transformational leader, who displays charismatic qualities, there are examples of those who are negative examples. To be truly transformational, leaders need to demonstrate core moral values (Jambawo, 2018). A further disadvantage of the charismatic nature of transformational leadership is that the leader's enthusiasm is misinformed and mistaken for truth and reality (Lavery, 2011). A lack of planning and direction by enthusiastic leaders is capable of leading the charge "right over the cliff and into a bottomless chasm" (Changing Minds, 2010, para. 14). The next section will explore instructional leadership.

2.3.3 Instructional Leadership

The notion of instructional leadership as a leadership model emerged in the 1980s (Hallinger, 2007). Dimmock and Tan (2016) noted that whilst there appears to be no single definition of instructional leadership, it “is multi-dimensional” (p. 3). Instructional leadership’s main purpose is to improve the classroom practices of teachers. Hallinger (2003), indicated that among the three dimensions of instructional leadership, the following are noted; defining a school's mission, managing its instructional program, and promoting a positive school climate.

Alternatively, Robinson et al. (2008), identified three areas that were key to instructional leadership: promoting and taking part in teacher learning, establishing expectations, and planning, and coordinating and evaluating the quality of teaching and curriculum outcomes. In a similar manner, Mestry and Pillay (2013), suggested that instructional leaders display the following characteristics of leadership: they enhance the quality of education in schools, improve learner achievement, manage resources to effectively improve teaching and learning, and promote overall pedagogic and curriculum management. Instructional leadership is thus demonstrated by leaders who motivate, enable, and support teachers’ efforts to learn and alter their instructional practices, in order to keep schools focused on educational changes that achieve high performing outcomes.

Instructional leadership enables principals to support teachers to learn and implement new instructional routines and practices, which include providing feedback on classroom instruction as well as sharing ideas about structuring a lesson or instruction (Rigby et al., 2019). Brolund (2016) emphasised that in order to develop curriculum and instruction for improving pupils' performance, it was important for principals to work collaboratively with teachers. Hattie (2012) noted that principals became immersed and engaged in instructional leadership when they, “have their major focus on creating a learning climate free of disruption, a system of clear teaching objectives, and high teacher expectations for teachers and students” (p. 83).

The advantages of the instructional leadership model include the development of strong teachers and learners, the opportunity for staff to develop, the sharing of resources and ideas, and shared responsibility (Costello, 2015). When principals successfully implement instructional leadership, their contribution can have a powerful and inspiring influence on their staff by ensuring they have opportunities to develop pedagogically and instructionally

during protected instructional time (Mestry & Pillay, 2013). Furthermore, implementation of instructional leadership is effective when principals interact and recognise the expertise of other educators and work collaboratively in order to encourage shared responsibility by inviting staff to share resources, materials and ideas at staff meetings (Costello, 2015).

The disadvantages of instructional leadership include the lack of a universal definition of instructional leadership (Costello, 2015), the increase in managerial demands impacting on the role of instructional leaders (Meyer & Macmillan, 2001; Mitchell & Castle, 2005), and potential feeling of inadequacy in curriculum knowledge on the part of instructional leaders (Mitchell & Castle, 2005). There are many challenges arising from the vague interpretation of the concepts and practice of instructional leadership stemming from the lack of a universal definition of this leadership style. For example, these challenges include “feelings of inadequacy related to curriculum and expertise, work intensification, and time constraints” (Costello, 2015, p. 4). Without common standards and greater clarity in the role, the instructional performance of the principal may be impacted (Fink & Markholt, 2013). A further disadvantage of instructional leadership is the increase in managerial demands. The demands associated with the principalship duties make it difficult for the principal to clearly focus on and fulfil the role of instructional leadership (Duke et al., 2003). Finally, Mitchell and Castle (2005) highlighted that the most common view of instructional leadership held by principals is that it is clearly associated with being an expert in curriculum planning and knowledge. They reported that many principals had been out of the classroom for a period of time, therefore, they felt uncomfortable with the label of curriculum experts. The next section will explore transcendental leadership.

2.3.4 Transcendental Leadership

At the core of transcendental leadership is the sense of service and a notion of spirituality (Lavery, 2012). The original concept of transcendental leadership proposed by Cardona (2000), highlighted the spiritual dimension of the transcendental leadership model by adopting Greenleaf’s description of ‘servant leader’ (Isebor, 2018). The theory of transcendental leadership can be defined as a spiritual relationship between the leader and follower. The leader motivates, rewards, leads, and empowers the employees, in order to build quality spiritual relationships, and is a leader who is being of service (Sanders et al., 2003). Moreover, transcendental leadership has been described as “dimensions of spirituality (consciousness, moral character, and faith) that incorporate the efficient managerial aspects

of transactional theory and the positive charismatic aspects of transformational theory to enhance leader effectiveness” (Sanders et al., 2003, p. 21).

In her research, Liu (2007) affirmed that transcendental leaders display attributes such as the act of loving altruistically, enhancing harmony and well-being through care, appreciation of self and others, and genuine selfless concern for others. In such a way, transcendental leaders empower followers to make decisions, accomplish work, and lead themselves. Isebor (2018) noted that the description of ‘servant leader’ in transcendental leadership is displayed by people who are capable of sacrificing themselves to the service of others and who recognise that the notion of service is a key component of transcendental leadership.

There are significant advantages of the transcendental model of leadership. These advantages include eliciting the intrinsic motivation of followers, cultivation of a positive influence on task performance, and providing developmental feedback (Isebor, 2018). These advantages, all interrelated, arise from an emphasis on inspiring followers in a positive manner in order to encourage them to develop their ability to act in accordance with their own values for the benefit of others. Huang et al. (2010) noted that transcendental leadership is relation-centred and participative leadership in which followers are included in the decision-making process. This relation-centred participative leadership in turn appeals to the intrinsic motivation of followers, which enhances performance. Furthermore, by improving intrinsic motivation, transcendental leadership enhances ongoing task performance and induces satisfaction of accomplished tasks and goals (Isebor, 2018). A further advantage of the transcendental leadership model is related to the principle of caring for others (Northouse, 2019). That is, the nurturing approach of transcendental leadership leads to caring for others. Leaders exercise supportive action by providing developmental feedback such as investing in intrinsic rewards and interests to improve job performance (Isebor, 2018).

There are potential disadvantages associated with the transcendental leadership model. These disadvantages include inadequate interpretation of the practice and application of spirituality by those being led, misconceptions about servant leadership, and inappropriate use of power by the transcendental leader (Isebor, 2018). One particularly significant disadvantage of transcendental leadership can be that some followers may find it difficult to interpret the practice and performance of spirituality as demonstrated by the leader. This disadvantage in turn can impact the followers’ commitment to the organisation in such a way as to have a negative impact on job satisfaction (Isebor, 2018).

An additional disadvantage with transcendental leadership is that there can be a misunderstanding surrounding the theoretical formulations of being a servant leader due to a lack of common theoretical framework for servant leadership (van Dierendonck, 2011). Being a servant implies following, not leading, and although the model of servant leadership embodies this influence, the definition of servant is still neither clear nor fully explicated (Northouse, 2019). When clarity around the spiritual dimension of the servant leadership is ambiguous, leaders can adopt traits of leadership which include manipulation, seduction, subjugation, and evangelism of followers, thereby leading to the possibility of preferential treatment, distrust, and division (Krishnakumar et al., 2014). Isebor (2018) noted that transcendental leaders who practise the embracing of spirituality at the expense of rationality are engaging in an attempt to manipulate followers. He further suggested that exercising inappropriate use of power, whilst disregarding the needs and personal interests of the followers in order to take advantage of them, is not embracing the spiritual dimension of the servant leader (Isebor, 2018).

In the school context, a key component of transcendental leadership is the notion of service that one would expect in a Catholic school (Schafer, 2005). Service in transcendental leadership demands that one gives of one's best to others and is a key component of the model. Transcendental leadership highlights the value and place of spirituality within the principal's agenda (Lavery, 2012). When displaying transcendental leadership, Catholic school principals reflect on how their actions impact on those they serve. They prioritise their commitment to be of service to their students, parents, co-workers, and the system authorities to whom they are accountable (Lavery, 2011). In opposition to leadership approaches with a top-down, hierarchical style, transcendental leadership, with its emphasis on service, focuses on the key areas of collaboration, trust, empathy and the ethical use of power, based on Jesus as an example of servant leadership (Farrugia, 2011).

Sergiovanni (1998) claimed that "the source of authority for leadership is found neither in bureaucratic rules and procedures nor in personalities and styles, but in shared values, ideas and commitments" (p. 43). Sergiovanni's statement resonates well with the Catholic approach to transcendental leadership and the application of servant leadership to a Catholic Church school (Farrugia, 2011). As Duignan (2007) pointed out, Catholic educators and leaders are called to serve in the footsteps of Jesus who taught that "the greatest among you must be your servant" (Mathew 23:11). In order to successfully lead as a servant leader in a Catholic school, Lavery (2012) noted that the principal needs to possess a deep understanding of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, in short, "a spiritual standard for

principals by which to judge their decision-making processes, their interaction with all members of the school and wider community” (p. 40).

2.4 Summary

The review of literature pertaining to leadership models explored four leadership models that are evident in a leadership approach to education. These models are transactional, transformational, instructional, and transcendental leadership. The transactional model of leadership is often used by managers who entice their followers, rewarding and praising them in order to elicit commitment to the leader and to the needs of the organisations. Transactional leadership is concerned with the everyday tasks and responsibilities involved in the running of an organisation. Transactional leaders are involved in an exchange process between themselves and their followers to facilitate a specific reward in order to achieve a particular goal.

Transformational leadership is often associated with leaders who are visionary and who focus on the beliefs, needs, and values of their followers. A transformational approach to leadership is evidenced by a leader who has a vision and who sets out to empower members of the school community. Transformational leaders are willing to make a difference for their followers and have genuine charismatic qualities which build their followers’ confidence and self-efficacy in order to improve their performance.

The instructional model of leadership is education-focused and aims at improving the educational outcomes of schools’ performance; hence the core business of many schools has been to transition from administration and management leadership to instructional leadership. Instructional leadership models require that principals allow time for instruction, supervise and evaluate instruction, monitor students' progress, establish clear school goals by providing encouragement to learn, and for professional development for teachers.

The final leadership model examined was that of transcendental leadership. Transcendental leadership is defined by service and spirituality. It prioritises the personal development of followers and the building of their capacity as leaders. Transcendental leaders are capable of sacrificing themselves to service as servant leaders. The servant leadership model in transcendental leadership focuses on inspiring others in a positive manner, to empower followers to act within their own moral values in order to serve others. Spirituality is an integral component of transcendental leadership where the leader highlights the dimensions of spirituality such as consciousness, moral character, and faith with his/her

followers. The spiritual element of a transcendental leader is demonstrated by acts of service, witness, values and faith.

2.5 Leadership in Catholic Schools

There are three main areas in the literature pertaining to Leadership in Catholic schools. These three leadership areas are the purpose of Catholic school leadership, approaches to Catholic school leadership and the role of the principal in a Catholic school. Literature on the purpose of Catholic school leadership identifies the promotion of Gospel values as the basis for Catholic identity. Literature on the approaches to Catholic school leadership emphasises the notion of the servant leader and that of values led leadership. Lastly, although the leadership framework underpinning the role of the Catholic school principal may vary from diocese to diocese, there are four reoccurring leadership roles of a Catholic school principal that establish a base for discussion, performance review and goal setting (Coughlan, 2009). These roles are the religious leader, the educational leader, the community leader, and the pastoral leader.

2.5.1 Purpose of Catholic School Leadership

The main purpose of Catholic school leaders is to ensure that the Church's universal mission to proclaim the Gospel and its values is upheld within the school setting (Spesia, 2016). The Gospel values are the basis of Catholic identity. These values are fundamental to all planning, orientation, training, evaluation of the curriculum and administration of Catholic schools (Maney et al., 2017). Whelan (2019) argued that promoting the Gospel message not only fulfils the purpose of a Catholic school, but it also needs to be embedded in all areas of teaching, providing a shared language and lens to the meaning of the Catholic world view. In 1999, McDermott argued that to proclaim the message of faith through gospel values in the daily life of students in Catholic schools necessitates the school leader's understanding of what the message means and also how to live by example in the local community.

The role of the principal in maintaining Catholic identity within the mission of Catholic schools is central, and entails teaching the message of the Gospels, building a faith community and being of service to the larger community (Whelan, 2019). Buetow (1988) asserted that the Catholic identity of a Catholic school is integral to the mission of the Church and argued, "unless a particular Catholic school is considering the principles that give it its Catholic identity and is trying to live by them, it does not deserve to stay in existence" (p. 311). Furthermore, Nuzzi (2002) noted that the purpose of Catholic school leadership is the

missionary transformation of the school whereby “clarifying Catholic identity today is thus a significant part of staff development and faculty formation for the Catholic school” (p. 13). Nuzzi maintained, moreover that “left unattended, the lack of clarity about identity can thwart the overall mission of the school” (p. 13). The significance of the Catholic identity for Catholic school leaders is critical in their missionary transformation, and the leadership responsibility involved behind instilling the Catholic identity principles impact greatly on their role (Coughlan, 2009).

2.5.2 Approaches to Catholic School Leadership

The literature on approaches to Catholic school leadership identifies two main approaches. The first emphasises that the concept of servant leader is “service to others, a holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community, and the sharing of power in decision” (Tran & Spears, 2019, p. 76). The second focuses on Catholic school leadership which is values led, that includes inclusivity, equal opportunity and equity for all in the school community (Campbell et al., 2006).

2.5.2.1 Servant Leadership. Servant leadership is the notion of service by leaders who intrinsically demonstrate a “natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first” (Greenleaf, 1991, p. 13). As exemplified by the work of Jesus of Nazareth, Catholic schools are called to model servant leadership (Lavery, 2011). The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (2009) highlighted ‘service’ as the primary role for principals to adopt and stated clearly, “all who are called to leadership roles in Catholic schools, especially principals, must remember that, as leaders in the Church, theirs are roles of Christian service” (p. 43). Nsiah and Walker (2013) stated that the vision of Catholic leadership originated from the biblical metaphor of the shepherd and service.

The principal’s role as a servant leader is to serve his/her staff and students, so that they, in turn, may develop the will to serve as Christ did (Farrugia, 2011). Scott and McNeish (2012) recommended the servant leadership approach to leading Catholic schools as this approach encouraged the educational and spiritual growth of students. Furthermore, in order to develop as a just and caring school community, the school’s mission and commitment are to ensure that the principal, as servant leader, provides opportunities for teachers and students to extend Christian service to go beyond the classroom and the school day (Ozar & Weitzel- O’Neill, 2012).

2.5.2.2 Values Led Leadership. Branson (2004) argued that the expression ‘values led’ principalship entails a principal who consciously adopts certain values and deliberately allows particular values to influence behaviour in order to achieve desired outcomes. This approach to principalship would apply to a principal who is people-centred, achievement oriented and values led (Day, 2000). Values led leadership includes advocacy for social justice and fairness, such as inclusivity, equal leadership encourages equal rights, equal opportunity and a preferential option for the disadvantaged (Rebore & Walmsley, 2009). Striepe and O’Donoghue (2014) noted that serving the community is a commitment demonstrated by a value led leader. More specifically, values led leadership “requires that the school’s leaders be involved in serving disadvantaged groups, including Aboriginal and children with special needs” (Striepe & O’Donoghue, 2014, p. 141). Finally, values led leadership inspires students to take action on behalf of the oppressed and the voiceless as well as against injustice in society by serving disadvantaged groups (Striepe & O’Donoghue, 2014).

2.5.3 *The Role of the Principal in a Catholic School*

The literature pertaining to the role of the principal in a Catholic school are defined in four areas. These areas include the religious leader, the educational leader, community leader and the pastoral leader. These areas are now considered.

2.5.3.1 The Role of Religious Leadership. In the role of religious leader, Catholic school principals perceive their responsibility to create connections between God’s reign and the lives and faith journeys of people in the school community (Rymarz, 2004). The Catholic school principal is responsible for facilitating the faith development of the school community, implementing the school's philosophy, and developing and promoting moral and ethical development of the school community (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009). The role of the Catholic school principal as religious leader is to develop elements of Catholic school identity by developing a culture that is inclusive and is in response to the spirit of the gospels, “where students feel safe to discover one’s unique personhood” (Cook, 2001, p. 12). Spesia (2016) noted that the role of the Catholic school principals needs to “embody a spirit of self-giving at the service of the Church” (p. 252). Catholic schools base their foundations and vision in the Church where the notion of faith and education are not separated (Nsiah & Walker, 2013). Nsiah and Walker (2013) noted that the relevance of servant leadership in

Catholic schools is paramount, as the intention of Catholic leadership is to serve the Catholic education community.

An important aspect of religious leadership that contributes to the effectiveness of a Catholic school and to the role of the Catholic school principal is spiritual leadership (Convey, 1992). Catholic school leaders need to be spiritual leaders and unlike their public-school counterparts, their role as religious leaders in a Catholic school community requires the responsibility of being a faith leader (Whelan, 2019). McEvoy (2015) mentioned that as a religious leader, principals of Catholic schools must be bound by the vision of education outlined in the major documents of the Catholic Church on Catholic education. Furthermore, this vision is concerned with the development of the whole person, the integral education of the human person (McEvoy, 2015).

Even though the principal's role of religious leadership in a Catholic school is a spiritual one and requires the responsibility of a faith leader, with the transition from religious or ordained leadership to lay leadership, this expectation has grown significantly (Coughlan, 2009). Principals in Catholic schools, "may be voices crying in the wilderness, and they have to shoulder an unequal burden of witnessing to the faith, leading some clergy to appreciate and understand the spiritual leadership component of principals more" (Coughlan, 2009, p. 166).

2.5.3.2 The Role of Educational Leader. In the role of educational leader, it is the responsibility of principals to ensure students have access to quality life-long education across all learning areas (Coughlan, 2009). Part of the principal's responsibility is to make many decisions in areas as diverse as instructional leadership, marketing, capital improvements, finances, and development (Nuzzi et al., 2013). As educational leaders, the school principal is required to ensure the school is aligned with curriculum standards, achievement benchmarks, and other policy directives from multiple sources, which are complex and demanding (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Such accountability to meet successful student outcomes can weigh heavily on many principals, as the requirements of standardized tests are government mandated and often tied to funding levels (Earl & Timperley, 2009).

As an educational leader in a Catholic school, the principal must have a clear, well-articulated and internalised vision to ensure that the curriculum (formal and informal) is based on Gospel values, addresses the needs of students and wider community, and that staff prioritise the learning of each student (Coughlan, 2009). Furthermore, Coughlan, (2009) stated that effective curriculum and instruction is a fundamental pre-requisite for a successful

Catholic school, hence educational quality is important. With regard to the varied roles and responsibilities of a Catholic principal in today's educational landscape, Murfitt, (2019) maintained, "Leaders are tasked with...developing the school as a faith community accountable to the Bishops, the delivery of the curriculum as well as being a personal witness to the values and vision of the Catholic Church" (p. 1). To meet both the faith and educational demands of the 21st century, Catholic school principals are required "to exercise leadership that goes beyond effective organisation based on collaborative, collegial work relationships" (Lavery, 2012, p. 38).

The role of the principal as an educational leader must be managed to ensure a smooth operation of the school (Bush et al., 2010). Principals have witnessed increased autonomy, high stakes accountability, and a shift from managerial to educational leadership since 2000 (Bush et al., 2010). For new principals, in particular, there are many expectations and requirements they need to balance, from managerial requirements of the role to the educational requirements of improving the learning and teaching practices within the school (Sayce, 2014). Coughlan (2009) noted that the recurring educational administration burden felt by principals included the escalating administrative and accountability coupled with diminishing autonomy to act locally. Coughlan added that challenges presented by administration and accountability was summarised succinctly in these emphatic remarks, "Paperwork! We are not the captain of our own ship. We are accountable for so many grants and this adds to the paperwork" and similarly "compliance with Government makes for lots of paperwork" (Coughlan, 2009, p. 169).

2.5.3.3 The Role of School Community Leader. As school community leader the principal assumes responsibility for building a Christian community. The purpose of the school community leader is to foster collaboration between the clergy and the parish community, staff, students, parents' and friends' association, as well as the wider community (Ciriello, 1994). One expectation of principals in Catholic schools is that they establish and maintain an amiable relationship with and connection to the parish (Volkenant, 2020). However, even though there are attempts by Catholic principals and the clergy to demonstrate collaborative approaches to school leadership, often differences can arise from priests' traditional understandings of leadership (Holohan, 1999).

When it came to the demands and expectations of the role of community leaders, Coughlan (2009) noted the link between the parish and the principal is more tenuous and has become an additional expectation for principals to do more parish work due to the declining

numbers of Parish priests. Coughlan added that it is concerning for principals that priests are often shared amongst parish schools, particularly when there is no resident parish priest. Catholic school principals assume responsibility for building a Christian community and for fostering faith. Furthermore, principals meet the needs of the school's social, religious, historical and cultural context and are able to foster a sense of community among all facets of the school (Boyle et al., 2016). In the role of community leader, the principal needs to respond to and assume responsibility for dealing with societal issues, often with families that have dysfunctional lifestyles (Coughlan, 2009).

2.5.3.4 The Role of the Pastoral Leader. Effective pastoral leadership addresses the spiritual and temporal needs of people (van Rensburg, 2010). Udomah (2016) noted that pastoral leadership within a school emphasises the value of nourishing and protecting others such as parents, students and staff. In the pastoral leadership role, the principal fosters appropriate relationships so as to provide pastoral guidance to parents, teachers and staff in order to nurture faith and spiritual development (Ciriello, 1994). In order to be effective pastoral leaders, it is necessary to develop 'people skills' such as self-management, appropriate communication, management of people and tasks, innovation in regards to change, problem-solving, strong vision, and have appropriate time management. (Hillman, 2006).

In a Catholic school, pastoral leadership is exhibited by the principal being available to guide parents and staff (Flynn & Mok, 2002). As a pastoral leader a principal in a Catholic school builds a cohesive community that nurtures life-giving relationships (Coughlan, 2009). McLaughlin (2002) noted that the Catholic school principal exercises pastoral leadership for the school community by inspiring and demonstrating a caring and nurturing environment which is primarily "pastoral rather than doctrinal" (p. 6). As a pastoral leader, the Catholic school principal has a vision to fulfil a relational obligation to care for certain common interests, which he/she promotes while providing a secure environment in which to assist the community in its search for spiritual meaning and fulfilment (Coughlan, 2009). There are burgeoning demands within the principal's role to serve as a *de facto* leader of the faith community as people approach the school with concerns that were once dealt with by parishes (McLaughlin, 2002). As a result of the disintegration of the two traditional faith communities, parish and family, principals often have additional demands and expectations that may distract them from their core business of education (Coughlan, 2009).

2.6 Summary

The main purpose of Catholic educational leaders is to ensure that the Church's universal mission to proclaim the gospel is upheld and that Catholic identity is fundamental to all aspects of Catholic schools. The leader in a Catholic school has a responsibility for the promotion of Gospel values and Catholic identity within the school community. Literature on the approach to Catholic school leadership is based on servant and values-led leadership. Servant leadership is the notion of service by leaders who intrinsically have a genuine desire to serve others by adopting the style of Jesus of Nazareth. Values led leadership inspires the school community to take action on behalf of the oppressed and the voiceless in society.

The literature pertaining to the role of the principal in a Catholic school focused on four areas of leadership: the religious leader, the educational leader, the community leader and the pastoral leader. The role of the religious leader requires that a principal to be a servant leader fostering faith development and maintaining a strong connection with the clergy and to the wider parish. In the role of educational leader, Catholic school principals are ultimately accountable for the delivery of strong educational outcomes for all students.

As an educational leader in a Catholic school, the principal must have a clear, well-articulated and internalised vision to ensure that the curriculum (formal and informal) is based on Gospel values, and that staff prioritise the learning of each student. Furthermore, effective curriculum and instruction is a fundamental pre-requisite for a successful Catholic school, hence educational quality is important. The challenge confronting new principals is balancing the expectations and demands of the managerial requirements of the role. The educational leader's expectations of leading and improving the learning and teaching practices within the school was recurring burden for principals. In particular, the amount of paperwork surrounding Government grants and compliance was overwhelming for principals.

The principal's role of religious leadership in a Catholic school is a spiritual one and requires the responsibility a faith leader, however, the transition from vowed religious or ordained leadership to lay leadership of schools has heightened these significant expectations and demands on principals. As a community leader, the role of the Catholic school principal is critical in building a Catholic school community that is pastoral and implements the school's philosophy. However, there are expectations and demands for the principal when the link between the parish and the principal is more tenuous and principals feel they need to do more parish work due to the declining numbers of parish priests. Of great concern for some principals, is when there is no resident parish priest available or where the priest has responsibility for a number of parish communities. Finally, as a pastoral leader, the Catholic

principal develops a caring and nurturing relationship within a collaborative school community and provides a secure environment in which to assist the community in its search for spiritual meaning and fulfilment.

2.7 Women in Leadership

The literature on women in leadership has five main components. These components are the leadership characteristics of women, positive attributes that women bring to leadership, factors that encourage women into leadership positions, factors that support females in leadership and the challenges faced by women in leadership.

2.7.1 Leadership Characteristics of Women

This section dealing with the leadership characteristics of women draws on two areas of literature: feminine leadership attributes and gender stereotypes. These areas will now be described in detail.

2.7.1.1 Feminine Leadership Attributes. The literature on feminine leadership attributes includes areas such as strong communication skills, interpersonal style of leadership, and good problem-solving skills. Appelbaum et al. (2003) noted that leadership attributes defined as essentially feminine are, enhanced communication skills, including listening and empathetic capabilities, advanced intermediary skills for negotiation and conflict resolution, creative thinking and a soft approach to handling people. Female leadership has been noted to align with a transformational leadership style that stresses leadership skills such as good role modelling, inspiring others, stimulating, and supporting their followers (Sebastian & Moon, 2018).

When referring to feminine styles of leadership, Cummings (2005) mentioned that women take on a more interpersonal style of leadership and tend to be more efficient and better at problem-solving than men. Appelbaum et al. (2003) stated that female leaders had the following leadership attributes: strong communication skills, the ability to be a good listener, demonstrated empathy, had good negotiation and conflict resolution skills, and had sound interpersonal skills. However, research conducted by Vial and Napier (2018) indicated that even though women leaders seem to value communality leadership attributes such as communion, femininity, expressiveness, or warmth, women desired to adopt a masculine

view of leadership. These authors added that women leaders assumed that feminine leadership attributes could, at times, place them at a disadvantage compared to male leaders.

2.7.1.2 Gender Stereotypes. Gender stereotypes include beliefs about how males and females typically act, as well as how they should act (Koenig, 2018). The literature on gender stereotypes has highlighted the impact of the traditional view of leadership characteristics for women. For example, women may demonstrate nurturing qualities and avoid dominating others, whilst men are seen to be agentic and aim to not show weakness (Koenig, 2018). Hentschel et al. (2019) stated that although there is easing in some dimensions of traditional gender stereotypes, research has demonstrated that in many ways traditional stereotypes still persist. In particular, Hentschel et al. (2019) added that some men still have an unrelenting image of women as deficient in attributes such as several key agentic qualities defined as masculinity, instrumentality, or competence.

Shanmugaam et al.'s (2007) research suggested that there is evidence that stereotypes portray women as less capable leaders and noted that female leaders working in traditionally male dominated organisations find that the norms of conduct are masculine. Such norms make the traditional gender stereotypes resistant to change (Shanmugaam et al., 2007). In more recent research, Zenger and Folkman (2019) observed that some organisations must adjust how they select, hire and promote candidates, ensuring that qualified women are seriously considered. In order for women to succeed in obtaining promotional positions, leaders should assure women that they are competent and help them to seek promotions earlier in their career (Zenger & Folkman, 2019).

Traditionally, the view associated with managerial positions portrayed women as having deficient agentic qualities to succeed as a leader for example, being assertive, masterful, and competent (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Vecchio, 2002). When it came to gender stereotypes, research has shown that women are associated with attributes, such as being 'nice' and 'compassionate', while on the other hand, 'agentic' qualities, such as being assertive or competitive, are associated with men (Anyaso, 2011). Akhtar (2008) commented that because some corporate organisations consider women to have a family orientation, women are not regarded as being efficient in the workplace. As a result, gender stereotypes of women's leadership characteristics usually disadvantage women, which impacts on their opportunity to be selected at a top management level. Even though men's role in the responsibility of maintaining the home has increased, women still end up performing a disproportionate amount of home duties (Hentschel et al., 2019).

2.7.2 Positive Attributes That Women Bring to Leadership

Literature on the positive attributes that women bring to leadership highlight high emotional and social intelligence which enhances the qualities of transformational approaches to leadership. Northouse (2019) noted that the term ‘emotional intelligence’ was popularised by Daniel Goleman in 1995. Goleman (1995) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to “express and use emotions to facilitate thinking, reason and understand emotions and to effectively manage emotions within oneself and in relationships with others” (p. 28). Studies on women in top corporate leadership positions have demonstrated strong evidence of high emotional intelligence which includes self-confidence and a capability to maximize the self-concept of others (Chandler, 2011). Similarly, social intelligence is identified as having capacities such as social awareness, self-monitoring, understanding and managing feelings, and acting professionally (Marlowe, 1986). Social intelligence can be seen as having “the ability to enact and give the best response, given the contingencies of the situation and the social environment” (Zaccaro 2002, cited in Northouse, 2019, p. 22).

Women leaders are stronger in interpersonal skills than their male counterparts, and are more empathetic and flexible (Caliper Research and Development Department, 2014). This strength may be as a result of positive interaction between high social and emotional intelligence and soft skills. Research suggests that leaders in senior positions believe that women are more inclined to display soft skills (Jordan & Lawrence, 2009). When referring to 21st century soft skills, Nunn (2020) noted that there are many skills that are in demand in and across industries. These skills include: adaptability, leadership, communication and problem-solving skills, for example, creative and critical thinking. Hyder (2019) noted that soft skills, as personal attributes, include being approachable, pleasant and possessing a cordial way of communicating with others.

In the past decades, employment demanding a high level of social skills increased in the United States labour force (Calanca et al., 2019). Hyder (2019) highlighted that soft skills focus mainly on one’s ability to approach others appropriately or handle professional life with aplomb. These skills are essential leadership capabilities and leaders need to have four basic skills, which include: professionalism; the ability to collaborate; the ability to communicate orally and in writing; and the ability to be critical thinkers (Hyder, 2019).

Research by Korn-Ferry (2016) using the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI), identified that the greatest difference between men and women can be seen in emotional self-awareness and empathy, where women are significantly more likely than men to be seen as displaying this competency consistently. Korn-Ferry (2016) noted that

women scored higher than men in the following skills: coaching and mentoring, influence, inspirational leadership, conflict management, organizational awareness, adaptability, teamwork, and achievement orientation. When leaders possess high levels of emotional intelligence, they foster conditions that inspire their team members to stay and contribute to long term objectives, unlike leaders with low levels of emotional intelligence who could discourage their team members (Korn-Ferry, 2016).

Mackay (2017) maintained that the following three traits are all present in female leaders: capacity to cope, mental resilience and organisational skills and fairness. Another positive attribute noted was women's ability to demonstrate multi-tasking and organisational skills. However, whilst multitasking seems to be a useful skill, Mackay (2017) argued that it can be a disadvantage for women when they take on too many responsibilities until they get to a point where they become ineffective and stressed, which may be a precursor to burnout.

Female leaders may be more transformational than men and demonstrate more contingent reward behaviour (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Male leaders on the other hand, "were more likely to demonstrate two dimensions of transactional leadership: active management by focusing on followers' mistakes and failures and passive management by intervening after problems with followers become dire" (Chandler, 2011, p. 5). The promotion of self-concept and empowerment of others aligns well with transformational leadership style where relationships with followers, and emotional intelligence is an important aspect of transformational leadership (Waglay et al., 2020).

Munir and Aboidullah (2018) believed that women are more transformational than men. They described some of the qualities that women displayed as being "nature or nurture, they are more people caring, good in communication, more effective in mentoring their employees" (p. 103). Zacharakis (2017) maintained that a significant number of leaders found that women excelled at leadership competencies that were similar to transformational leadership such as, the development of others, inspiration and motivation, relationship building, collaboration and teamwork.

2.7.3 Factors that Encourage Women into Leadership Positions

There are several factors that encourage women to take leadership positions. These include self-assurance/belief, family attitudes, being 'tapped on the shoulder' and the women's financial background. Piterman (2008) argued that some women are able to navigate all areas of corporate life with success due to an awareness of their environment in order to enhance their capacity for judgment. Equally important for women is that parents

and partners can provide the much-needed support, for example, when fathers encourage their daughters to speak up or women whose husbands share the household duties (O'Neil & Domingo, 2016). Female principals noted that they were appreciative of the husbands' encouragement particularly on a challenging day (Sayce & Lavery, 2016). These authors defined the work as a team effort.

Women and young girls who are encouraged by family members are more likely to consider leadership than those who are coaxed into the leadership positions (Bay, 2020). Piterman (2008) noted that many attributes of women's leadership successes are due to the influence of significant family members and social background, hence as a woman matures, her family attitudes and social environment make a significant difference to her leadership abilities. Another factor that enables women to develop voice, influence and opt for leadership is being 'tapped on the shoulder' or encouraged to pursue leadership. The most powerful influence is a friend or mentor who encourages the female by communicating a strong message that she is talented and be supportive for her to 'just do it' (Bay, 2020). Lastly, the other factor that encouraged and provided opportunities for women to seek leadership positions is financial security and stability. In some Asian cultures, for example, being brought up in a privileged environment, elite women or women with secure financial backgrounds are most able to take advantage of leadership opportunities (O'Neil & Domingo, 2016).

2.7.4 Factors that Support Females in Leadership

Hinds (2015) indicated that there are many strategies that focus on supporting women themselves, as individuals and as a group. These strategies focused on support for women in leadership through professional development which includes mentoring, coaching and sponsorship, peer networking and power networking. It is therefore important to give women the facilities to support other women by developing women's networks, which include making women leaders more visible and using role models creatively, as well as sharing career experiences and appropriate strategies (Hinds, 2015).

Akhtar (2008) indicated in her research that in order for women to gain leadership positions, governments need to provide support and solutions to women's career barriers in order to give equal opportunities for female leadership. She noted four areas that can support and sustain the female as she takes on the responsibility of leadership, women require public life to be highly visible, flexibility to maintain a balance of family and professional lives, appropriate targeted education, and non-discriminatory practices in relation to selection for

positions, recruitment and development (Akhtar, 2008). Lastly, in a summary report by the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA, 2013) on the *Women in Leadership-Understanding the Gender Gap*, a number of recurring themes were revealed by respondents with regard to support required in order to improve equity of women in leadership. These themes included:

greater provision of flexibility, sponsorship for women and promoting applications for senior roles from women, building confidence and recognising that applications should be put forward even if not all criteria are met, pay equity between men and women in similar roles with the same amount of experience and qualifications, and social change around school hours and holidays (CEDA, 2013, p. 129).

2.7.5 Challenges Faced by Women in Leadership

This section draws on literature that relates to three main challenges faced by women in leadership. These challenges include barriers confronting women in leadership, conscious and unconscious gender bias, and work life balance.

2.7.5.1 Barriers Confronting Women in Leadership. The literature pertaining to barriers confronting women in leadership explores the notion of the ‘glass ceiling’ and the lack of female mentors and role models for women. Jarmon (2014) mentioned in his research that the term ‘glass ceiling’ was originally used in 1986 by Carol Hymowitz and Timothy Schellhardt to highlight the invisible barriers that women faced as they tried to approach the top of the corporate hierarchy. Oakley (2000), noted that whilst there is an increase in the number of women in middle management and lower management, there are numerous factors which deter women from reaching for the higher levels. Akhtar (2008) argued that “the barriers which prevent these females in rising up can be described by the metaphor glass ceiling” (p. 16). Eagly and Carli (2007) identified that the term ‘glass ceiling’ implied that everyone can attain equal access to subordinate positions, however, women seeking promotion had to overcome this invisible and impenetrable barrier. This journey was often riddled with challenges that women had to overcome in order to attain equity with men (Jarmon, 2014). Northouse (2019) noted that even in more recent times, women are significantly under-represented in senior leadership positions, barriers continue to discourage equal opportunity and women aiming for leadership have limited inclusion in the talent pool.

A barrier that is detrimental to women's career success is the lack of senior female mentors and role models, which is evident (Sealy & Singh, 2010). Parks (2000) defined mentoring as "an intentional, mutually demanding, and meaningful relationship between two individuals, a young adult and an older, wiser figure who assists the younger person in learning the ways of life" (p. 127). Mentoring women in leadership is important as many women often feel they are in the minority or are not confident about their leadership capabilities (Barber, 2013). Barber (2013) added that mentors inspire, challenge and push the mentee into facing new experiences or challenges. Jarmon (2014) noted that women expressed the desire for more mentoring as they had limited access to productive mentoring relationships including the need for support and encouragement from a female mentor.

Different than mentors, role models have no commitment to a relationship (Barber, 2013). A role model is one whose life and leadership inspires others and gives a good example to those who observe him/her (Barber, 2013). In her 1994 seminal work, Ely found that in firms with few senior women, women were "less likely to experience gender as a positive basis for identification... less likely to perceive senior women as role models with legitimate authority, more likely to perceive competition in relationships with women peers" (p. 203). The inability for women to see themselves mirrored in the leadership, or the opportunities to see many women in leadership positions, enhances the gender stereotyping of leadership as masculine (Singh et al., 2006). Latu et al. (2019) found that the visible female leader role models are important to inspiring female leaders because they offer the opportunity to mimic their behaviours in particular, powerful body postures. These female leader role models can demonstrate how to behave in challenging situations, which in short, serves the goal of empowering women (Latu et al., 2019).

2.7.5.2 Conscious and Unconscious Gender Bias. The literature pertaining to conscious and unconscious gender bias explores the following two elements: gender stereotyping in relation to leadership positions, and the notion of a 'boys' club culture. Gaddes et al. (2018) have defined conscious gender bias as, "...exist[ing] within a person's full awareness, thus knowingly affecting one's behaviour ..." (p. 3). Unconscious bias, on the other hand, can impact on one's perception and behaviour without the person having knowledge of their existence (Gaddes et al., 2018).

When referring to women in leadership, Filut et al. (2017) stated that "unconscious bias is ever present because it arises from the existence of cultural stereotypes about various social categories—including men and women" (p. 3). An example of this bias is evident in

stereotypic barriers for women, often identified as pitch of voice, physical appearance, and mode of dress (Oakley, 2000). Furthermore, unconscious bias tends to limit women's access to leadership positions (Filut et al., 2017).

Filut et al. (2017) maintained that women's career advancement is hampered when women are not given the same level of leadership opportunity as men. There are two disadvantages to women's career advancement. Firstly, women suffer from competency bias associated with the stereotypic assumption of lower ability than men, especially in leadership roles (Filut et al., 2017). Secondly, women who adopt stereotypically male behaviours are disadvantaged and will suffer in their evaluations and effectiveness for violating female gender norms (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Heilman, 2001; Heilman et al., 2004).

Nikolaou (2017) argued that most women are often unaware that they are victims of gender bias. However, women who were able to read the signs of gender bias could understand these behaviours within their workplace and had strategies to deal with them, in order to promote themselves (Nikolaou, 2017). Gaddes et al. (2018) stated that "despite significant progress towards gender equality over the past several decades, conscious and unconscious gender bias continue to persist" (p. 15). Northouse (2019) maintained that the inconsistency between the female gender role and their leadership role is biased and detrimental to female leaders who are judged in a negative way compared to male leaders.

Researchers believed that the notion of the 'old boys' club' that gives men an advantage in attaining promotions in the workforce, still persists in today's society (Cullen & Perez-Tuglia, 2019; Nikolaou, 2017; Pardoe, 2018). Nikolaou (2017) argued that there is a strong correlation between career promotions and social networks. He noted that "men are always sitting together... most of the men are doing this [getting higher positions] through the network and the women need to work a bit harder" (p. 29). Nikolaou mentioned in his research that his interviewees, all female employees, acknowledged the existence of an informal network [old boys' club], as an impediment that discouraged or forbade women to attain higher positions.

In her research, Pardoe (2018) maintained that the masculine culture characterised as the 'old boys' club' still persists and operates against women in many contexts. Cullen and Perez-Tuglia (2019) stated that men have an advantage over women when it comes to pay and promotion. Furthermore, the so-called 'old boys' club' phenomenon enhances men's attainment of promotion and pay advancement compared to their female counterparts (Cullen & Perez-Tuglia, 2019).

2.7.5.3 Work-Life Balance. The literature pertaining to work-life balance explores the following two elements: family and work conflict, and individual mental health and well-being. Family and work conflict have been an issue for some time. Paddock (1981) found that "the divided role of professional and homemaker is one of the biggest barriers to women's career development" (p. 191). The imbalance regarding the demands of work and home has led to women's feelings of conflict (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005).

Stress factors have increased for women since they have had the freedom and ability to simultaneously work and raise a family (Heath, 2012). In today's society, even though many workers are loyal to the workplace and devoted to their families, there is a significant challenge in balancing work and family (Parker, 2015). Many working women 'acknowledge the guilt' that comes along with being a working parent (Heath, 2012).

Klenke (1996) noted that "the gender asymmetries underlying work-family independencies are both unfortunate and inequitable" (p. 181). Studies by McGoldrick (2005) suggested that working mothers were overcome by childcare responsibilities and that combined domestic and work responsibilities had given rise to feelings of stress, tiredness, and depletion for many women (McGoldrick, 2005). Heath (2012) maintained that women who are not able to have a balance are more inclined to have work-family conflict, less job satisfaction, a tendency to give up and be emotionally exhausted. When negotiating dual roles women, particularly working mothers, are at higher risks of facing potential impacts on their stress levels, health, and well-being (Parker, 2015). Working women who juggled multiple roles at work and at home, often under tight time restraints, are prone to health problems, stress, anxiety, and other negative outcomes (Chawla & Sharma, 2019).

2.8 Summary

The literature on women in leadership highlighted five main components; leadership characteristics of women, positive attributes that women bring to leadership, factors that encourage women into leadership positions, factors that support females in leadership and the challenges faced by women in leadership. The literature pertaining to leadership characteristics of women included areas such as strong communication skills, interpersonal style of leadership, and good problem-solving skills. The leadership attributes defined as essentially feminine are, enhanced communication skills, including listening and empathetic capabilities, advanced intermediary skills for negotiation and conflict resolution, creative thinking and a soft approach to handling people. When it came to gender stereotypes, research revealed that emotional attributes, such as being compassionate and nice, are

associated with women. On the other hand, aggressive qualities, such as being assertive are associated with men. Consequently, gender stereotypes of women's leadership traits typically disadvantage women, which affects their chances of being chosen for senior management positions.

Positive attributes that women bring to leadership highlighted high emotional and social intelligence as attributes. These attributes enhance the qualities of transformational approaches to leadership. Women leaders are considered to be stronger in interpersonal skills than their male counterparts, and are more empathetic and flexible. Researchers noted that female leaders have soft skills as personal attributes. These attributes include being approachable, pleasant and possessing a cordial way of communicating with others.

Literature pertaining to factors that encourage women into leadership positions included self-assurance/belief, family attitudes, being tapped on the shoulder and the women's financial background. Many attributes of women's leadership successes are due to the influence of significant family members and social background; hence from childhood through adolescence and adulthood, family attitudes and social environment play a significant role in women's leadership. Women note that parents and partners can provide much-needed support, whether that be the father who supports his daughter's education or the partner who encourages her to pursue her goals and shares domestic duties. The most powerful influence is a friend or mentor who encourages the female by tapping her on the shoulder and for some women from Asian cultures, being brought up in a privileged environment with secure financial backgrounds are most able to take advantage of leadership opportunities. The literature that explored factors that support females in leadership indicated that strategies that focused on support for women in leadership are professional development which include mentoring, coaching and sponsorship, peer networking and power networking. Another author indicated governments need to provide support and solutions to women's career barriers in order to give equal opportunities to female leadership.

Factors that support females in leadership revealed that much consideration was required, in order to improve equity of women in leadership. These factors included four areas that can support and sustain the female as she takes on the responsibility of leadership. The four noted areas that support and sustain females are females require visibility in public life, flexibility to maintain a balance of family and professional lives, targeted education, as well as non-discriminatory processes in relation to hiring, recruitment, promotion and development practices.

The review of literature pertaining to the challenges faced by women in leadership explored three main areas of leadership that impact on the challenges faced by women. These included: barriers confronting women in leadership, conscious and unconscious gender bias and work-life balance. One of the barriers confronting women in leadership was described as using ‘the glass ceiling’ metaphor: a barrier that impeded female workplace progression. The term ‘glass ceiling’ gave the impression that while there is equal access to subordinate positions, women, in particular, were often confronted with an invisible barrier, with challenges that had to be overcome in order to attain equity with men. Another barrier that impedes women’s career success is the lack of senior female role models and mentors. It is also still evident that women express the desire for support and encouragement from a mentor as they had limited access to productive mentoring relationships.

Literature pertaining to conscious and unconscious gender bias explored the impact of gender bias whether it be conscious or unconscious on leadership positions and the existence of a boys’ club culture. Conscious and unconscious gender bias continues to persist, despite significant progress towards gender equality over the past several decades. In this case, the ‘old boys’ club mentality provides men with the opportunity to gain greater promotional and pay advancement than their female counterparts. As a result, women suffer from competency bias for being women with the stereotypic assumption of possessing lower ability than men for higher status and leadership roles. Women’s career advancement can be disadvantaged if women are not given equal opportunities for leadership as is afforded to men. The ‘old boys’ club’ phenomenon is renowned for men’s attainment of promotion and pay advancement, however, may be detrimental to female leaders’ chances of leadership success.

The review of literature pertaining to work-life balance highlighted that although female leaders are loyal to their work and devoted to their families. However, the act of balancing work and family is still challenging for many women. The imbalance regarding the demands of work creates inner conflict and feelings of guilt that results from being a working parent and being absent from their children. Female leaders who juggle multiple roles at work and at home, often under tight time restraints, are prone to health problems. These health problems include stress, anxiety, and other negative outcomes which impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

2.9 Female Principals

The literature on female principals indicates four main components. These components are the nature of female principal leadership, the positive attributes that female principals bring to schools, encouragement and motivation to become a principal, parent and staff expectations of female principals as leaders and the challenges faced by female principals.

2.9.1 The Nature of Female Principal Leadership

The literature on female principal leadership indicated that female principals have distinctive elements of power, were confident as instructional leaders and demonstrated a caring and nurturing approach to administration. In her research, Hurty (1995) identified five distinctive elements of power of female principals. These elements were emotional energy, nurtured growth, reciprocal talk, pondered mutuality and collaborative change. Emotional energy referred to female administrators' genuine care for others, their openness, honesty and their ability to use emotional range to empower others. Nurtured growth entailed the ability to see in others the evidence of learning and development. Reciprocal talk referred to talking 'with' rather than 'at' individuals and hence required effective listening skills and communication strategies to embrace different points of view. Pondered mutuality referred to a reflective process which takes into consideration both parties, in order to attain thoughtful problem solving. interaction and input from colleagues. Lastly, collaborative change relied mainly on respecting others for consensus building even in the face of disparity and frustration (Hurty, 1995).

A growing body of research has demonstrated that female principals tend to engage in the instructional leadership role more than male principals (Hallinger, 2011). Instructional leadership is a significant area of practice that can help teachers support students in improving results (Ebrahim, 2020). In 1981, Adkison observed that "there is evidence that female principals are more likely than their male counterparts to involve themselves in instructional supervision, to exhibit democratic leadership style, to be concerned with students, and to seek community involvement" (p. 317). Haim et al. (2018) noted in their research that a large number of female principals equated successful instructional leadership to positive relationships with the school staff, involving mutual trust and support, empowering others, and establishing cooperative relationships. These authors added that

female principals had the ability to deliver effective leadership practices, which increased the possibility of having a positive influence on student outcomes (Haim et al., 2018).

2.9.2 Positive Attributes that Female Principals Bring to Schools

Literature suggests that female principals exhibit a range of positive attributes when leading schools. These attributes include creating a collaborative working environment (Funk & Polnik, 2005), enhancing social equity and fairness and promoting people-orientated capability (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011), the ability to support and empower others (Zacharakis, 2018), and a commitment to building and sustaining professional relationships (Neidhart & Carlin, 2007).

Funk and Polnik's (2005) research indicated that female principals see leadership as a shared process in which all work collaboratively and aims at treating people with respect and encouragement within its work-team. In addition, these authors argued that female principals bring particular strengths to school administration such as interpersonal skills and acknowledge the importance of caring as well as being their true selves (Funk & Polnik, 2005). Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) observed that many female principals adopt an approach which is collaborative and enhances social equity and fairness for the entire educational community. Further, Zacharakis (2017) maintained that women leaders who were supportive, approachable, sensitive, understanding, nurturing, organized, creative, and receptive, tended to be more successful, which directly related to employee morale and job satisfaction.

Neidhart and Carlin (2007) identified in their research that building and sustaining professional relationships was an important attribute that females would bring to principalship. These authors added that female principals were able to exercise a sense of humour; "...they were realistic about teacher capacity and the need to respect work/life balance, exercised a commitment to lifelong education and learning, they had strong communication skills, and the ability to delegate and empower others in decision-making" (Neidhart & Carlin, 2007, p. 19). Regardless of their title, women principals were motivated in their work, they were social risk takers, skilled in interpreting facial expressions and took action with greater emotional force than men (Hymowitz, 2010).

2.9.3 Encouragement and Motivation to Become Principals

In her research, Mochizuki (2014) argued that there were key factors that encouraged women to become principals. One factor was that others, such as key administrators, saw

potential in females or had offered or pushed them into leadership. A second factor was the influence of other people such as a colleague or friend. Such influence was important to female aspirants, as these people had instilled values that shaped their leaderships ideals. Lastly, parents, both mothers and fathers, had a big influence on the lives of these women and the way they valued themselves and attained their beliefs, which ultimately made them successful in their career.

Research by Hansen (2014) noted that female principals relied on others to sustain them in the transitional stages of their professional careers. As women take on new roles as high schools principals, support and encouragement were integral for them to fulfil the role of principal (Hansen, 2014). A crucial support to female principals entailed women supporting other women and being around other women who knew about the challenges and demands of being a women leader (Mochizuki, 2014). Murakami and Törnsten (2017) mentioned that most female principals would welcome support in the area of care and motherhood to fit in their leadership role.

When observing the motivational drivers behind the professional identity of female principals, it is imperative to note each individual's passion for and commitment to their role as a leader (Murakami & Törnsten, 2017) Murakami and Törnsten added that the motivational characteristics seem to be significant and in order to understand motivation, one must take into consideration external and internal factors, coupled with interactions with others. To emphasise the above statement on motivational characteristics, Caza and Creary, (2016) stated, "...when professional workers become identified with their profession, they will incorporate distinctive professional values and attitudes into their own self-identity as a result of that membership and will enact the role expectations of their profession" (p. 8).

A majority of the female respondents in Avgeri's (2015) research indicated that as a whole the female respondents were motivated by their love and devotion for students and the educational field. Female principals were focused on students' progress and learning results. However, Avgeri noted that their focus also extended to the community and broadly, to the whole of society in general. As one female respondent in Avgeri's research observed, "What triggered me to be a school principal was mainly, my dedication to education and my firm belief that I can achieve substantial reforms improving the educational system" (p. 59).

The family is important in building confidence in the early stages of the female's life. The women's childhood influences their character and other people they meet along their leadership journey will help shape their leadership persona (Mochizuki, 2014). Women with caring parents reported having positive and supportive parental relationships (Fennell, 2008).

Fennell added that women who are influenced by their mother's strengths usually paved the way for a very effective model for women in leadership.

2.9.3.1. Opportunities to Take on Acting Principal Roles. The opportunity to undertake acting principalship roles is considered important in setting female leaders on the path to principalship. Such as opportunity as acting principal was also seen as appropriate leadership development (Cannon, 2004). During their leadership journey, deputy principals seeking principalship should be provided with opportunities to engage in a range of school governance training and education activities (Marks, 2013).

Aspiring female secondary principals, should not only be given leadership opportunities but they should have an opportunity to act in the principalship role to test the waters, as it provided them with those valuable skills to refer them for the role. Marks (2013) emphasised that the principal's role in its current structure can be an overwhelming task for one person. Marks added that the concept of job sharing or co-principalship models would build the capacity of the deputy/assistant-principal to operate effectively as the acting principal.

2.9.4. Parent and Staff Expectations of Female Principals as Leaders

Female school principals face differing expectations from parents and teachers (Smith & Hale, 2002). Smith and Hale (2002) noted that some parents who were unhappy with circumstances at school thought that women principals were easier to intimidate than male principals. As a result, female principals may be confronted with an intimidating parent (Smith & Hale, 2002). For a particular female principal, the challenge of being confronted by a male parent at the parents' meeting was another example where a parent had different expectations of female principals in an African school (Ntaka, 2013). Ntaka added that the parent who was a local policeman was rude to the female principal whilst she was waiting for parents to respond to the discussion.

Apart from parents, teachers were not always supportive of female principals. Male teachers can demonstrate less respect in schools led by female principals (Murakami & Tornsen, 2017). Murakami and Tornsen (2017) remarked that female principals are perceived to treat male teachers differently and even when they are strict and fair, their integrity as women would be questioned. One reason for this situation might be, as Coleman (2012) noted, men are frequently associated with leadership, with "unconscious or semi-conscious assumptions about maleness and leadership as held by most men, to a lesser extent by

women” (p. 327). The assumption that men are inherently leaders is shared by most men and by both younger and older age groups in a wide range of international settings (Coleman, 2012).

2.9.5 Challenges Faced by Female Principals in School

The section on Women in Leadership highlighted challenges faced by women across a broad spectrum of leadership contexts. The following literature focuses on how these challenges are experienced specifically by female secondary school principals. This section will explore issues of work-life balance, family and work conflict, gender bias and exclusion, and a lack of quality professional support and appropriate mentors or role models for female principals.

2.9.5.1 Work Life-Balance, Family and Work Conflict. Various researchers have highlighted the work-life balance and family and work conflict of women in educational leadership, however, only a few focussed on the experiences of female secondary principals (Eckman, 2003). For example, Neidhart and Carlin (2007) noted that in relation to some of the principals in their research, the demands of principalship on women with families had become overwhelming. When trying to find the work-life balance, female principals with families often felt guilty when the demands of their role had taken them away from their family time. McManus (2018) noted that, for many female leaders, guilt came from the fact that they were not able to devote as much time to either the work role or to their own families. The demands of the school principal position are such that these demands may rob female principals of much needed time to balance their personal and professional lives. Managing the roles of mother and principal simultaneously may lead women to make the choice between motherhood over administration (Parker, 2015). Female principals have work and family conflicts as they struggle to maintain leadership positions, such as those in educational leadership, whilst juggling work and family, in order to find the work-life balance (Hansen, 2014)

2.9.5.2 Gender Bias and Exclusion. The literature pertaining to gender bias highlighted a gap that persists between female and male principals especially with the exclusion of women in the ‘old boys’ network’ which can generate impediments to impede women’s promotion (Pirouznia, 2006). When it comes to gender bias against female principals in schools, Klenke (1996) maintained that “female principals’ exclusion from

informal networks prevents them from developing an intelligence or communication base which could spread a mantle of authority over their positions in informal structure” (p. 187). Eckman (2003) argued that when female principals attended conferences, they were often the only female high school principal present and conversations frequently changed upon their presence at the conference. While researchers have acknowledged the exclusion of female principal leaders occurring in the past, a more recent survey launched by the National Excellence in School Leadership Institute (NESLI) as part of their 2018 Year of Women in School Leadership revealed consistent patterns of severe gender bias. Among the consistent patterns of bias within the education sector was a culture of prejudice against women leaders in ‘boys’ clubs’ (Women & Leadership Australia, 2018).

In her research, Eckman (2003) remarked that female principals reported that the notion of being equal partners in the profession has been negatively impacted by the old boys’ network. She stated, “they [female principals] reported that their male colleagues often chose not to consult with them and did not recognize and use their expertise” (p. 61). Eckman noted that female principals expressed concerns at being excluded from the old boys’ network which encouraged male teachers in schools to gain promotions to the high school principalship.

In a similar manner, Coleman (2005) argued that women principals who often worked with a majority of male principals in their region or network meetings experienced feelings of isolation or marginalisation. In surveys of men and women principals of secondary schools in England, Coleman found that gender equity issues were present, where women experienced discrimination in relation to appointments and in working with their colleagues and peers. She provided the following example of exclusion: “A woman head [principal] in her late forties commented that she is the ‘only female head’ in the network – head meetings started with a full English breakfast and talk about rugby and cricket” (Coleman, 2005, p. 11). Crosby-Hillier (2012) stated that as long as the old boys’ club or network exists and is sustained, the educational administration remains largely a ‘man’s world’. Hansen (2014) also commented on the exclusion of female principals from the old boys’ network but recognised the difficulty in modifying the situation. Hansen noted that there was still evidence that gender-stereotypical conversations persisted through the old boys’ network, observing that practices in gender bias were slow to change.

Female principals in Catholic schools have identified specific issues of gender bias affecting their roles, stating that they feel priests are continuing to view women in a traditional sense as mothers and caregivers, often with minor regard for women in leadership

positions (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009). Belmonte and Cranston noted that the clergy seemed sceptical of the capacities of female principals. Volkenant (2020), in her recent research, identified that women may be afraid to speak, lack the relevant communication skills, or have been silenced by the patriarchy of the Church because of an absence of relevant narratives and the impact of gender bias on their profession. She commented on female principals' feelings of being an 'outsider' in a man's world as a Catholic school principal.

2.9.5.3 A Lack of Quality Professional Support and Appropriate Role Models or Mentors for Female Principals. The literature highlights three issues with respect to a lack of quality professional support for female principals. These three issues are: concerns over adequate preparation for undertaking the role; the need for quality professional development once in the role; and a scarcity of appropriate female mentors and role models. Female principals felt inadequately prepared for the principalship and needed professional support in the form of well-planned, continuous professional development to assist them in order to become competent leaders (McManus, 2018).

Although female principals expressed that their professional learning mattered for the long-term success of the school, in reality, female principals felt that they were not adequately prepared for undertaking the leadership role due to the lack of skills, knowledge, and information to successfully enter into the principalship role (McManus, 2018). Beginning principals found the lack of preparation in the area of financial knowledge challenging (Rieckhoff, 2014). In particular, Gallagher (2017) noted that female principals felt the specific need for quality professional development in the areas of the school business administration such as finance and strategic planning once in the role of principalship. Gallagher suggested that such professional development remained a barrier for many female principals.

The literature suggests a shortage of female principals who serve as appropriate role models (Funk & Polnik, 2005). Sayce and Lavery (2016) noted that the scarcity of female role models in educational leadership reinforced the notion that leadership is a masculine occupation. Authors such as Arthur and Salsberry (2005) highlighted the valuable support female principals can receive through well-planned and ongoing professional development if they connect with a strong network of female role models. In order to address the issue concerning the lack of female role models and mentors in educational administration, Helterbran and Rieg (2004) suggested placing women on network teams and providing

female administrators with mentors might provide a possible solution to supporting females, having their voice heard and addressing the lack of female role models and mentors.

Mentors are important for female principals, in order to sustain successful and effective administrative and leadership positions (Perkins, 2011). Many female principals who had a mentor had themselves taken on a mentorship role for others whom they supervised or informally supported (McManus, 2018). Women in educational leadership roles have requested more helpful or supportive measures in addressing the lack of quality professional support and lack of suitable mentors for female principals (Women & Leadership Australia, 2018). In particular, female principals suggested obtaining support from mentors, having access to leadership training and professional development and being offered more opportunities to progress as leaders (Women & Leadership Australia, 2018).

2.10 Summary

The literature on female principals explored four components. These components are the nature of female principal leadership, attributes that female principals bring to schools, encouragement and motivation to become principals, parent and staff expectations of female principals as leaders and the challenges faced by female principals. The nature of female principal leadership explored how female principals are more likely to demonstrate expertise in the area of instructional leadership. Many female principals demonstrated the ability to care for their students, engage with others at community level and lead democratically. In general, female principals are collaborative in their leadership approach, view the work-team of the school as a family, and treat people with respect and trust. Female principals are inclined to have acknowledge about the importance of caring as well as being their true selves. Important attributes that females bring to principalship are that they have a sense of humour; they respect the need for work/life balance, and they are realistic about teachers' capabilities. They have a commitment to lifelong education and learning, attain good interrelation and communication skills.

The researchers highlighted factors that encouraged women to become principals included the support of key administrators, such as their principal and the influence of other people such as colleagues or friends. Lastly, parents were a big influence on the lives of these women and the way they valued themselves, attained their beliefs which ultimately made them successful in their career. In terms of motivation towards attaining the principalship role, the literature suggested the importance of the female principals' passion for education. Often female principals were motivated to improve students' progress and learning results.

The literature pertaining to parent and staff expectations of female principals as leaders highlighted that at times, female principals concluded that sometimes parents and teachers hold different expectations for women principals than for male principals. Some parents find it easier to intimidate women principals, and this becomes challenging when the female principal is being confronted by parents who are rude. Staff members are not always supportive of female principals. At times, male teachers demonstrate less respect for female principals as there is an expectation that female principals would treat male teachers differently. Even when female principals are strict and fair, their integrity is sometimes questioned.

The literature highlighted work-life balance and family and work conflict of women in educational leadership balancing the demands of work and family. The principals' administration role was demanding, and many female principals needed more time to balance their personal and professional lives, especially if they had families. Managing the roles of mother and principal simultaneously led to women feeling guilty when absent from young children and family. The career pathways of female educational leaders tend to be impacted by family responsibilities and a sense of guilt when absent from their young children.

Gender bias and exclusion related to male privilege within educational administration were identified in the literature as 'the 'old boys' network'. Some researchers noted that female principals were challenged by the existence of the tradition of the old boys' network that dismissed them as leaders. Often the notion of exclusion left female principals working in isolation and in need of finding alternative informal networks. This form of exclusion from professional network associations was considered to be a very powerful obstruction to female leaders as well as their educational institutions, often undermining their opportunities for promotion.

Female principals were identified as requiring quality ongoing professional learning and support in their roles, in order to achieve long-term success for the school. Beginning female principals in particular, had expressed a desire for quality professional training, appropriate guidance and professional support. Lastly, the review of literature highlighted that good female role models and mentors together with formal and informal mentoring were important. In addition, quality professional development and support were key factors in the successful development of female principals in their leadership journey.

2.11 Conclusion

The review of literature on the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools examined four areas of literature, Leadership Models, Leadership in Catholic schools, Women in Leadership and Female Principals. First, Leadership Models highlighted transactional leadership, transformational leadership, instructional leadership and transcendental leadership. Second, Leadership in Catholic schools considered the purpose of Catholic school leadership, approaches to Catholic school leadership, and the role of the principal in a Catholic school. Third, Women in Leadership examined the leadership characteristics of women, positive attributes that women bring to leadership and challenges faced by women in leadership. Finally, Female Principals focussed on the nature of female principal leadership, positive attributes that female principals bring to schools, encouragement, and motivation to become a principal, parent and staff expectations of female principals as leaders, and the challenges faced by female principals in schools. Together these areas of literature informed the current research. The following chapter presents the research plan that was utilised in this inquiry.

CHAPTER 3: Research Plan

3.1 Introduction

The review of the literature in Chapter Two focused attention on four themes, namely: leadership models; leadership in Catholic schools; women in leadership and female principals. Four research areas developed from the literature review and formed the focus of the study. These research areas included: factors that encouraged female educational leaders to become principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools; the expectations and demands of being a female principal in CEWA composite and secondary schools; factors that support and sustain a female principal in CEWA composite and secondary schools; and challenges female principals face as leaders in CEWA composite and secondary schools. This chapter is concerned with the research plan employed to explore the central research question of the study: What are the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools?

The research approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) underpinning this study is qualitative in nature. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative research as involving "...an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world. In short, this means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 63). Creswell (2009) stated that "the procedures of qualitative research, or its methodology, are characterized as inductive, emerging, and shaped by the researcher's experience in collecting and analysing the data" (p. 22). Qualitative research uncovers the meaning of individuals' perspectives generated by the findings derived from real-world settings where the "phenomenon of interest unfolds naturally" (Patton, 2001, p. 39). The advantage of qualitative research is that it thoroughly analyses and describes a research topic without restricting the scope of the study and participants' responses (Collis & Hussey, 2003). Qualitative research is an approach which focuses on people or specific situations, such as the "real world setting where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest" (Patton, 2001, p. 39). The researcher's experience as a secondary school educator and leader in school settings, as well as at system level (CEWA), provides her with an insider view of the context of the research. Consistent with a qualitative approach, the research plan adopted for this study was constructivist, interpretivist and designed around a case study approach. The outline of the research plan is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1*Overview of Chapter Three: Research Plan*

Section	Subheading	Subdivision
3.1	Introduction	
3.2	Theoretical Framework	
3.3	Epistemology	3.3.1 Constructivism
3.4	Theoretical Perspective	3.4.1 Interpretivism
3.5	Methodology	3.5.1 Case study 3.5.2 Instrumental case study 3.5.3 Concerns and defence of case study methodology
3.6	Method	3.6.1 Semi-structured one-to-one interviews 3.6.2 Document search 3.6.3 Researcher field notes
3.7	Research Participants	
3.8	Trustworthiness	3.8.1 Credibility 3.8.2 Transferability 3.8.3 Dependability 3.8.4 Confirmability
3.9	Methodological Rigour	
3.10	Data Analysis	3.10.1 Data condensation 3.10.2 Data display 3.10.3 Drawing verification and conclusion
3.11	Ethical Considerations	
3.12	Conclusion	

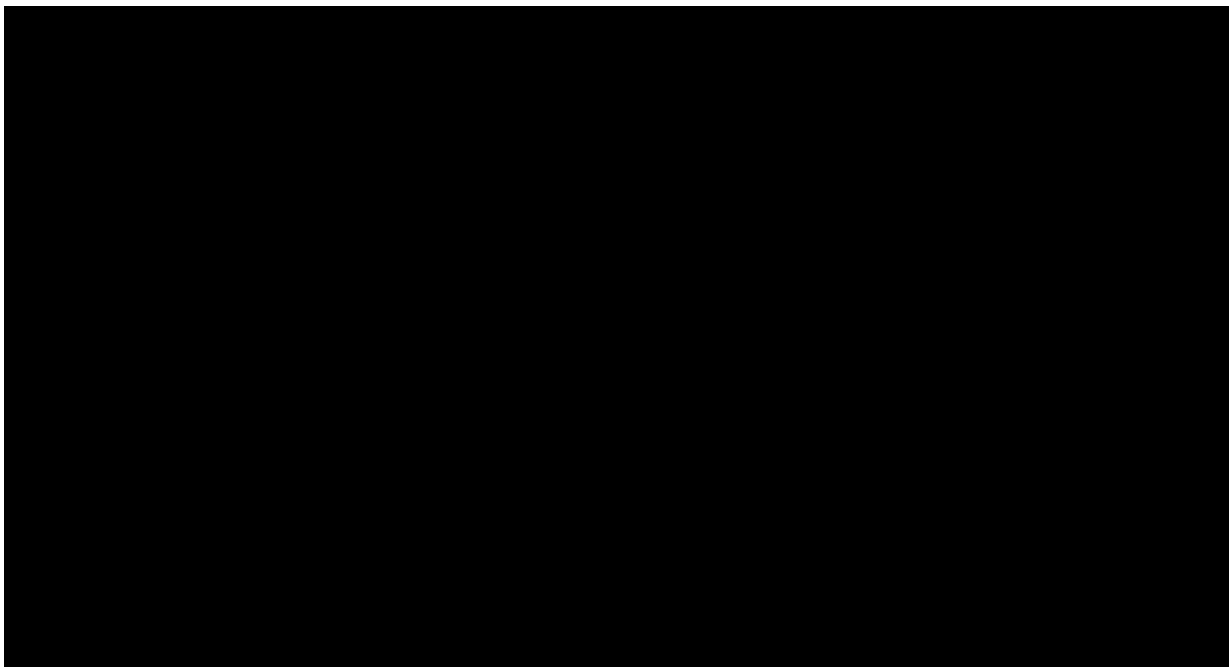
3.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of a research inquiry relates to the philosophical basis in which the research takes place. A theoretical framework is a framework that provides or sustains a theory of a research study. According to Abend (2008), the theoretical framework explains why the research problem under study exists and introduces the theory underpinning the research. This framework can be defined as “an inter-related set of variables formed into propositions or hypotheses that specify the relationship between variables, enabling the

researcher to predict and explain phenomena” (Creswell, 2013, p. 51). The four elements associated with the theoretical framework are epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods. Epistemology is the theory of knowledge that informs the theoretical perspective. Theoretical perspective is the philosophical position that directs the methodology. Methodology is “the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods, and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes” (Crotty, 1998 p. 3). Methods are the techniques and procedures used to gather the data (Crotty, 1998). The elements of the theoretical framework need to be congruent with the researcher’s approach as one element affects decisions made in others (Gray, 2013). The theoretical framework for this qualitative study is outlined in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1

Theoretical Framework for the Study (adapted from Crotty, 1998, p. 4)



3.3 Epistemology

An epistemological stance provides a structure for predicting, describing, empowering, and deconstructing population-specific viewpoints, enhancing the understanding of the purpose behind qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). Epistemology is the study of how knowledge is created, how it is validated and how it is applied (Neuman, 2011). Epistemology is concerned with providing a philosophical basis for discovering

diverse knowledge and ensuring it is appropriate and legitimate (Maynard, 1994). The epistemological position for this research project is constructivism. In constructivist research, the interaction between the inquirer (researcher) and the researched creates the knowledge as the research proceeds (Cuba & Lincoln, 1994).

3.3.1 Constructivism

Constructivism is an epistemology which highlights participants' viewpoints on a subject or phenomenon and how they interpret their experiences (Creswell, 2013). Constructivism is noted as an approach to qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). A constructivist views reality as being a result of human intelligence interacting with experiences in the real world. As Guba and Lincoln (1994) observed, the constructivist approach in research is subjective and transactional. Bisman and Highfield (2012) noted that adopting a constructivist approach allows the researcher to provide meaning to the state of affairs, and to investigate those factors that otherwise could not be easily exposed or described nor generalised across entire populations. Thus, the researcher can produce important insights into social structures and human behaviours (Bisman & Highfield, 2012).

According to Wilson (1996), the following four principles guide constructivism: 1) knowledge is not transmitted, rather it is constructed; 2) the learning process is impacted by prior knowledge; 3) initial understanding is not global, it is local; and 4) purposeful action is required to develop knowledge. A constructivist epistemological approach is suitable for this research as it allows the researcher purposefully to explore the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools in local settings in order to build in-depth knowledge derived from the data collected.

3.4 Theoretical Perspective

Crotty (1998) describes theoretical perspective as an understanding of theories as the philosophical position that informs methodology, and provides a context for the process and grounding of its logic and criteria. The theoretical perspective adopted for this research is interpretivism. Interpretivism is defined as “culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 67) and is associated with a constructivist epistemology. By collating the data from the female principals' responses, it will be possible to interpret and analyse the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools.

3.4.1 Interpretivism

Interpretivism focusses on the social reality that is shaped by human experiences and social contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Patton (2015) stated that the interpretative researcher can delve deeper beyond the data, in order to provide significance to findings, and offer explanation and inferences of the meaning. Hence, the interpretivist viewpoint calls for searching for patterns that emerge from people's interpretations expressed to make sense of their world (Bryman, 2008; Schwandt, 1998) Interpretivism requires researchers to interpret elements of the study in order to integrate human interest into a study (Myers, 2008). Ritchie and Lewis (2003) stated that by adopting an interpretive approach in research, the aim of social research should be to discover the links between the social, cultural, and historical aspects of people's lives and determine the context in which certain actions take place. Through an interpretivist lens, the current research has endeavoured to explore, interpret, and understand the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools.

There are different approaches to human actions within the interpretivist perspective (Bryman, 2008). One approach is symbolic interactionism, which is the specific interpretivist approach selected for this research. A symbolic interactionist approach focusses on human beings and how they think about themselves and others, and draws on symbolic communication when they socially interact (Neuman, 2011). Symbolic interactionism is based on three assumptions. Firstly, human beings react accordingly to their beliefs and upbringing which pertain to their personal being. Secondly, the meaning of life and objects are generated through time, and thirdly, modification of meaning occurs through an interpretive process adopted by the person who interacts with others during specific situations (Blumer, 1969).

Crotty (1998) observed that it is important for the researcher to investigate how participants come to an understanding of their perceptions, as well as the significance of meaning associated with how participants interpret people in their world. Taking a symbolic interactional perspective into account, the purpose of this study concerning the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools (CCSS) was to explore the perspectives of participants as they navigated their principalship journey. Data was collected from a variety of contexts (personal and professional) of each participant. In keeping with the theoretical perspective of interpretivism and the lens of

symbolic interactionism, the methodology approach chosen for this inquiry is a case study design.

3.5 Methodology

Crotty (1998) defined methodology as the overall strategy or plan of action for conducting research. Specifically, this strategy underpins particular research methods relevant for the study (Crotty, 1998). Methodology is the discussion of the framework of methods used in academic work. Methodology provides a master plan to research complex, multiple realities and proposes a rationale for the organisation and conduct of the research (Cohen et al., 2011). The methodology used for this research study is a case study, in particular, an instrumental case study.

3.5.1 Case Study

Case study design involves explaining, describing, or exploring events or phenomena in a context that is relevant to everyday life (Yin, 2009b). Using a case study approach provides an opportunity to gather information which depicts an understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context (Crowe et al., 2011). Researchers using case studies collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Stake, 1994).

Punch (2003) stated that researchers using a case study approach gather evidence from multiple sources in an effort “to understand the case in-depth, and in its natural setting, recognizing complexity and its context” (p. 144). Case studies are an effective strategy when the researcher has minimal control over events or when examining contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts (Yin, 1994). Case study protocol as a methodology involves a formal document capturing a number of tools or procedures involved in the collection of empirical material (Yin, 2009a). Rashid et al. (2019) noted that “case study protocol should include (i) research question, (ii) research method, (iii) permission seeking, (iv) ethical considerations, (v) interpretation process, and (vi) criteria for assessment” (p. 5).

As a methodology, Yin (2014) acknowledges that the strength of a case study not only answers the ‘what’ research question but also explores the ‘why’ and ‘how’. There are three types of case study – collective, intrinsic and instrumental (Stake, 1994). An advantage of intrinsic case studies is that researchers select intrinsic case studies not because they are representative of other cases, but rather because they are unique and of genuine interest to

them (Stake, 1994). An intrinsic case study is based on research into a specific case, which the researcher wishes to understand better (Punch, 1998). Baxter and Jack (2008) defined instrumental case study as research which provides further insight into the case rather than understanding of a particular situation. This study into the personal and professional experiences of CCSS female principals is based on an instrumental case study.

3.5.2 Instrumental Case Study

An instrumental case study may select a ‘typical’ case. While an intrinsic case study is typically undertaken to learn about a unique phenomenon, an instrumental case study is “examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalisation” (Stake, 2003, p. 137). That is, in an instrumental case study, the case itself is secondary to understanding a particular phenomenon. There are a number of data analysis strategies such as “case description; examining rival explanations and analytic techniques, which are apt to compare the proposed relationships with empirical patterns” (Yin, 2014, p. 133). The phenomena explored in this instrumental case study are the personal and professional experiences and experiences of CCSS female principals. In particular, this instrumental case study aims to provide insight into specific factors that encourage educational leaders to become principals, factors that support and sustain female principals, the expectations and demands of being a female principal, and the challenges that female principals face.

3.5.3 Concerns and Defence of Case Study Methodology

According to Rashid et al. (2019), the most widely used method in academia for researchers interested in qualitative research is case study methodology. However, the case study approach is, as with all research, not without its various concerns and limitations (Rashid et al., 2019). The main concerns of case study methodology are generalisability, subjectivity, volume of information, quality of research and methodological rigour.

Yin (2014) considers case study generalisation as “...an effort to generalize from a small number of cases to a larger population of cases” (p. 325). Concerns regarding case study generalisation seem to develop from “a deliberative worry of presenting an inaccurate picture of reality; a fear that is entirely appropriate to have, since the prominent purpose of science itself is to paint an accurate picture of reality” (Wikfeldt, 2016, p. 8). For optimal objective generalisation, Wikfeldt, (2016) suggested that “one examines an ample range of attributes within the case(s); common and/or similar attributes between the different samples must be abundant and the attributes ought to be relevant” (p. 4). In this study, substantial

reference to literature was made, which assisted in supporting the results of the current study. Further, the researcher was able to synthesise and draw a significant number of common and similar attributes in connection with the fourteen participants.

Concerns over subjectivity in research have led to much discussion and to many debates (Drapeau, 2002). Flyvbjerg (2006) noted that “the alleged deficiency of the case study and other qualitative methods is that they ostensibly allow more room for the researcher’s subjective and arbitrary judgment than other methods” (p. 18). Hamel et al. (1993) observed that “the case study has basically been faulted for its lack of representativeness... and its lack of rigor in the collection, construction, and analysis of the empirical materials that give rise to this study” (p. 23). Various factors may contribute to the lack of rigour, these factors include bias and the subjectivity of the researcher (Hamel et al., 1993).

Drapeau (2002) recommended the following steps in order to ensure a valid use of subjectivity: submitting the research results to peers and to other experts in the field; data analysis in groups in order to obtain consensus; and the use of triangulation. In line with Drapeau’s recommendations, the researcher undertook various types of triangulation. The four forms of triangulation were: multiple forms of data collection; multiple school locations; differing school types; and variety within the participants’ experience as a principal. These forms are outlined in Section 3.8.1. To ensure impartiality and address subjectivity in this methodological approach, the researcher also used the following: documentation of procedures; consistency of the analysis process; and the use of pilot questions. These approaches were implemented to ensure conformability in the collection of data across the fourteen CEWA composite and secondary school principals.

A further concern with qualitative case study methodology is the potential volume of data that can be collected (Crowe et al., 2011). Baxter and Jack (2008) stated that the opportunity to gather large amounts of data from various sources can be very attractive. However, concerns remain regarding the management and analysis of potentially overwhelming volume of data. In order to bring some order to the data collection it is necessary to systematically organise and manage the data (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In order to organise and manage the data, Baxter and Jack (2008) suggested that the use of a database improves the reliability of the case study by “enabling the researcher to track and organize data sources including notes, key documents, ... and audio files... for easy retrieval at a later date” (p. 554).

In this research, data collection entailed semi-structured interviews, a document search and field notes. To address the manageability in the collection of data, the research design phase in this instrumental case study was restricted to female secondary principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools only. Participants were not included from the other two educational sectors, the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) and the Department of Education Western Australia. This process ensured that the amount of data collected for this research was manageable.

According to Ali and Yusof (2011), criticism with regard to the quality of qualitative research in case study is often due to a low quality of documentation and reporting of the findings. In order to ensure the quality of qualitative research in case study, researchers use a process of trustworthiness of the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This process entails four considerations, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These four considerations were used to ensure quality of this qualitative research. These considerations are explained in Section 3.8. Finally, the methodological rigour used to support this research is addressed in Section 3.9.

3.6 Research Participants

Creswell (2009) stated that subject selection in qualitative research is critical where the selection of participants is based on those who can best inform the research questions and enhance understanding of the phenomenon under study. The research participants in this study are fourteen CCSS female principals who held principalships in a range of CEWA coeducational and single gender composite and secondary schools. Table 3.2 provides an overview of the number of participants in the various types of school.

Table 3.2

Female Research Participants

School Type	Regional Co-educational	Metropolitan Girls School	Metropolitan Co-educational	TOTAL
Composite Years K-12	1	3	3	7
Secondary Years 7-12	2	1	4	7
TOTAL	3	4	7	14

Of the fourteen participants, four were principals with less than two years' experience, three participants had three to six years of experience in the principalship role, and seven participants had seven or more years of experience as principals. The majority of participants were married and most had children. Ten of the participants were in their first principalship and four had been principals in two CEWA composite or secondary schools. Two participants had been former primary school principals.

At the time of the study there was a total population of seventeen female CEWA composite and secondary principals. All seventeen female principals were invited to take part in the study. Three participants did not participate. One participant declined the invitation due to work commitments and a second declined the invitation due to health reasons. The third did not respond to the invitation.

3.7 Methods

Research methods are techniques and procedures to retrieve, collate and analyse data (Crotty, 1998). This study aims to understand the perceptions of female principals of CEWA composite and secondary schools based on their own personal and professional experiences. The following methods will be used in this research:

- Semi-structured one-to-one interviews
- Document search
- Researcher field notes

3.7.1 *Semi-Structured One-to-One Interviews*

Punch (2003) defined semi-structured interviews as interviews which are flexible and can be adapted according to the context, situation and the particular respondent. According to Burgess (1984), these types of interviews are “conversations with a purpose” (p. 102) to enhance the involvement of the participants. In semi-structured interviews many questions can be prepared prior to the interview, however, areas of interest which emerge during the interview can also be further investigated (Blandford, 2013). Blandford noted that interviews are best suited for understanding people's perceptions and experiences. The researcher undertook a semi-structured one-to-one interview with each of the CCSS female principals in the study to explore the participants' personal thoughts, feelings, beliefs and sometimes delved into issues that were sensitive to them.

3.7.1.1 Interview Guide. Arthur and Nazroo (2003) emphasised the importance of careful preparation for interviews, in particular the formation of an interview guide. The interview guide for an interview should comprise of an introduction, a series of questions, followed by core questions and a conclusion (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003). The preparation of the guide and proposed questions involved the use of open-ended questions, questions that a researcher poses but does not provide answer options. The categories of questioning would normally pose questions regarding experience, opinions or values, behaviour, feelings, knowledge, and background/demographic information (Patton, 1980). In this study, the researcher’s interview guide (Appendix A) incorporated five of these six different categories of questions as outlined in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Linking of Categories of Questions to the Interview Guide Questions

Categories of Questions	Interview Guide Questions
Experience /behaviour questions aimed to elicit the participants’ behaviours/ experiences	Two, four, six and seven
Opinion-based questions were asked to understand the participants’ opinions, judgments, and values	Three, five, ten, eleven and twelve
Questions relating to feelings aimed at eliciting responses, which demonstrated the participants’ feelings and emotions	Six
Knowledge questions	Eight and nine
Background/demographic questions were asked to ensure that a thorough understanding of information relating to age, education, occupation or to identify characteristics of the participant being interviewed	One

The interview questions were based on the specific research questions:

- What factors encouraged female educational leaders to become principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools?

- What are the expectations and demands of being a female principal in CEWA composite and secondary schools?
- What factors support and sustain a female principal in CEWA composite and secondary schools?
- What challenges do female principals face as leaders in CEWA composite and secondary schools?

Table 3.4 highlights the relationship between the specific research questions and the explicit interview guide questions.

Table 3.4

Linking of Specific Research Questions to the Interview Guide

Specific Research Questions	Interview Guide Questions
SRQ1 What factors encourage female educational leaders to become principals in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia?	4, 12, 14.
SRQ 2 What are the expectations and demands of being a female principal in Catholic composite and secondary schools in Western Australia?	5, 6, 13.
SRQ 3 What factors support and sustain a female principal in Catholic composite and secondary schools in Western Australia?	7, 8, 9.
SRQ 4 What challenges do female principals face as leaders in Catholic composite and secondary schools in Western Australia?	10, 11.

3.7.2 Document Search

A document search is often used to support research work (Scott, 1990). Documents should be assessed against four criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning (Scott, 1990). The authenticity of a document gives information about whether or

not the documents are original and of reliable and dependable origin. A document's credibility refers to whether the evidence contained in the document is free from error and distortion. A document's representativeness refers to how well the evidence in the documents is typical of such documents, is known and can be related to the research topic(s) (Mogalakwe, 2006). Finally, meaning refers to whether the documents are clear and comprehensible, and provide an understanding of the significance and meaning of what the document contains (Scott, 1990).

A document search was employed to provide an initial description of the context of the case. That is, supporting data obtained from documents can provide a background, which may shed light on the behaviour and attitudes of the participants (Shenton & Dixon, 2004). In this study examples of documents search include:

- The Mandate Letter from the Bishops of Western Australia 2009–2015 (Hickey et al., 2009)
- CEWA Leadership Framework documents
- 2018 and 2019 CEWA Directory of Catholic Schools
- Local school publications with relevant information relating to the context of the participants' schools
- AITSL (2011) Australian Professional Standard for Principals public statement document

3.7.3 *Researcher Field Notes*

Within qualitative research the practice of taking field notes is a common method of documenting observations (Patton & Patton, 2002). Bogdan and Biklen (2016) stated that field notes can provide important insights to interpret oral dialogue in terms of emotional and circumstantial factors. Berg (2007) suggested that researcher field notes should be an accurate recording of what happens during the interview and within the environment in which the interview takes place. Phillippi and Lauderdale (2018) argued that field notes aid in “constructing thick, rich descriptions of the study context, encounter, interview, focus group, and document's valuable contextual data” (p. 381). The use of field notes in interviews can improve the depth of qualitative findings and ensures robust research is consistent with qualitative approaches (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). Field notes were used in this research to describe the physical setting and the communication patterns, both verbal and non-verbal, of participants in the semi-structured interviews. During the interview the researcher kept a

record of key comments that were made and any non-verbal communications such as body language and tone of voice.

3.8 Trustworthiness

Guba and Lincoln (1994) emphasised the importance of establishing and assessing the quality of qualitative research. Within qualitative research, this process is known as trustworthiness. Guba and Lincoln (1994) outlined four criteria for trustworthiness. These were identified as, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Table 3.5 indicates the procedure used in this study to establish trustworthiness.

Table 3.5.

Establishing Trustworthiness

Section	Quality Criteria	Research Techniques
3.8.1	Credibility	Researcher’s background and experience Examination of previous research on the topic Triangulation In-depth interviews
3.8.2	Transferability	Purposeful sampling Detailed description of the phenomena examined
3.8.3	Dependability	Case study protocol Pilot testing of the interview questions
3.8.4	Confirmability	In depth methodology description Reference to researcher’s beliefs & assumptions

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility involves establishing the results of qualitative research as believable from the perspective of the participants in the research (Bryman, 2008). In order to check credibility and the truth of the researcher’s findings, the researcher needs to clearly link the research study’s findings with reality. This research has followed four criteria of ensuring credibility as recommended by Shenton (2004): background and experience of the researcher; examination of previous research findings; triangulation; and in-depth interviews.

The credibility of this study was enhanced by the researcher’s background as a CEWA educator with 30 years of teaching in Catholic secondary schools and 20 years of educational leadership experience in the roles of Head of House, Head of Year, Head of

Department and Acting Head of Senior School. She has had six years' experience as Team Leader and Coordinator of Curriculum in the Teaching and Learning Directorate at system level (CEWA). In this capacity, she was a member of the school cyclic review panels of both CEWA primary and secondary schools, which enabled her to interact with and assist primary and secondary school principals.

The researcher was previously employed in an Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA) composite college for all girls in a leadership role for a period of seven years. Furthermore, the researcher worked for approximately seven months at the Curriculum Council, which is currently known as the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA). SCSA (2020) is a Western Australian government department that develops curriculum policy directions and assessment standards, and certification of students' achievement for Kindergarten to Year 12 schooling in Western Australia. This broad educational and leadership background has given the researcher an appreciation of the personal and professional experiences of female principals, particularly in CEWA composite and secondary schools and gave her credibility in the eyes of the participants.

The review of literature provided a foundational base for the topic under research and encompassed relevant published studies on the topic. Snyder (2019) argued that the integration of results and perspectives from many empirical studies has the potential to address research questions and provide an overview of areas in which the research is disparate and interdisciplinary. The literature review synthesised research results and demonstrated evidence to uncover areas in which more research was needed. The review of literature for this research encompassed relevant published studies on the topic relevant to this research.

Triangulation, according to Patton and Patton (2002), consists of the use of several methods or data to develop a thorough understanding of phenomena. Triangulation assists the researcher to verify data and increase learning as one observes a phenomenon from multiple perspectives rather than from a single perspective (Neuman, 2011). The process of triangulating the data increases the credibility by varying the data, researchers, theories, methodologies, or environments (Bryman, 2008). Four methods of triangulation were used for this research: multiple forms of data collection (semi-structured one-to-one interviews, document search and researcher field notes); differing school locations (regional and metropolitan); differing school types (composite, single gender, and coeducational secondary schools); and variety within the participants' experience as a principal (years of service and the number of principalship positions held).

The primary data collection method in this study was a semi-structured one-to-one in-depth interview with participants. The use of semi-structured one-to-one interviews facilitates the collection of reliable and comparable qualitative data by providing interviewers with a set of topical questions (Cohen et al., 2011). An interview guide was used which emphasised the questions and topics that needed to be covered. The participants received the questions prior to the interview. The style of interview with the participants in this semi-structured format was conversational, and probing questions were used to ensure that the interviewee responded to the relevant topic. The researcher highlighted key issues with each participant at the conclusion of the interview.

3.8.2 *Transferability*

The transferability of results refers to the extent to which they can be applied or transferred to other contexts or settings with other participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that it was the researcher's "responsibility to provide the data base that makes transferability judgements possible on the part of potential appliers" (p. 316). The question in this study is the degree to which one can generalise the professional and personal experiences identified by female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools to female principals in Catholic secondary schools at a national level, or with female principals in other educational sectors within Western Australia and nationally.

The researcher employed two criteria to enhance transferability; purposeful sampling and a detailed description of the phenomena examined. Ames et al. (2019) noted that too much data due to a large number of participants can undermine the researchers' ability to perform a thorough analysis. One way of achieving a manageable amount of data is through systematic, purposeful sampling of participants for inclusion in the synthesis (Ames et al., 2019). Purposeful sampling enhanced the transferability of this study in two ways. Firstly, purposeful variation sampling of female principals across regional and metropolitan CEWA composite and secondary schools allowed for both diversity and common patterns in the data collected. Secondly, the researcher found similarities between the results of this study with those of other studies on the personal and professional experiences of female principals in the review of literature.

As stated by Daher et al. (2017) qualitative research should account for participants' experiences and meanings. The latter can be done through holistic impressions and their corresponding detailed descriptions. To establish explicit links between the cultural and

social contexts that encompass data collection, Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended that qualitative researchers provide detailed description. Denzin (1989) noted that thick description, "...does more than record what a person is doing. It goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances, it presents detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another" (p. 83). In this study, the participants' varied experiences were outlined with thick descriptions incorporating multiple quotations.

3.8.3 Dependability

A key element of trustworthiness is the level of dependability of the research findings and the degree to which research procedures are documented, making it possible for someone outside the research to evaluate and critique the research process (Polit & Beck, 2014). In order to have dependability in the research, researchers are required to establish a process to ensure consistency (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Researchers need to ensure that their findings are consistent with the raw data they collected, hence the processes within the study should enable a future researcher to repeat the work, in order to gain the same results (Shenton, 2004). For readers to develop a thorough understanding of the methods and their effectiveness, Shenton (2004) noted that "the text should include sections devoted to the research design and its implementation, describing what was planned and executed on a strategic level; the operational detail of data gathering and the reflective appraisal of the project" (p. 71). In this research the following three measures were taken to enhance dependability: case study protocol; interview guide; and pilot testing of the interview guide. The researcher kept records of all steps of the research processes.

3.8.4 Confirmability

The term confirmability in qualitative research is used to describe the adherence to objectivity by the researcher so that the data and interpretation of an investigation are not reflective of the researcher's imaginative interpretations (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). That is, the findings must be shaped by participants more so than they are shaped by a qualitative researcher. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), researchers must show that their results are clearly linked to the conclusions in a way that can be tracked and, replicated as a process. It is important that the researcher provides the reader with an opportunity to determine confirmability by demonstrating how the data, constructs and theories emerged from a detailed methodological description (Shenton, 2004). While the qualitative researcher is part

of the research process and can thereby offer a unique perspective to the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), the researcher must avoid any bias, personal value or theoretical inclinations that may influence the research process and its findings (Bryman, 2012; Shenton, 2004). In this study, two strategies were used to ensure confirmability. First, the researcher's field notes were employed to supplement interview data to ensure that the depth of context persisted to allow robust research consistent with qualitative approaches. Second, the interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed for analysis and excerpts from data were used to provide examples of emerging themes.

3.9 Methodological Rigour

In the context of this research, methodological rigour refers to the precision of the instrument used for data collection. The researcher needs to “ensure that the chosen instrument performs the desired job properly i.e., collects the right data” (Dikko, 2016, p. 526). Dikko argued that a pilot study should be undertaken to streamline and validate semi-structured one-on-one interviews.

In this research, the pilot testing of the interview guide was undertaken with two former female principals of CEWA metropolitan composite and secondary schools. This process was applied in order to ensure that the questions were appropriate and suitable to ask the female principals in the study. Both former principals have had a combined principalship experience of approximately sixteen years in metropolitan CEWA composite and secondary schooling. One was the principal of a CEWA single gender (girls) composite college for over fourteen years and an acting principal of a Catholic secondary college in another state in Australia for one year. The other had been a principal of a large metropolitan CEWA co-educational composite school for a period of two years.

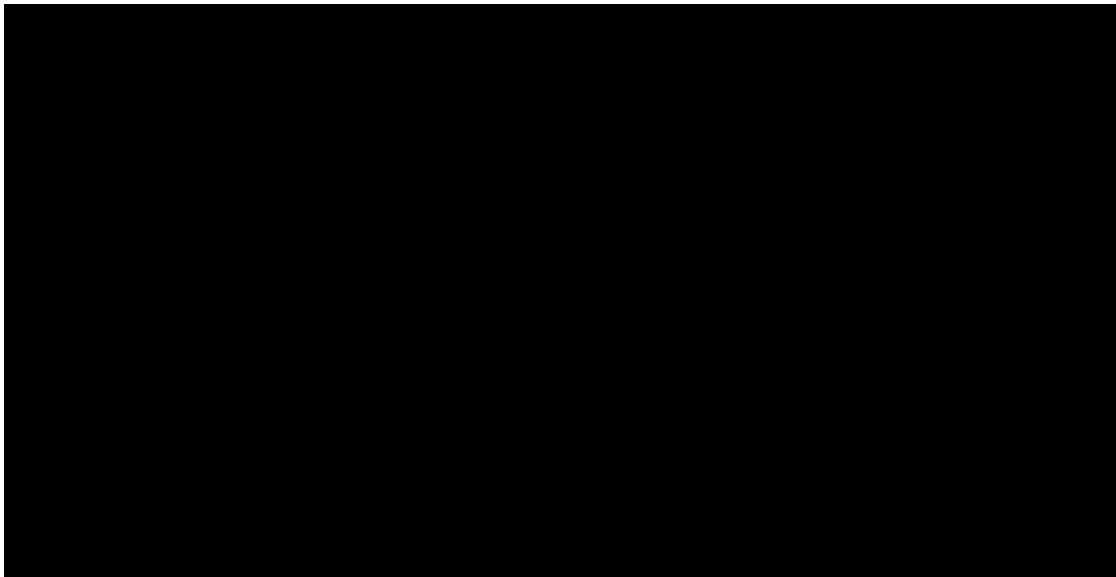
This pilot study enabled the researcher to make minor modification to the original set of questions, in particular with regard to the challenges of work-life balance and raising children. The area of work-life balance was of interest to the former principals as they were leading at a time when the concept of working mothers in principalship positions was not common. The results of the pilot study were scrutinised, and the interview questions were finally checked by the researcher's supervisors.

3.10 Data Analysis

The process of analysing qualitative data involves coding and categorising in order to extract meaning of the phenomenon (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This analysis is based on the Interactive Cycle Process (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and was used with the data collected from semi-structured one-to-one interviews. It entails data condensation, data display, and verification and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Bogdan and Biklen (1992) noted that data analysis in qualitative research involves arranging observation notes and other transcripts from the interview, which are gathered to assist with the understanding of the phenomenon. The interactive and iterative processes occur in four stages: before data collection begins, during the research design and planning phase, during data collection and post data collection. Figure 3.2 represents the data analysis strategy used in this inquiry.

Figure 3.2

Data Analysis Strategy: Interactive Cyclical Process (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 12).



3.10.1 Data Condensation

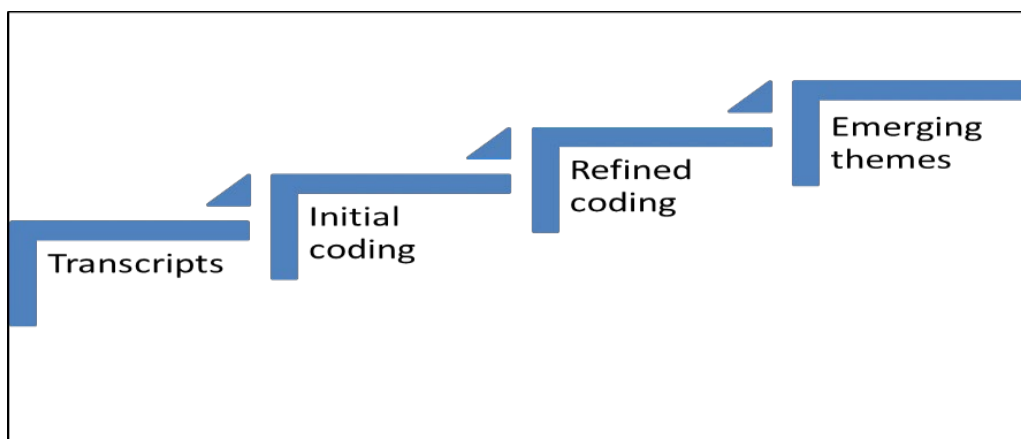
The process of data condensation consists of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data in transcriptions or field notes that appear in the interviews (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, the researcher condensed data through the identification of key themes emerging from the transcripts from the semi-structured one-to-one interviews. The data were summarised according to the research questions being addressed. In this inquiry, the data derived from the semi-structured one-to-one interviews

focused on the key messages when exploring the personal experiences and professional perspectives of female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools. The use of coding assisted in compartmentalising themes that emerge from important key messages.

A coding process of significant amounts of text, involved reading the transcript, listening to each audio recording, and note taking, scribbling notes, words, sentences, or paragraphs. Codes are described as “tags or labels for assigning meaning” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56), where the tagging data identifies relevant information at a particular point in an interview. Coding can be identified as “indexing or mapping data, to provide an overview of disparate data that allows the researcher to make sense of them in relation to their research questions” (Elliott, 2018, p. 2851). To assign meaning, codes were scrutinised and revised, in order to enable the formulation of emerging themes throughout the process. The process of data analysis that was utilised in the study is shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3

Process of Data Analysis



3.10.2 Data Display

Data display provides “an organised, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11). Data displays using visualisation tools such as word clouds and matrices can identify patterns emerging from the data which can correlate an area of study. Sellars et al. (2018) stated that word clouds are a visual representation that “portrays patterns of keywords and phrases included in the text, which allows viewers to identify relationships and meaning” (p. 2). The word clouds used by the researcher were graphical representations of word frequency that highlighted greater

importance to words that appeared more frequently in a source text. This process allowed the researcher to detect the most repeated response to the specific question asked.

Displayed data conveys information efficiently and concisely, while illustrating details provided in longer textual descriptions (Verdinelli & Scagnoli, 2013). Data is organised in a visual display, which then demonstrates the connections between different pieces of relevant data (Verdinelli & Scagnoli, 2013). Display format and means of entries can be varied and adjusted at any stage. For example, a data display can be a diagram, chart or matrix that arranges and explains in depth the embedded data. Such data displays enable the qualitative researcher to make conclusions from the data that emerges and observe relationships of themes under study. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that displays “are designed to assemble organised information into an immediately accessible, compact form so that the analyst can see what is happening and either draw justified conclusions or move on to the next step analysis...” (p. 11).

Data display for this study incorporated the use of conceptually clustered tables for each response and Word Clouds, a data visualisation representation comprising of a collection, or cluster of words that depict (using bigger and bolder font) those words which are frequently mentioned, such as expectations and challenging. Using transcripts of the one-to-one interviews, the researcher was able to draw out the initial coding from the participants’ responses and then refine the coding. Finally, the displays helped the researcher to draw out the emerging themes. In addition, the display tables enabled comparisons to be made between responses that emerged between participants. In this study, displays were organised under the four research questions assisting the researcher to draw major themes. Some examples of data display that were in used in the study to derive emerging themes are provided in Table 3.6 – 3.9.

Table 3.6

Examples of Coding to Identify Emergent Themes for Specific Research Question One: What factors encourage female educational leaders to become principals in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia?

Initial Coding	Refining Coding	Emerging Themes
Religious orders; School Improvement Advisors (SIAs); teachers and former principals;	Mercy Sisters and colleagues. CEWA personnel.	Encouragement from key educational

Deputy Executive Director of CEWA		administrators and colleagues
Relieving for absent and ill principal; co-working with the principal; gaining experience and realising potentials	Affirming their ability to do the job after experiencing the acting role.	Opportunities to undertake acting principal roles
Encouragement from family members; particularly from husbands; a line of strong family leaders	Encouragement from family members; family tradition of strong leaders	Family members and family traditions.
Desire to help students; passion for teaching; feel energised by teaching	Make a difference for students; bring out the very best in all students; passion for education	Commitment to making a difference in the lives of students in their school

Table 3.7

Examples of Coding to Identify Emergent Themes for Specific Research Question Two: What are the expectations and demands of being a female principal in a Catholic secondary school in Western Australia?

Initial Coding	Refining Coding	Emerging Theme
Parent/family issues; mental issues of parents and staff; issues with senior leadership team; staff resistant to change; parents and staff's different perspectives of female principals; parents of different cultural backgrounds views on female principals	Demanding parents; demanding staff; internal stakeholders' gender expectations of female principals; and perceptions of female principals from parents of different ethnic backgrounds	Expectations and demands of internal stakeholders
Issues surrounding compliance and risk management reporting; unrealistic expectations by the school community to solve financial problems	Principals' increasing accountability to external agencies; and unrealistic expectations of principals.	Expectations and demands of external stakeholders
Responsibility to the parish; unrealistic expectations of parish priests; shortage of priests willing to interact with secondary students	Principals' involvement with the school parish; the expectations of parish priests; and the decline of suitable	Principalship in a Catholic context

	priests for secondary school communities	
A sense of guilt; much time away from the family; no work-life balance	Balancing the principalship role alongside motherhood and home duties	Balancing career and family
Compared themselves to male principals; female principals hardest task masters	High-self expectations as leaders; overly self-critical of themselves as principals i.e., perfectionists	High expectations and self-criticism

Table 3.8

Examples of Coding to Identify Emergent Themes for Specific Research Question Two: What factors support and sustain a female principal in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia?

Initial Coding	Refining Coding	Emerging Theme
Support of fellow principals; leadership team members and PA (Personal Assistant)	Support from fellow principals, leadership team members and the personal assistant; support from significant others for personal responsibilities; and support of religious people	Significant people
Coaching support from a good principal; regular and ongoing meetings with mentor; the support of the School Improvement Advisor [SIA]	Importance of attaining suitable mentors; mentors who provide ongoing guidance and reassurance	Suitable mentors
Prior induction programs; attendance at the CEWA's Leadership Forums; networking with other secondary principals	The value of good leadership induction preparation for principalship; other leadership courses	CEWA leadership programs
Working as a consultant a CEWA an 'eye opener'; a stepping-stone into leadership	Previous experience as a consultant in the CEWA office had been beneficial; valued system overview into Catholic education in Western Australia	Previous experience as a CEWA Consultant

Table 3.9

Examples of Coding to Identify Emergent Themes for Specific Research Question Four: What challenges do female principals face as leaders in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia?

Initial Coding	Refining Coding	Emerging Theme
Families at crisis; demanding parents; lack resilience of parents and children; difficult conversations with underperforming staff; attracting and retaining staff in regional schools; time management responsibilities and accountabilities	Managing parental issues; concerns around staff; and insufficient time to complete tasks	Multifaceted nature of the role
Understanding of code of conduct and behavioural associated with social media; child protection issues; impact of isolation of staff in regional schools; staff shortages in regional areas; regional principals are outsiders to secondary network.	Impact of social media on mental health of the school community; and the challenges of isolation for regional school principals	Challenges facing principals on safety, health and wellbeing of the school community
A lack of preparation for financial leadership; inheriting building projects which principals have little knowledge of	The need for further training to address challenges associated with financial management; minimal knowledge and preparation around property managing building and construction operations	Breadth of financial and property management skills and knowledge to be a successful principal
Mandatory reporting and risk management- time consuming; lack of understanding around industrial issues	Impact of time-consuming work around compliance; and the challenges associated with educational industrial issues.	Compliance and regulation
Lack of transparency at handover time; ill prepared for a principalship role; unprepared to deal with inherited issues; the need for more structured and sustainable program for beginning principals; improve the scope of management skills and knowledge within the CEWA induction programs; support for principals has been overlooked	Transparency at handover time for principals; and lack of purposeful programs to support beginning principals in CEWA secondary schools	Principal preparation processes
Gender discrimination from CEWA male principals, board members, architects and property developers); a boys' club culture mentality; leadership characteristics of female principals are not always recognised	Gender discrimination; and the value and effectiveness of the leadership characteristics of female principals	Accepting Females as Principals in CEWA Secondary Schools

3.10.3 Drawing Verifications and Conclusions

Miles and Huberman (1984) stated “We have few agreed-on canons for qualitative data analysis, in the sense of shared ground rules for drawing conclusions and verifying their sturdiness” (p. 16). These authors emphasised that the process of drawing verification requires the researcher to review the data repeatedly to confirm conclusions. Miles and Huberman (1994) argued that “the meanings emerging from the data have to be tested for their plausibility, their sturdiness, their ‘confirmability’ that is, their validity” (p. 11). The researcher noted the responses that had emerged from the four research questions. The emerging themes identified from each of the research questions were further explained by dividing the themes into the sub-themes, which became apparent from the participants’ responses for the individual themes.

The researcher attempted to establish “patterns of variables involving similarities and differences among themes” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278) throughout the process of data display and data condensation. Conclusions drawn from the responses of female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools were examined in light of the review of literature. The researcher’s search for literature was comprehensive and it involved a methodical approach for data extraction and evaluating various types of review articles (Templier & Paré, 2015).

3.11 Ethical Considerations

The procedure followed in the research project ensured that there is an optimum standard of professional conduct during the research process. The optimum standards include human research ethics, respect for people’s rights and dignity, and informed consent to research. The researcher has an ethical obligation to respect and honour the rights and privacy of the participants throughout the entire research process. Ethical considerations were promoted to maintain knowledge, truth, and avoid error (Resnik, 2008).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011) the cornerstone of ethical research is ‘informed consent’. In this study, participants were fully informed of what was going to be asked of them, how the data would be used, and what (if any) consequences there could be. Participants provided explicit and signed consent to take part in the research, “including understanding their rights to access to their information and the right to withdraw at any point” (Fleming, 2018, p. 210).

This research into the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools was conducted in accordance with the University of Notre Dame Australia Human Ethics Research Committee, through which ethical clearance was obtained. Human research ethics review procedures have guidelines that are crucial when conducting research involving people. In this study, the following has occurred to ensure ethical requirements are met:

1. A formal application was made to The University of Notre Dame Australia’s Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) and to Catholic Education Western Australia. Compliance was demonstrated with all relevant guidelines of the research plan of the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia (1999) Statement on Human Experimentation and Supplementary Notices.
2. A CEWA application was submitted, and written approval was sought from the Director of Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Perth.
3. Following approval, the researcher sought written consent from the female principals of all CEWA composite and secondary schools to conduct the research.

Table 3.10 provides a summary of the ethical considerations for the research.

Table 3.10

A Summary of the Ethical Considerations for the Research

1	Approval from The University of Notre Dame Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) (Appendix B).
2	Approval from the Director of Catholic Education, Western Australia (Appendix C).
3	Approval from participants through a written consent form.
4	All records of interviews stored electronically on the password secured computer of the researcher during the research.
5	All records stored securely at the University of Notre Dame Australia, School of Education after the research was conducted.
6	All recorded data to be destroyed after a five-year period following the final submission.
7	Participants and their individual schools not identified.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research plan for the study, which focused on exploring the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools. A justification was given for the choice of an interpretivist perspective within constructivist qualitative research and outlined the reason for selecting an instrumental case study design. The choice was explained for the methods of data collection and data analysis. The chapter highlighted various elements of trustworthiness, methodological rigour, and ethical considerations. The chapter concluded with a design summary. The following chapter will present data under the four specific research questions derived from the research question of the study.

CHAPTER Four: Presentation of Results

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the instrumental case study examining the personal and professional experiences of current female principals in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia. The overarching research question is: What are the personal and professional experiences of female principals in Catholic Secondary Schools in Western Australia? The data were collected through qualitative semi-structured, in-depth interviews of fourteen female principals working in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia along with document searches and generated field notes. The results are organised into four themes based on the four specific research questions. For the convenience of the readers the four specific research questions are listed below.

1. What factors encouraged female educational leaders to become principals in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia?
2. What are the expectations and demands of being a female principal in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia?
3. What factors support and sustain a female principal in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia?
4. What challenges do female principals face as leaders in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia?

The themes that emerged are identified in table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Identified Themes

Theme Number	Theme
1	Factors that encourage female educational leaders to become principals in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia.
2	The expectations and demands of being a female principal in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia.
3	Factors that support and sustain a female principal in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia.
4	Challenges female principals face as leaders in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia.

4.2 Factors that encourage female educational leaders to become principals in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia.

Data from the female principals highlighted four sub-themes that encouraged educational leaders to become principals. These sub-themes are outlined in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2

Factors Contributing to Female Educational Leaders Becoming Principals in Catholic Secondary Schools in Western Australia.

Sub-Themes	Results
4.2.1	Direct encouragement from key educational administrators and colleagues
4.2.2	Opportunities to undertake acting principal roles
4.2.3	Family members and family traditional links to leadership
4.2.4	Commitment to making a difference in the lives of students in their school

4.2.1 *Direct Encouragement from Key Educational Administrators and Colleagues*

The data presented in this sub-theme are divided into two categories: support from key educational administrators, the Mercy Sisters and colleagues; and support from CEWA personnel.

4.2.1.1 Support and influence of key educational administrators, the Mercy Sisters and colleagues. Many participants mentioned the importance of support from key educational administrators. Specifically, these participants highlighted the support of their principal and colleagues in their journey to becoming a principal. For example, one participant noted, “my former principal certainly encouraged me.” A second participant identified that her former principal’s support and trust to take charge was an important element. She commented, “He [principal] was really encouraging, he gave me a free reign to do what I wanted to do within teaching and learning”. A third participant noted, “For me it was working with my principal who just gave me a lot of autonomy, a lot of responsibility and a lot of trust”. This participant remarked further, “I’d come to my principal with ideas to implement an initiative, and the principal was always supportive of having a go and it is

through that you then develop the respect of the staff.” A fourth participant indicated, “The principal came in and said to me, you need to start applying [for principalship]”.

Some participants had been encouraged to take on the principalship whilst they were in the role of deputy principal. One participant acknowledged, “I was a young deputy principal, my leaders were very supportive and encouraging of me to take the next step.” A second participant expressed her experience in working with a principal who was a Christian Brother. She commented, “He encouraged people, encouraged the young ones in those days. He mentored people; he saw the need to give other people opportunities”. This participant believed that this principal encouraged people to move on to other leadership roles. As she noted, “I've known a number of people who have done leadership renewals now who would readily acknowledge this [Christian] Brother as a great mentor”.

Some participants identified that various members of the religious order of the Sisters of Mercy played a part in influencing and supporting their leadership journey. In particular, these participants highlighted the support and guidance of the Mercy Sisters as female principals who dutifully looked after women in need. One participant commented, “The Mercy Sisters brought a strong sense of collegiality and leadership”. She noted further, “The Mercy Sisters, they've been supporting principals, and they've looked at support like a wellbeing allowance and professional coaching”. A second participant noted, “I think the Mercy Sisters have a great affection for me because I know the history and I've lived the history”. Reinforcing the impact of the Mercy Sisters' influence on her leadership journey, the same participant added, “The Mercy Sisters also felt very strongly that they were all women; they were all leaders. They looked after women in need”. A third participant indicated her sense of belonging and acceptance with the Mercy Sisters, “There was a sense of connection for me in the community and certainly with the Sisters and the Mercy heritage.”

Some participants commented on the encouragement they received from people around them, those they referred to as ‘colleagues’. One participant noted the impact of encouragement from colleagues with whom she worked closely. As she noted, “People [colleagues] would reach out and say, why don't you give this a go? And eventually I just did that until I became deputy principal”. A second participant remarked, “It wasn't till I came to my current school, which was then a brand-new school, and people (colleagues) would say, give it (principalship) a go.” A third participant noted, “I think it was most likely that people around you encouraged you”. A fourth participant remarked, “I had some strong feedback

from teachers I worked with, they would often make comments saying that they felt I would make a good principal”.

4.2.1.2 Support from CEWA Personnel. A number of participants noted the importance of encouragement and recognition provided by CEWA personnel in their journey to becoming a principal. School Improvement Advisors [SIAs], for example, provide support to their designated secondary schools where often a professional relationship with the leadership team is developed. Whilst working with her SIA, one participant commented, “He [SIA] said it [principalship] can be done, you’re sort of the right person for the job”. Reflecting on these words, this participant noted, “I’ve got nothing to lose by having a go”. A second participant remarked, “The factor that motivated or encouraged me was that I was part of the aspiring leadership program and was encouraged by a School Improvement Advisor”. She noted further, “He said use the formation as leadership growth”. A third participant stated, “I had my SIA as a mentor, and he said some really wise things to me. You want a school board that's going to be collaborative and supportive. That is something that really stuck with me”. A fourth participant remarked, “The Deputy Executive Director was at that time in the same leadership group as me... I think that [support] was really powerful”. A fifth participant stated, “A job was advertised at a school in the Kimberley region, but it was the executive director at that time who supported me to take on the position”.

4.2.2 Opportunities to Undertake Acting Principal Roles

The data presented in this sub-theme describes the positive influence associated with opportunities to undertake acting principalship roles. For many of the participants, the opportunity to take on the role of acting principal was an incentive to become a principal in a CEWA secondary and composite school. One participant remarked, “I did the acting role quite early on because of principal’s personal circumstances. Whilst I found the experience really challenging, I did like the opportunity to steer the ship even in acting capacity”. This participant commented further, “In the acting role, there was no expectation to make major changes, as the role was primarily a caretaker role”. A second participant noted, “The opportunity to substitute for an absent principal was enough to encourage me to consider the next move”. A third participant, who also had an opportunity to substitute for an absent principal stated, “There was enough of a taste of it [principalship] for me to think, I would actually quite like to do this”. She commented further, “So, it was that experience more than anything that made me to at least consider it [principalship]”.

For one participant the opportunity to take on the role of acting principal occurred whilst relieving for a principal who was ill. This participant remarked, “When the principal got very ill...I was the principal, that’s what happened. I entered untrained and because I was untrained, I co-worked with another (to gain the principal experience)”. A second participant who gained an opportunity to take on the role in light of an ill principal noted, “The principal I was working with was very sick with a lot of mental issues, so pastorally you just step in, things had to be done, the school had to run”.

Some participants noted that they were able to do the role once they had the opportunity to step into the role of principalship. One participant realised that she was able to improvise and do the role when she remarked, “Due to the principal’s detriment, I started to realise I had some potential because of the gains I was making with staff and students; thus, that was the start to realise I was capable”. A second participant who was invited by her principal to co-share responsibilities mentioned, “Co-working with my principal was an opportunity to gain first-hand experience, it worked favourably for me in expanding my knowledge in leadership of secondary schools”. She remarked further, “I was getting a strong picture of what the secondary network system looked like, and I said I can really do this”.

4.2.3 Family Members and Family Traditional Links to Leadership

The data presented in this sub-theme are divided into two categories: encouragement from family members; and a family tradition of strong leaders.

4.2.3.1 Encouragement from Family Members. Most participants mentioned that their families had encouraged them to take on the role as principal of a CEWA secondary school. In particular, married participants described the key role their husbands played in encouraging them in their leadership journey. Two participants even commented that their husbands stayed at home. For example, one participant stated, “My husband was very good, and obviously I couldn’t have done it without his encouragement”. A second participant commented, “My husband is very supportive, he very much believes in me and my ability to do the role”. A third participant remarked, “My husband is a very supportive person, who guided, supported me and encouraged me to go on and become a principal.” This participant added, “It is great to have someone at home, a partner who supports you in your leadership work”.

4.2.3.2 Family Tradition of Strong Leaders. A few participants indicated that they were motivated and influenced by strong leaders within their own families. For example, one participant observed, “My motivation really lies in the tradition of my family. I have my grandma who was the principal of a Catholic school in England”. This participant remarked further, “My auntie was a principal at St. Agnes in England and another auntie actually ran a special education school, thus the tradition [of leaders in education] carried on.” A second participant indicated that her confidence to lead and become a principal was mainly due to her resilient upbringing and her father’s influence. She commented on her father as a strong leader, “I grew up with a can-do [anything is possible] attitude because of my father”. She remarked further, “I was strongly influenced by my siblings...I have a sister, she’s a Franciscan missionary nun who is head of her congregation”. A third participant noted, “My husband has been in education and was an educational leader himself. He understood me and we've been in education a lot and I have three children who work in Catholic schools”. She added, “They also understand that you know there are career paths”.

4.2.4 Commitment to Making a Difference in the Lives of Students in Their School

Many participants indicated that part of their motivation to become a principal was a desire to make a difference in the lives of their students. In particular, participants had a sincere desire to help their students improve academic results as well as their well-being. For example, one participant noted, “I’ve been in teaching now for many years and right from when I started, I loved being in the classroom, but I felt that I could really make a difference in leadership roles”. She added, “I just really enjoy teaching and making a difference for my students.” A second participant remarked, “What motivates me is to make a difference for our students, to provide the very best opportunities for them [students] and encourage staff to grow these skills to be able to make that happen”. A third participant indicated, “I thrived on feeling like I make a difference to the kids [students]. That's the big thing that drives me.” A fourth participant noted, “When I am making a difference to the students’ [learning and achievement outcomes], this gives me energy, it energises me”.

Many of the participants also expressed that their motivation to become principals came from their passion for education and commitment to engaging with students. Many of these participants indicated that they were energised by their interaction with children and passion for teaching. For example, one participant commented, “I really enjoyed working with children and I found that the kids responded to me, so I actually developed good relationships that really encouraged me [to become a principal]. That's why I applied for this

job [principalship].” A second participant noted, “I have always been passionate about working with young people and trying to ensure that they are engaged in schooling. I have always thought about them being the future of the country”. A third participant remarked, “I have a passion for education and especially, a passion for girls’ education. I think I’m very dedicated to my role and I really want to lead with the best outcome from everything that we do”.

4.2.5 Summary

This section presented data on the key factors that encouraged female educational leaders to become principals in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia. Specifically, four sub-themes were highlighted: direct encouragement from key administrators and colleagues; opportunities to undertake acting principal roles; family members and family tradition of strong leaders; and commitment to making a difference in the lives of students in their school. The participants interviewed were encouraged, supported and guided by educational administrators, such as former principals, the Mercy Sisters, and CEWA personnel to take the next step into educational leadership. In short, participants felt that this encouragement had built their confidence and enthusiasm to take on the next step to principalship. Not only did participants mention the encouragement received by administrators, many participants indicated that they were also encouraged by colleagues to take on the role of principalship. For some participants the opportunity to undertake acting principal roles was key for giving them an initial experience into the life of a principal, and hence developing a self-belief that they are able to progress to the next step of their professional leadership journey.

Some of the participants’ families had encouraged them to become principals and were understanding of the nature of the role’s responsibility and time commitment. In particular, married participants had mentioned the encouragement received from their partners. This encouragement and support was seen as significant for the female principal as she navigated between her personal and principal roles.

A few participants indicated that their motivation was influenced by strong leaders within their own families. Encouragement came from a history of strong female educators which became a traditional link to leadership. Leadership examples included both female and male role models such as, grandmothers and aunts who were themselves school principals and a father who had instilled a positive attitude in a particular participant.

Another important contributing factor to female educational leaders becoming principals in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia was a commitment to making a difference for students in their school and a passion for education. This passion was manifested by leading improvement and change for all students. Participants expressed that they found the notion of being present and engaging with students within their schools, energising.

4.3 The Expectations and Demands of Female Principal in Catholic Secondary Schools in Western Australia.

This section presents data based on a reflection of the participants’ expectations and demands of being a female principal in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia. The data from the female principals highlighted four key sub-themes with respect to what they described as expectations and demands and how these expectations and demands impacted their ability to lead in their respective school communities. These sub-themes are outlined in table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3

Factors Contributing to the Expectations and Demands of Female Principal in Catholic Secondary Schools in Western Australia.

Sub-Themes	Results
4.3.1	Expectations and Demands of Internal Stakeholders
4.3.2	Expectations and Demands of External Stakeholders
4.3.3	Expectations and Demands of Principalship in a Catholic Context
4.3.4	Demands of Balancing Career and Family
4.3.5	High Personal Expectations and Self-Criticism

4.3.1 Expectations and Demands of Internal Stakeholders

The data presented in this sub-theme are divided into four categories: demanding parents; demanding staff; internal stakeholders’ gender expectations of female principals; and perceptions of female principals from parents of different ethnic backgrounds.

4.3.1.1 Demanding Parents. Many participants mentioned how demanding parents impacted on their role as principal in a CEWA secondary school. For example, one participant commented, “I just find that parents are more demanding; a lot of parents are more demanding than they were nine or ten years ago”. She remarked further, “Someone coming into the role quite new, they [demanding parents] can throw you quite a bit”. A second participant stated, “I think probably there's a few challenges, but I guess one of the greatest challenges that I've experienced along the way has been parents”. She added, “It is a really difficult landscape; we've just dealing with a really nasty one [parent] at the time but it has been a real challenge. It emotionally takes so much out of you as a leader because you know your reputation is at stake”. A third participant indicated, “My second biggest challenge would be parents’ issues around first term this year”. She commented further, “There were significant parent issues, and if that had been my first term as a principal, I might've thought: if this is how it is to be, then maybe is not for me”.

Many participants added that the demands of the parents and families were often at the forefront of the daily responsibilities of principals. One participant remarked, “Demands are things that are going to happen because you are dealing with people... demands such as, families in crisis”. A second participant commented, “There is an expectation that you will fix everything and they [parents] don't have to take responsibility”. A third participant noted, “We have parents who think that schools are places for their own problems to be solved.” This participant explained further, “Parents just want to come and dump their mental issues on them [staff]. I believe that because you are a female principal, we are approached more by parents for the counselling and the listening than a male principal”.

4.3.1.2 Demanding Staff. Many participants mentioned various demands that came from staff within their school, especially those staff who were set in their ways and not willing to change. One participant, who was a new principal in her school mentioned, “My challenge lies with my senior leadership team, who haven't experienced other schools and haven't experienced other models. Therefore, ideas are limited, and creativity is probably limited as well”. A second participant remarked about a demanding staff member who did not want to change old habits. She noted, “He realised he was going to be more accountable; he was a PE/English teacher and just wanted to teach PE and was using the same program for twenty years”. A third participant commented, “There are so many dimensions to the role. You're dealing with humans so there are those demands, and you always have expectations that there might be a staff member who may be also struggling”. A fourth participant stated,

“We have had challenging staff . . . as a leader you want to affirm and work with them and encourage them, but then there comes a time you can only do so much”.

4.3.1.3 Internal Stakeholders’ Gender Expectations of Female Principals. Many participants highlighted that the expectations of some of the internal stakeholders on the female principal in a CEWA secondary school were at times, based on gender. One participant commented about how her staff viewed her leadership approach: “There is a belief that because you’re a female you’re going to be softer and won’t be able to make hard decisions and there is an expectation I may not be able to manage the budgets”. She remarked further, “However, I think that female principals in CEWA schools are very strong women and are able to make strong decisions”. A second participant noted, “They [parents] expect you to be nurturing because you are a woman. I think women are expected to show a different type of pastoral care and nurturing than perhaps men might not.” A third participant had previously worked in a loud and boisterous male dominated secondary school environment. Contrary to the loud and boisterous environment, she expressed confidence in using her softly spoken voice, “In a boys’ school, I didn’t have a loud voice and I am determined not to change the way I operate as a female leader”.

A fourth participant stated that parents and staff perceived female principals as the nurturing type, especially for consulting purposes. She remarked, “Because you are a female principal you are approached for counselling and the listening more often than the male principal by both parents and staff.” A fifth participant noted that there is a perception that women need to adopt a strict persona to be a leader in a secondary school. As she explained, “Should you be a hard woman if you are going to be a principal? You don’t need to be, at all”. Finally, a sixth participant indicated, “I do believe that being a female [principal], there's a lot of expectations. For example, if you're talking to staff about professional responsibilities, they see that as you are being a hard woman, so I'm not being a hard woman, it's actually being a principal expecting responses at a certain level”.

4.3.1.4 Perceptions of Female Principals from Parents of Different Cultural Backgrounds. A few participants mentioned that parents who came from different cultural backgrounds had differing perceptions of female leaders. These parents did not accept the participants’ authority as leaders because of their gender. One participant commented, “Some families of different cultural background have an expectation maybe that you should be at home and not spend much time at school”. She remarked further, “There have been some

cultural implications with some parents”. A second participant noted, “In some cultures females are not leaders. At times when there is conflict, there’s blame and finger pointing. I find that challenging as a female”. A third participant stated, “I had a very strong Italian population at the school with very dominant boys. They [the parents] didn’t like the fact that I had expectations of them [their children] as a female principal”.

A fourth participant remarked, “It is about breaking those barriers in some cultures, particularly new families to Australia. They have different backgrounds when it comes to women in leadership. They will automatically assume a male is the principal”. A fifth participant stated, “In my first principalship, I had a parent say to me from a different nationality, a new Australian, ‘I want to speak to the male principal in the school’. I said, well, there's no male principal, I'm it”. She added, “They [parents] have very different backgrounds and beliefs when it comes to women in leadership. I think men have it naturally easier because in some cultures and some backgrounds, they [parents] will automatically assume a male is the principal rather than the female as the principal”.

4.3.2 The Expectations and Demands of External Stakeholders

The data presented in this sub-theme are divided into two categories: principals’ increasing accountability to external agencies; and unrealistic expectations of principals.

4.3.2.1 Principals’ Increasing Accountability to External Agencies. Participants felt strongly and were passionate about the issues surrounding compliance and reporting. One participant remarked, “The demands that come with the job are obviously the compliance and accountability”. A second participant commented, “The biggest issues are things like compliance, which are documentations that you have to write up about incidents”. She commented further, “The administrative side of what we have to do, things like risk management, is huge and very time-consuming but it has to be done”. A third principal remarked, “The Catholic school system is multifaceted, accountable through Department of Education Services”. She noted further, “We are accountable to the government through Schools Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA), CEWA and to the Bishops”. In addition, a fourth participant commented, “The nature of this job means you need to really be across trauma-informed practice [compliance], you need to have really good behaviour management knowledge”.

Many participants remarked that the impact of compliance and reporting was time consuming and taxing on valuable instructional leadership time. One participant noted how

compliance was beyond what is strictly necessary, “One of the things that threatens principals and their capacity to lead in schools is the amount of compliance. I’m spending too much time following up on compliance”. She added, “The compliance is just ridiculous, it is very easy for someone afar to say, you’ve got to do this, and you’ve got to do that because you are audited in two weeks’ time”. A second participant remarked, “The biggest issue is compliance, documentation about incidents that you are required to do in terms of mandatory reporting”. She stated further, “The other big things are your annual school report and your school performance report”. A third participant, new to the principalship role, indicated, “We have a number of students that are in state protection. We have a close relationship with the council office and working with different organisations and with compliance requirements”.

4.3.2.3 Unrealistic Expectations of Principals. Many participants mentioned that there is an unrealistic expectation of the school community that the principal can solve most external problems associated with education. One participant commented, “There is an expectation that you will fix everything and they [others external to the school community] don’t have to take responsibility”. A second participant mentioned, “It’s complex, you need to be at the top of your game as a leader, you need to have a standard”. She stated further, “The community [including external agencies] is expecting that you know [everything] about education, be creative and also take risks in regard to that too”. A third participant indicated, “There’s all the other dimensions [to solving educational issues], that is part of the leadership in a Catholic school and that is being a financial manager”. She added, “That probably is the biggest complex area [to solve financial problems,] because we’re not business managers, we’re not accountants, we’re teachers, we come from a teaching background”.

4.3.3 Expectations and Demands of Principalship in a Catholic Context

The data presented in this sub-theme are divided into three categories: principals’ involvement with the school parish; the expectations of parish priests; and the decline of suitable priests for secondary school communities.

4.3.3.1 Principals’ Involvement with the School Parish. All participants interviewed professed their commitment to supporting the mission and ethos of the Catholic Church and their allegiance to the school parish both on a professional and personal level. Although they believed their relationship with their schools’ parish was pivotal in imbuing

Catholic identity of the school and its teachings, some participants indicated that the expectation to maintain a good relationship with priests allocated to schools was demanding. For example, one participant commented, “We [principals in secondary schools] have got a responsibility to the parish that you wouldn’t have in a secondary school that was isolated from the parish.” A second participant indicated, “It is an expectation for Catholic principals to be involved in the parish community”. The same participant stated further, “When principals are asked if they’re active in their parish, there needs to be some better understanding [of what this entails]. They [principals] can still be there and be part of the parish and be contributing in a much less formal way”.

In addition to the female principal’s involvement in the parish, participants stated that obtaining the priest’s support for their school was challenging. For example, one participant remarked that finding parish priests who were willing to work with secondary schools’ students was demanding, “It’s really sad when you send out a letter to all the parishes inviting them here [at school] for a feast day and there's only one parish priest that says he can make it”. A second participant commented, “We now have had a permanent priest. We’ve had four priests in the last four years, and he [current priest] will be a wonderful addition to our parish now that he is appointed for six years”. A third participant noted, “We are certainly not like a school that’s got a strong connection to a parish. It is tricky at the moment; we float between priests which is not my preference”. A fourth participant commented, “One of the biggest challenges for Catholic schools going forward, is that we had four or five priests that we call on almost a roster system because they are all different”.

4.3.3.2 The Expectations of Parish Priests. A few participants had experienced overwhelming expectations from their parish priest. One participant stated, “The parish priest expects more from the principal, he wants his meals cooked, he is really old school.” A second participant wanted to be part of her parish community, however, was concerned of an over commitment on top of her responsibilities as a principal. This participant remarked, “I think that the parish priest and community can suck you in.” A third participant noted the expectations and viewpoints of her parish priest were conflicting with respect to what is suitable or appropriate for her secondary school, “We are not considered to be part of the parish down the hill. That is partially because of the relationship fell apart over a number of years”. She stated further, “He [priest] was a different character... We had lots of priests, so our community relationship and our Church community are very different”. A fourth participant indicated, “I moved to another Parish six years ago. The minute I walked through

the doors and the parish priest recognised me, I was on the reading roster and specialist roster, and you feel obliged to do that”.

4.3.3.3 The Decline of Suitable Priests for Secondary School Communities. Many participants lamented the decline of suitable priests able to work with the secondary school communities. In short, participants felt it was becoming difficult to find available and suitable priests to conduct school masses or to develop an ongoing relationship with the secondary school community. As one participant remarked, “Connection to the parish priest is challenging. Some parish priests do not want to engage”. A second participant pointed out other concerns, “We either don’t have enough priests, or they are too old to engage with young people”. A third participant commented on her attempt to get a parish priest to engage with her school community, “It can be challenging, some parishes and parish priests don’t want to engage with high school students as they find it quite intimidating”. A fourth participant noted, “As leaders, how do we get our clergy into our secondary schools? That in itself is an inherent issue”. A fifth participant stated, “We haven’t got a strong connection to one priest. It’s tricky at the moment with attaining a priest”. A sixth participant indicated, “The relationship (between the school and the parish priest) fell apart a number of years ago. He [priest] is probably not the right fit for our kids.” A final comment from another concerned participant was, “We would love to have a full time young innovative priest that really connected with the students; that would be my dream”.

4.3.4 *Demands of Balancing Career and Family*

Many participants, particularly those who had children, emphasised the expectations and demands associated with balancing the principalship role alongside motherhood and home duties. When it came to motherhood, many participants felt a sense of guilt as they tried to juggle the demands of their role as principal and finding time to be with their children. For example, one participant commented, “I think females still do more at home”. She added, “Your role is still mother at home, it’s different for females because that’s the way society looks at you and expects you to be good at all”. A second participant explained, “For me, it is a juggle of motherhood and work”. A third principal participant stated, “Women [female principals] feel guilty. If you have not looked after your family, you’re not going to be able to do your job properly”. A fourth participant remarked, “I don’t know if it comes with being a female, needing to be a mum, that mum guilt kicks in”. A fifth

participant noted, “The demands are different. As a female in a leadership role, you’re probably doing much more at home than some of the males in leadership roles”. Finally, a married participant who did not have children and was aware of the additional pressures and complexities for female principals who have children indicated, “I don't feel pressure at home because we don't have any children. I don't know how I could do the job the way I lead, and I also put in, if I had children” She added, “I found that incredibly complex and I feel like I'd be very torn, to be honest. I think that's complex for female principals that have children, certainly schooling children at home”.

The participants expressed belief in the pivotal importance of balancing their work and home life, in particular with their partners. One participant stated, “I feel I spend so much time away from home... You know being away from home is hard enough, so obviously family is important... I tell my staff that their family has to be number one.” A second participant commented about her husband’s support, “We work it together, we have a child with a disability, and you just do it, it’s a partnership”. A third participant noted, “My husband is very supportive, and he'll come to one [school function] if he can do, or when he's not working”. A fourth participant remarked, “Female principals need a life, you need a partner as you have a lot of night meetings after school hours”. She stated further, “I am not always going to be available for things he [husband] may want me to be available for”. A fifth participant indicated, “The biggest challenge is the time and the work-life balance, it’s a big job and you could work 24 hours a day because the demands are so diverse and different”.

4.3.5 High Personal Expectations and Self-Criticism

A few participants remarked that they had high expectations of themselves as leaders which often led to them being overly self-critical. One participant commented, “I think this is more about my own expectations, about having to try and do everything and be all things for everyone. If I can't, I personally beat myself up if I feel letting someone down”. She remarked further, “I know I cannot, but personally this is probably more about my expectations.” A second participant stated, “It’s more about my own expectations as a leader”. She added, “When you have people, who expect you to be a leader that's more like a male than a female; it's more about who you are as a person not about your gender”. A third participant stated, “I've had to critique myself; I will beat myself up if I feel like I haven't done something well, or something doesn't go well”. She explained further, “If I didn't do something well, if I've rushed it and I haven't given it the time, I am very hard on myself”. A

fourth participant indicated, “I think that too often we [women] are our own worst critique, we’ve got to remember we are all in it together”. Finally, a fifth participant remarked, “Women [principals] can be their hardest task masters”.

4.3.6 Summary

This section provides a summary of the factors that participants stated contribute to the expectations and demands of female principals in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia. Key factors identified included the expectations and demands of internal and external stakeholders, the implications for principalship in a Catholic context, demands of balancing career and family, and high personal expectations and self-criticism.

One of the key factors experienced by female principals in CEWA secondary schools was the demands and expectations of internal stakeholders. Direct expectations and demands from parents and staff could be overwhelming for some participants. Most participants commented that the school community assumed that female principals were more likely to be seen as nurturing and compassionate principals rather than assertive and strong figures. Many participants experienced demands associated with family [parents] and due to staff issues. The expectations of the role were not only one of counselling but one where the participants became good listeners and problem solvers for parents and staff. Many participants considered themselves to be strong women.

Participants indicated that the expectations and demands placed upon them by external stakeholders created additional administrative work around compliance and reporting. In particular, they noted the joint impact of compliance and reporting was time consuming and taxing on valuable instructional leadership time. One participant noted how compliance was necessary but excessive to the point that it had become ridiculous.

The majority of the participants accepted that their commitment to the parish community was pivotal. For some participants, the expectations of some parish priests were demanding for the busy principal. The key challenge was to find a suitable parish priest who was engaging and understood the nature and interests of young adults in today’s secondary school. Finding a suitable and engaging priest in the midst of the decline in the number of priests for CCSS was a concern for many participants.

For many participants, trying to balance family and work commitments was demanding. Above all, participants who were mothers felt they lacked time to fulfil the role of motherhood. For some participants, absence from family resulted in a sense of guilt.

Participants who found themselves in this situation, especially, believed the task of balancing home life and work hours to be demanding. Many participants acknowledged that the support of their partner and family was pivotal to taking on the principalship role.

Some participants admitted that they had high expectations of themselves and placed self-imposed demands on themselves due to their own personal ambitious traits to lead with perfection. These participants stated that they were at times, very self-critical and hard on themselves. One participant acknowledged that women can be their hardest task masters.

4.4 Factors that support and sustain a female principal in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia.

This section presents data based on factors that participants mentioned would support and sustain a female principal in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia. The section is divided into four main sub-themes. These sub-themes are outlined in table 4.4 below:

Table 4.4

Factors that Support and Sustain Female Principals in Catholic Secondary Schools in Western Australia.

Sub-Themes	Results
4.4.1	Significant people
4.4.2	Suitable mentors
4.4.3	CEWA leadership programs
4.4.4	Previous experience as a CEWA Consultant

4.4.1 Significant People

The data presented in this sub-theme are divided into three categories: support from fellow principals, leadership team members and the personal assistant; support from significant others for personal responsibilities; and support of religious people.

4.4.1.1 Support from Fellow Principals, Leadership Team Members and the Personal Assistant. Some participants acknowledged the support of fellow principals (both male and female), leadership team members and their personal assistant in their leadership role. These significant people who offered the participants guidance, were noted as being

trustworthy and were available in times of need. The support from fellow principals played an important part in the participants' leadership journey. For example, one participant remarked, "I am blessed, I have a couple of really good CEWA secondary principal colleagues who support me. We do reach out to each other a lot of the times". A second participant commented, "I have connections with other female principals and get their feedback". A third participant indicated, "I have a really good group of experienced principals that I know I can reach out to". A fourth participant stated, "I feel supported and whatever happens, I have a really good group of people around me and good principals I can reach out to".

Participants highlighted the importance of their leadership team members. As one participant commented, "The value of having a leadership team is a really important support". A second participant praised her leadership team she worked with when she remarked, "Once again, the value of having a leadership team around you at school that supports you is really important". A third participant stated, "Obviously, I have a good leadership team here...they very much support [me]". Finally, a fourth participant noted, "I'm very lucky, the vice principal [and I], we work very closely together, and he was appointed by me, so there is a very strong relationship".

Whilst some female principals reported that they relied heavily on their internal senior leadership team, other participants mentioned that their personal assistant (PA) was the person they confided in the most. One participant remarked, "I don't keep things away from my executive and my PA, we work very closely together". A second participant highlighted those people who supported her the most when she commented, "Having a good leadership team around me, however, the principal's personal assistant is magical". A third participant stated, "I have good internals, but the support of my PA is important".

4.4.1.2 Support from Significant Others for Personal Responsibilities. Many participants identified other significant people who supported them with their personal responsibilities allowing them to attend to their leadership role. One participant remarked, "I'm lucky that I have someone, she's a bit of a mother figure and she has adopted my daughter. She is helping to alleviate some of that guilt". A second participant commented, "You're in the role of principal, so you need good support and if you've got children, you really need to have a partner". A third participant indicated, "He [husband] does all the cooking and he looks after the house, so I wouldn't be able to do that without him". A fourth participant stated, "I wasn't going to let the fact that I was a mother interfere with my role as

principal”. She noted further, “I deliberately had support; a lovely lady who became part of the family, like a nanny...I don’t think I could have done it without her support”.

4.4.1.3 Support from Significant Religious People. Some participants recognised significant religious people who had provided spiritual, emotional and professional support. One participant commented, “The Mercy Sisters, they have been looking at supporting their principals for example like providing us with a well-being allowance”. She remarked further, “The allowance can be gym membership, professional coaching, remedial massage, these sorts of things can be useful”. A second participant stated that a member of the clergy provided her with the spiritual support during her principalship journey. “Bishop Justin provided me with spiritual guidance I needed whilst in the principal role”. A third participant indicated, “I have had great support from the Mercy sisters, and the Marist Regional Council, from whom I learnt a lot”. She noted further, “Actually, it is also a combination of the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Marist Brothers who offered support”. A fourth participant recalled, “I got the Edmund Rice scholarship for Christian Brothers' schools, so I managed to go to America. I really just had some amazing opportunities”. She added, “He [Christian Brother] saw the need to give other people opportunities”.

4.4.1 *Suitable Mentors*

Many of the participants who were at the beginning, or in their early stages of their career as a principal, highlighted the importance of attaining suitable mentors. These participants mentioned that mentors provided them with ongoing guidance and reassurance they needed. One participant stated, “I think for me it was definitely the mentoring. So, the mentoring and the recognition where people would believe in you, that's everything. You know, that was everything”. A second participant remarked, “Seeking coaching support has been valuable to me, having an external person is invaluable”. A third participant commented, “Advice for potential female leaders - learn from a good principal - so work to have a good principal that mentors you and encourages you”. A fourth participant said, “I think it is important to have that mentor that is encouraging you and giving you that confidence to have a go”.

With regard to accessing a suitable mentor, one participant recommended, “A mentor that comes and meets with you for an hour and talks through any of your questions and concerns, and someone that you have a real bond with; to me that would be invaluable”. A second participant noted, “I went ahead and chose a mentor. I didn't know how that process

worked, and so I just chose a female principal. I ring her regularly. We meet ... most holidays we'll meet as well". She added, "I just make a note of things I want to ask her so when we meet, I go through them. If it's urgent, I just ring her. She's told her PA that if I call for her that I'm to be put through". A third participant mentioned, "He, the School Improvement Advisor [SIA] would be the one I have a lot to do with in terms of school development". In terms of mentorship, this participant remarked; "With my SIA representative, we talk for a long time". Finally, a fourth participant stated, "Certainly, I had my SIA as a mentor, and he said some really wise things to me".

4.4.3 CEWA Leadership Programs

Some experienced participants mentioned the value of the leadership induction preparation for principalship as well as other leadership courses. With reference to the timing of leadership preparation one participant commented, "The principals' induction was great once you were a principal. They [CEWA] had the induction and it would've been really good to have had that before to make you realise". Another participant who was very experienced in her role as principal was also positive about the frequency and timing of the leadership preparation courses for principals, when she remarked, "In the early days of a lot of induction for principals, four days a year you had different points throughout the year that you had to take on. I found that incredibly valuable".

One participant who had completed a CEWA leadership program for aspiring and established leaders commented, "That's probably the factors that motivated or encouraged me. I was part of the principal's program, and even at that point when I did the program, I actually said to the facilitator, 'I don't know yet if I want to be a principal'. And he said it doesn't matter, use the formation as part of the leadership growth." Another experienced participant affirmed her attendance at the CEWA's Leadership Forums as being purposeful and a supportive networking opportunity. The participant mentioned that attending this event enabled principals to network and talk to other principals. This participant noted, "Leadership Forums for Catholic Principals...they're really a good way of supporting us".

4.4.4 Previous Experience as a CEWA Consultant

Some participants identified that their previous experience as a consultant in the CEWA office had been beneficial. In particular, they valued the experience for gaining a system overview into Catholic education in Western Australia. One participant mentioned, "I went into consultancy, actually had a year there and learnt so much about the system and got

into K-12 schools. I thought my gosh, there is a whole other world and so many opportunities in Catholic Ed.”. A second participant noted “I worked at CEWA for a little while as a consultant, so I had that experience too of working with staff and teachers rather than students”. A third participant stated, “But for me, I was lucky that I had that CEWA [office] experience and knew the processes...It was an eye-opener”. A fourth participant strongly recommended working in the CEWA office as a great learning stepping stop into leadership. She stated, “I worked for six months in the Catholic education office in Leederville, and then was appointed to this principal's position and I remember saying to the then executive director that it was outstanding learning prior to principalship”. She added, “I've said openly since to lots of people, if you get the opportunity to do a short stint at the office, you should take it because you can't know how much system learning you get whilst being there”.

4.4.5 Summary

Participants referred to four key factors that contribute to supporting and sustaining female principals in CEWA secondary schools. The factors included significant people, suitable mentors, CEWA leadership programs, and previous experience as a CEWA Consultant. The participants acknowledged valuable support coming from significant people such as fellow principals, leadership team members and their personal assistant in their leadership role who could offer them professional and emotional guidance and sustain them whilst in their role of principalship. Participants noted that significant people were those who were trustworthy and were available for them in times of need. Some participants also identified other significant people who supported them with their personal responsibilities allowing them to attend to their leadership role.

Many participants identified people such as good principals and CEWA personnel as appropriate mentors. These mentors offered advice to participants and encouraged them in their role as principal. These significant people provided them with professional advice and support. The participants commented that the support of appropriate mentors was important, as it offered them ongoing professional guidance, in order to sustain them in their role as principals.

Some experienced participants mentioned the value of the CEWA leadership courses for principalship. These same participants also mentioned that the opportunity to attend network days at Leaders Forums was another form of support. Finally, some participants considered that their experience working as Consultants of the Catholic Education Western

Australian office was of great value, and instrumental in providing them with an understanding and overview of education at system level.

4.5 Challenges faced by female principals in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia.

This section presents data based on the challenges faced by female principals in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia. The section is divided into six sub-themes. These sub-themes are outlined in table 4.5 below:

Table 4.5

Challenges Faced by Female Principals in Catholic Secondary Schools in Western Australia.

Sub-Themes	Results
4.5.1	Multifaceted nature of the role
4.5.2	Challenges facing principals on safety, health and wellbeing of the school community
4.5.3	Breadth of financial and property management skills and knowledge to be a successful principal
4.5.4	School compliance with regulations
4.5.5	Principal preparation processes
4.5.6	Stereotyping females as principals in CEWA secondary schools

4.5.1 Multifaceted Nature of the Position

The data presented in this sub-theme are divided into three categories: managing parental issues; concerns around staff; and insufficient time to complete tasks.

4.5.1.1 Managing Parental Issues. Many participants commented that one of their biggest challenges was managing parental issues. For example, one participant indicated, “One of the greatest challenges that I’ve experienced along the way has been parents and their issues”. She added, “I have had parents go to the media...they [the media] were sitting outside wanting to interview because of ridiculous things. The threat to our reputation is a big

challenge”. A second participant noted, “The parents are a challenge; the trouble is...ice addict parents and transgender issues, you name it we have got them”. A third participant noted two areas that were particularly challenging for her when she mentioned, “I guess the biggest challenge is the demands of the role, my second biggest challenge is parents’ issues around first term”.

Some participants also linked the issue of family when discussing parental concerns. For example, a participant indicated, “There are families [parents] who are at crisis point. From day-to-day, it can be anything because you never know who is going to walk through that door.” Another participant commented, “Family issues, yes, I’ll say dealing with students and parents”. She noted further, “I have a reputation to uphold, it is really a challenge to get the school where I wanted it to be”

Many participants commented, furthermore, that building relationships with parents was difficult at times. One participant remarked, “I think we are finding a high level of accountability in a whole range of things, and I just find that parents are more demanding with their dependence on the school to help them with issues”. A second participant stated, “We try to get parents to come in [the school] but we don’t see them again after enrolment”. She further commented, “The challenge is the dynamic nature of the kids, and not being able to build the relationship with their parent, as they shy away. We don’t have that relationship with parents anymore”. A third participant spoke of the parents’ issues being more prevalent than in previous years. She mentioned, “Things have changed...there is a high level of accountability in a whole range of things and parents are far more demanding than they were 10 years ago. The ramifications for that are increasing”. Some participants noted that today’s young parents and students lacked resilience. For example, one participant remarked, “I’m educating the young parents and their children about resilience and the values and goals we hold here. They [parents] are less resilient than their kids”. She noted further, “They’re just not resilient enough, we have had to tell them...it’s time to stop bringing their [children’s] lunch up, they won’t starve”.

4.5.1.2 Concerns Around Staff. Some participants commented that along with managing parental issues, there were also concerns around staff. These concerns included: difficult conversations with staff who were unenthusiastic and longstanding; staff with mental and physical health issues; and difficulty in locating and retaining of staff. Many participants highlighted challenging conversations around staff who were comfortable in their role but no longer challenged nor enthused about teaching. Whilst reflecting on having challenging

conversations with staff, one participant commented, “Certainly, a number of those challenges were around staffing, long standing staff who were very comfortable in their role but not willing to be challenges any longer. A second participant remarked, “Challenges were around staffing, long standing staff who were comfortable in their role”. A third participant remarked, “A challenge was with long standing staff members who were not willing to put the needs of children ahead of their own”. A fourth participant commented, “I think having challenging conversations with staff about my expectations as a principal and perhaps their underperformance as staff members”. A fifth participant indicated, “I had the most challenge with a staff member. I’ll be open here, middle-aged women are not used to having a female principal, and I am challenging them with regard to professional responsibilities”. A sixth participant noted, “If they [staff] are not prepared to step up, they’re really not doing particularly good job, so those conversations are difficult”. Finally, a seventh participant remarked, “About two months ago, I had a hard conversation with someone who was a standout, not pulling her weight in middle school”.

A few participants mentioned the challenges associated with staff who had mental and physical health issues. For example, one participant noted her concern about staff with mental issues, “We’ve had some staff with mental issues...who have gone on indefinite leave. Difficult conversations with staff in general, is a big one [challenge]”. Another participant remarked, “I can have a hard conversation with any staff member and you will get very different reactions ... she [staff member] in fact, is suffering from lymphoma and cancer and quite a number of parts of her body, but didn’t find out until after she had threatened to sue me and do all that stuff. People will react very differently to all sorts of things”.

A participant from a regional setting commented that the overall success of the regional secondary school relies on attracting teachers. She noted, however, the difficulty was finding and retaining staff. This participant remarked, “Staffing is a challenge, obviously being in a country school, getting enough staff and then retaining them”.

4.5.1.3 Insufficient Time to Complete Tasks. A third challenge that participants identified, which emerged from the multifaceted nature of the principal role, was finding the time to complete required work. All participants admitted that it was a difficult task managing the multilayers of responsibilities and accountabilities associated with the principalship role. For example, one participant commented. “I think the biggest challenge is the lack of time and the work-life balance because it’s a big job and you could work twenty-four hours a day and because there the demands are diverse”. A second participant stated,

“There are an extraordinary number of meetings, if you went to all of them you would never be at school”. She noted further, “I find that hard to juggle”. A third participant remarked, “I try not to bring work home. I’d also have various night-time functions to attend at schools, and then have to do tons of work when the kids are asleep.” A fourth participant indicated, “Time restrictions are challenging. You do not have enough hours in the day. Sometimes, you’ve got to cancel everything because something might happen at home”. Finally, a fifth participant commented, “I’ve come to the realisation that you can’t and never will do it all. It cannot and never will be always to your total satisfaction”. She indicated further, “Giving yourself that space and focus on family. That is, taking time as a family to go somewhere away from work related issues”.

4.5.2 Challenges of Safety, Health and Wellbeing of the School Community

The data presented in this sub-theme are divided into two categories: the impact of social media on mental health on the school community; and the challenges of isolation for regional school principals.

4.5.2.1 The Impact of Social-Media and Other Issues on Mental Health and Wellbeing on the School Community. Most participants acknowledged that the impact of social media on the mental health and well-being of their students and families was a challenging aspect of their role. The day-to-day running of the school and the safety of students were at times, intense. One participant commented, “There is the education of young parents and their children...There are lots of health issues with parents and they are young”. A second participant indicated, “The challenge is the education of parents about the code of conduct and behavioural expectations, using social media”. A third participant remarked about the impact of social media on children’s mental health, “Social media is very challenging and a lot of that happens outside school. But then parents see it and want the school to solve it [the problem]”. In reference to the impact of social media and inappropriate content on students in her school, a fourth participant noted, “The biggest challenge for me was a child protection issue”.

Other than mentioning the concerns around social media, a few participants referred to technology, poverty and drugs as also impacting on the mental health and wellbeing of the school community. One participant discussed the use of technology in the school and ongoing concerns and stated, “We can’t stop technology, but you can change children and

how they use technology”. Another participant mentioned, “Particularly, mental health issues... last year we had people [families] living in cars”. She added, “Mind you these parents were ice addicts and there is a lot of ice around here too, so they are all challenges”.

4.5.2.2. The Challenges of Isolation for Regional School Principals. The three participants living in regional areas mentioned the challenges of isolation such as the health and wellbeing of staff, shortage of staff and feeling excluded from the secondary principal network. The impact of isolation on the mental health of staff was a key topic of concern for the three participants in regional schools. For example, one participant highlighted the focus on the health and well-being of the staff when she stated, “Particularly in a small town when you’ve got people involving themselves in some quite intimidating behaviour, that was probably the major challenge”. A second participant remarked, “In a small town, whilst you as the employer might respect confidentiality, not everybody necessarily does. That can affect your family quite significantly”. A third participant noted in her regional school, “Along with staffing, we had some staff with mental health issues that we have had to put on indefinite leave, and another on a return-to-work plan”. A participant who had previously led a regional school commented, “They’ve [staff] had to uproot their families to live in a regional town”. She indicated further, “It is really difficult and when it [working in regional schools] didn’t work, some [staff and leaders] had to go back [to the city] because of their experiences of living in a regional town with a young family”.

Participants noted significant challenges due to taking on additional responsibilities during staff shortages. For example, one participant commented, “We are more like a tiny country school with one person who does the role of the principal’s PA, the receptionist the bookkeeper, the school nurse, so there’s a serious gap”. A second participant remarked, “How can we better support country schools’ principals because it can be very isolating. The next secondary school is nine hours away, or six hours south, so we’re not exactly close”.

One participant from a regional school expressed feeling like she was an outsider, in short, she felt excluded at secondary principal network meetings. This participant noted, “As a regional school principal, I came outside of the secondary network. As far as being part of a social network or being brought in, it is not that welcoming. It hasn’t really happened”. She added, “I’m not the only person that feels like that. That’s something that principals [secondary] and CEWA need to be aware of.”

4.5.3 Breadth of Financial and Property Management Skills and Knowledge

Other participant concerns revolved around the breadth of financial skills and experience that were needed to be successful in the role of principal in a CEWA secondary school. One participant who had a mathematics background remarked, “I’m clever with numbers and I’m a maths person, but I’m not an accountant”. She noted further, “I’m not a financial planner I haven’t done that learning”. A second participant who was previously a mathematics teacher noted, “A lack of preparation for financial leadership is just horrendous, and I am a Maths person [teacher]”. A third person who felt she lacked the basic financial skills commented, “Will I ever fully understand everything? No, schools are businesses regardless of what people say and you’re dealing with a lot of money.”

Participants commented on the need for further training to address challenges associated with financial management. For example, one participant stated, “In our principal induction, the finance team comes to talk to the principals. However, there needs to be done much more in that field”. She added, “I had to put the budget together...you’re not used to reading financial statements, but you had to prepare a financial statement”. A second participant indicated, “We had a one-hour session from the resource team, but it didn’t help me read the balance statement”. A third participant commented, “Doing a finance course that doesn't set you up for being in a school and running the finances of the school, you need to be in the school and working alongside the person who's doing the finances, the business manager”. She added, “Every school is a bit different in terms of how they do that part of it. So that's where it's very hard to do a one size fits all three-day leadership course”. Finally, a fourth participant commented on the need to have more time dedicated to financial professional learning when she said, “So I guess in terms of what I'd like to see [in leadership support], I think certainly the financial side is something that a lot of people coming into this role would like more on”.

Some participants voiced their concerns about the challenges associated with having minimal knowledge and preparation around property managing building and construction operations. As one participant indicated, “I’ve inherited a building program; so obviously that comes through the whole world of challenges because I wasn’t clear from the beginning”. She remarked further, “I had to learn very quickly all that is involved in this building. In my first week here in my school, I had to go to the state arbitration tribunal”. A second participant stated, “Overseeing the capital development and the finances...I certainly, put in the time [in that area]”. Finally, a third participant remarked, “We currently have financial challenges...we’ve had three major building projects in five years”.

4.5.4 School Compliance with Regulations

The data presented in this sub-theme are divided into two categories: the impact of time-consuming work around school compliance with state and sector regulations; and the challenges associated with educational industrial issues.

4.5.4.1 The Impact of Time-Consuming Work Around School Compliance. The majority of participants interviewed commented that the impact of compliance on the work of principals was time-consuming and laborious. For example, one participant commented, “One of the things that really threatened principals and their capacity to lead in schools is the amount of compliance”. She remarked further, “It is definitely what is driving and taking away so much of my time following up on compliance”. A second participant stated, “The biggest issue is compliance; the documentation that you need to write up about any incident in terms of mandatory reporting, that is a huge part”. When referring to different documents associated with compliance, she added, “The other big things are your annual report, your school performance report and your WACE report. Risk management is huge and very time consuming”. Finally, a third participant, while commenting on the increased compliance, noted its value, “No doubt compliance has become stronger, and there is a good thing about that, it means you need to make sure that schools have the things in place that need ticking off”.

4.5.4.2 The Challenges Associated with Industrial Issues. Some participants mentioned the challenges associated with complex industrial issues. For example, one participant expressed, “I was not familiar with regulations and compliance surrounding this particular industrial issue”. A second participant mentioned, “A major issue that I came into, transpired into a number of industrial issues. Some of those issues became quite ugly as a result of one staff member, which saw us go to a number of commissions”. A third participant stated her challenges, “Bullying, verbal abuse and the web. If there is a challenging situation in the industrial relations chain, we’ll call CEWA”. A fourth participant noted, “The challenges that have caused me the most stress... have been of an industrial nature”. Finally, a fifth participant remarked, “Challenges have been of an industrial nature [child protection] where you have one [student] who is struggling”.

4.5.5 *Principal Preparation Processes*

The data presented in this sub-theme on principal preparation processes are divided into two categories: transparency at handover time for principals; and lack of purposeful programs to support beginning principals in CEWA secondary schools.

4.5.5.1 Transparency at Handover Time for Principals. Some participants highlighted that the principal preparation process called for improved transparency during handover between the departing principal and the incoming principal. One participant remarked, “There should be an understanding of exactly what you're going to walk into”. She commented further, “I had been appointed in June as there was a principal in place that would have been a prime opportunity to have an understanding of what's going on within that school so that you are well prepared”. A second participant indicated, “As for the former principal, we are very different, and we see and do things quite differently. I haven't been in the secondary system for long, so I needed help as I don't know many secondary principals”. A third participant who felt ill prepared for a principalship role stated, “I don't know how we do it, who knows what they expect of us? Whether it happens prior, we had a tiny bit of principal's handover”. She added, “Then I had to read every week at the Board. They are the ones who are ultimately accountable”. A fourth participant noted, “Definitely coming into the role with a lack of information; might scare you off the position”. Finally, a fifth participant indicated, “There are always handovers but in the context of the school that needs to be known at a higher level”. She added. “You go into a school and always inherit things that you didn't know about when you applied for the position”.

Some participants noted how they felt unprepared to deal with inherited issues when commencing their role as principals. In particular, one participant commented, “There had been a dispute with the neighbours over it [building] and maybe from the Shire”. She further remarked, “My first week of work here at my school and, as I said before there's nothing that can prepare you for these things”. A second participant noted, “Preparation needed for taking over a new school is the changing landscape [of the school]. If there is anything in the context of the school that is known at a higher level...people [the new principals] need to be put in the picture”. A third participant affirmed commencing blind to the role when she stated, “Definitely coming in with a lack of information [about the new school]. I didn't have the information”. She added, “People [School Administrators] thought that the information

might scare you off from the position”. Finally, a fourth participant indicated, “I was thrown in the deep end, and it wasn’t transparent what I was walking into”.

4.5.5.2 Lack of Purposeful Programs to Support Beginning Principals in CEWA Secondary Schools. A number of participants commencing their principalship journey in CEWA secondary schools emphasised the need for purposeful programs for beginning principals, in order to support them and sustain them in their new role. For example, one participant remarked, “There needs to be something far more structured for beginning principals that is sustainable. It shouldn't just start with the Aspiring and Established Programs”. A second participant noted, “I suppose the Aspiring and Established principal programs help but nothing where you really need it [as a principal]”. A third participant offered her advice when she commented, “A lot more work needs to be put in the formation and particularly once you are employed as a principal”. She noted further, “I really feel that CEWA needed to spend more time with us, a prime opportunity to get you together to talk you through things”. A fourth participant who had more experience as a principal stated, “I worry about the support that we give to newly-appointed principals ... it is not really preparing them for the life as a principal”. Finally, a fifth participant indicated, “I said this to [the CEWA consultant] the other week, the downside of that [the preparation program] is that there's very little for beginning principals. And it's actually the time you need it most”. She added, “There needs to be something far more structured for beginning principals”.

Some participants who were more experienced in their role had expressed appreciation for the induction programs which they had undertaken in earlier years. Many participants, however, who were new to their role remarked there was a need to improve the scope of management skills and knowledge within the CEWA induction programs. These participants indicated having prior understanding of the role and being prepared for the new principalship role are critical, in order to cope with the demands that come with the role. For example, one participant commented, “The downside of being prepared is that there's little [basic structure] preparation for beginning principals”. She stated further, “Three days here [CEWA office] in November was more about the nuts and bolts of principalship. A second participant remarked, “It is an understanding of exactly what you're going to walk into, in order that you are well prepared before commencing”. A third participant seeking more support in her role as principal commented, “We’re crying out for some more structured formation in principal

leadership”. A fourth participant, pleading for purposeful quality professional learning for beginning principals, commented, “It’s really, really challenging”.

A couple of participants expressed frustration with the lack of support in their earlier stages of their principalship. For example, one participant stated, “I was just really frustrated that once again, the beginning principal stuff [program] had been cancelled. I feel like that is something [purposeful induction programs] that's really lacking”. She noted further, “I was given this mentor who hasn't even emailed me this year, let alone called or come to see me”. Another participant who was beginning her career as a principal noted the support she needed was overlooked. She stated, “I felt that someone probably should just have come out to see me, if not once a term maybe twice a term, if possible”.

4.5.6 Stereotyping Females as Principals in CEWA Secondary Schools

The data presented in this sub-theme on stereotyping females as principals in CEWA secondary schools are divided into two categories: gender discrimination; and the lack of recognition of the value and effectiveness of the leadership characteristics of female principals.

4.5.6.1 Gender Discrimination. A number of participants spoke of the challenges associated with various forms of gender discrimination as female leaders. For example, a few of participants remarked that they felt discrimination from men they needed to work with at a professional level, such as members of the school board, an architect’s building consultant and certain male principals of the Catholic Secondary Principal Association. As an example, one participant remarked, “As female principals, our strengths are different to some males. It’s interesting because there's also at board level, where a male member addressed me as Missy, ‘What do you think about that Missy’? I call it small man syndrome”. She added, “I don't know whether it's a lack of their own confidence, or they feel that I'm a threat to them? I don't know that someone would have done that to another male principal”. Another participant made reference to her school architect’s middle-aged European male building consultant, when she remarked, “There is one guy, he treats me and another staff member as if we were ‘dingbats’, he thinks we know nothing”. She added, “Huge arrogance, just because we are women in leadership, he doesn’t even want to be handing over the knowledge”.

Participants also had remarked that they felt dismissed and marginalised by some male CEWA secondary principals. For example, one participant remarked, “There are some

males [principals] out there that still believe that we [female principals] are the weaker sex and will try to intimidate or perhaps power play with you". A second participant commented, "I'm going to be honest with you, it's a boys' club...certainly when I go the Catholic Schools Principals Association (CSPA) meetings". She added, "They all know each other, they went to school together, they played football and don't necessarily sit next to the women. There's always that generation of boys that will only see men". A third participant stated, "Some older male principals [in CEWA secondary schools] are almost untouchable, they sort of can do what they like". Finally, a fourth participant reaffirmed her opinion that principalship should not be gender biased even though gender discrimination exists, "There should not be any gender bias nor distinction when a principal of a CEWA secondary principal is appointed".

4.5.6.2 Lack of Recognition of the Value and Effectiveness of the Leadership

Characteristics of Female Principals. Some participants suggested that the value and effectiveness of the leadership characteristics of women are not always recognised. Some participants believed that female principals were more suited to the current leadership climate where interpersonal skills and emotional skills are paramount. These participants believe that to lead as a female principal in a CEWA secondary school does not mean having to adopt the leadership characteristics of men but accept the suitability of the females' leadership characteristics. For example, one participant remarked, "I actually think the current leadership framework or climate that we find ourselves in, is probably more suited to women than men". A second participant stated, "Women are very aware of how to make changes within constraints of our belief system...and get the best out of it for our children." She noted further, "Women are better at seeing the individual". A third participant indicated, "I know that there would be some men who would be drawn to women's nurturing qualities". She added, "I think the emotional intelligence characteristics of women is stronger than that of men". A fourth participant commented, "There was an expectation that I'd be more sympathetic to their [staff] needs". She added, "One of the teachers has come back full time, she's still breastfeeding a baby and wanted to discuss working arrangements. Would you have had the same conversation with the male principal?"

4.5.7 Summary

The participants in this study recognised that there were many challenges that they dealt with on a daily basis due to the multifaceted nature of the principal role. Participants

highlighted the breadth and depth of knowledge and skillset required to be a successful principal. The participants often referred to the issues which centred around parents, staff, financial skills and knowledge, and the lack of time to adequately fulfil the role. Participants who were experienced in their role agreed that the face of education is quite different from when some came into the role years ago.

Most participants acknowledged that the impact of social media, technology, poverty and drugs on mental health and well-being of their students and families was a challenging aspect of their role. Participants living in regional areas mentioned challenges with regard to isolation, the health and wellbeing of staff, shortage and retention of staff, and feeling excluded from the secondary principal network meetings. The impact of isolation on mental health was a key topic of concern for all participants in regional schools.

Other concerns revolved around the breadth of financial skills and knowledge required to be successful in the role of principal in a CEWA secondary school. Specifically, some participants highlighted challenges associated with having minimal knowledge and preparation around financial skills, property management and building and construction operations. In particular, participants new to the role emphasised the need for more support in the breadth of financial skills and expertise. Most female participants highlighted challenges associated with compliance requirements. Participants felt overwhelmed by the amount of work involved with regard to the paperwork around compliance. They commented on how time consuming the process was.

Most participants new to the role mentioned as a major concern the lack of purposeful induction programs. These participants were critical of the current induction programs offered by CEWA. They believed more purposeful preparation programs were needed to manage school administration and assist them in their overall leadership role. Of particular concern was the lack of support, notably in the operational areas of the role, such as financial and property management and dealing with the complexities of industrial issues.

Participants in regional secondary schools experienced specific challenges, in particular when it came to isolation and lack of support in their role as principals. Some participants expressed that the lack of continuing and substantial leadership support caused anxiety. Other challenges associated with isolation were the health and wellbeing of staff, shortage of staff and feeling excluded at secondary principal network meetings.

Another challenge for many participants was that they felt professionally unprepared for dealing with unexpected situations relating to educational management and industrial issues. Some participants felt that there was a need for improved processes and transparency

at handover time. They highlighted the need for good communication and transparency with regard to inherited issues prior to commencing their role as principal.

Some participants highlighted challenges faced around gender discrimination and the recognition of the value and effectiveness of female principal leadership characteristics. Certain participants spoke about various forms of gender discrimination from people such as board members and male principals. On another note, some participants referred to the lack of recognition of the value and effectiveness of the leadership characteristics of women. The participants felt that their contributions as female principals to education in CEWA secondary schools were noteworthy, especially in the area of emotional intelligence. Furthermore, some participants believed that the challenge that came with the current leadership framework [complex mental health and wellbeing issues] was more suited to female principals rather than male principals.

4.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present the results of the instrumental case study examining the personal and professional experiences of female principals in Catholic composite and secondary schools in Western Australia. The results are organised into four themes.

Theme Number	Theme
1	Factors that encourage female educational leaders to become principals in Catholic composite and secondary schools in Western Australia.
2	The expectations and demands of being a female principal Catholic composite and secondary school in Western Australia.
3	Factors that support and sustain a female principal in Catholic composite and secondary schools in Western Australia.
4	Challenges female principals face as leaders in Catholic composite and secondary schools in Western Australia.

The first theme examined three key factors that encouraged female educational leaders to become principals in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia. The second theme explored four key factors regarding the expectations and demands of being a female principal in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia. The third theme highlighted four key factors that supported and sustained female principals in CEWA secondary schools. Finally, the fourth theme outlined six key challenges that female principals faced as leaders in Catholic secondary schools in Western Australia. The next chapter, Discussion of Research Results provides an interpretation of the data presented for each of the four research questions.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion of Results

5.1 Introduction

This study explored the personal and professional experiences of female principals in Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) composite and secondary schools. The discussion of results is divided into four sections based on the four research questions.

1. What factors encouraged female educational leaders to become principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools?
2. What are the expectations and demands of being a female principal in CEWA composite and secondary schools?
3. What factors support and sustain a female principal in CEWA composite and secondary schools?
4. What challenges do female principals face as leaders in CEWA composite and secondary schools?

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the qualitative data collected through individual semi-structured interviews and document searches. The discussion is also in reference to the review of literature presented in Chapter Two and the four areas of Literature, Leadership Models, Leadership in Catholic schools, Women in Leadership and Female principals. Table 5.1 outlines the structure of Chapter Five.

Table 5.1

Outline of Chapter Five: Discussion of Research Results

Section	Section Heading
5.1	Introduction
5.2	Factors that encourage female educational leaders to become principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools
5.3	Summary
5.4	Expectations and demands of being a female principal in CEWA composite and secondary schools
5.5	Summary
5.6	Factors that support and sustain a female principal in CEWA composite and secondary schools

5.7	Summary
5.8	Challenges that female principals face as leaders in CEWA composite and secondary schools
5.9	Summary
5.10	Conclusion

5.2 Factors that Encourage Female Educational Leaders to Become Principals in CEWA Composite and Secondary Schools

This section discusses the factors that encourage female educational leaders to become principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools. The discussion is divided into four subsections: direct encouragement from significant people; opportunities to undertake acting principalship roles; encouragement from family members and family role models; and a passion for education and a commitment to making a difference for students.

5.2.1 Direct Encouragement from Significant People

Participants were able to provide insight regarding significant people who encouraged them to become principals. In particular, participants highlighted the importance of direct encouragement from former principals, members of religious orders, CEWA personnel and colleagues. Participants commented on the critical support of former principals who provided them with leadership opportunities and responsibilities. This support was particularly evident during the role of deputy principal, which gave participants confidence to consider a principal's position. A small number of these former principals were members of the Sisters of Mercy and a Christian Brother. All were considered crucial in influencing and supporting the participants in their leadership journey. Such an experience accords with the views of Mochizuki (2014) who stated that the notion of principals seeing potential in women is evident where principals offer women leadership opportunities and encourage them to take on responsibilities.

Some participants remarked that the Sisters of Mercy had a strong sense of collegiality and leadership. These participants noted that the Sisters were important for promoting strong female leaders. Above all, these participants highlighted that the Sisters were recognised for supporting teachers and leaders in the area of wellbeing and providing

professional coaching. The support of and dependence on key people is integral for females to fulfil the role of principal (Hansen, 2014).

Participants noted that CEWA personnel such as the School Improvement Advisors (SIAs) were important for encouragement, recognition and mentorship. The SIAs not only encouraged participants to become principals but were at times, supportive mentors whilst in their leadership positions. Women in leadership who feel they are not confident about their leadership abilities need supportive mentorship from key influential individuals (Barber, 2013).

Some participants commented on the encouragement received from colleagues. The influence of colleagues was instrumental in helping participants develop a self-belief that they were able to progress to the next step of their professional leadership journey. Some participants identified that the most powerful influence can come from those with whom they work most closely, who recognise their talent and encourage them. The participants' experiences were reflected in the literature which identified colleagues or mentors who encouraged females by acknowledging their abilities and communicating a strong message that they are talented (Bay, 2020; Mochizuki, 2014).

5.2.2 Opportunities to Undertake Acting Principalship Roles

A number of the participants commented very favourably on the opportunity to undertake acting principalship roles, which were instrumental in setting them on the path to principalship. Participants noted the challenging aspects of an acting principalship. However, they believed the experience gave them an insight into the nature of the role and helped to build in them a sense of confidence, which enabled them to progress to the next step of their professional leadership journey. In particular, the experience provided participants with a realisation that they had the potential to take on the principalship role.

For all the importance that some participants placed on the value of an acting principalship, there appears to be little literature that explicitly links the notion of an acting principalship role as a means of encouraging women to become secondary school principals in Australia. There is limited literature on models such as co-principalship (Marks, 2013) or acting principalship in general (Cannon, 2004). This paucity of literature is concerning given the emphasis placed on this experience by the participants. Aspiring female secondary principals should be given leadership opportunities and also have an opportunity to act in the principalship role, as it may provide them with valuable skills to refer them for the role.

5.2.3 Encouragement from Family Members and Family Role Models in Their Principalship Journey

A number of participants specifically commented on the importance of family members in terms of encouraging them to become principals. In particular, participants who were married emphasised that their husbands were supportive of the leadership work and were their main source of encouragement, especially those husbands who stayed at home. These participants commented that they could not have done their role without their husbands' encouragement.

There is evidence in the literature of the importance of a partner's support. O'Neil and Domingo (2016), for example, noted that partners provided much needed support and had a significant influence on the lives of women in leadership roles and the way they valued themselves, and attained their beliefs which ultimately made them successful in their career. Sayce and Lavery (2016) noted that female principals appreciated their husbands' encouragement where both partners shared the responsibility of domestic work, which was seen as a team effort. This situation was particularly the case for the female principals on a challenging school day (Sayce & Lavery, 2016).

Some participants were encouraged to take on leadership positions through female and male family role models such as grandmothers and aunts, who were themselves school principals, and a father who had instilled a positive attitude for leadership. These particular family members had an understanding of the nature of the leadership role, responsibility, time commitment and provided the participants with the encouragement needed to pursue the principalship role. Women's leadership successes can be due to the influence of significant family members and social background (Piterman, 2008). That is, family attitudes and social environment can be key to women's leadership aspirations, from childhood through adolescence to adulthood (Piterman, 2008). Only one participant, however, commented on the importance of a parent, who in her case was her father. This fact was a little surprising given that the literature acknowledges the significant importance of both parents as having an influence on the lives of women, specifically in the way they value themselves and attain their beliefs (Bay, 2020; Fennell, 2008; Mochizuki, 2014).

In some cultures, being brought up in a privileged environment, elite women or women with secure financial backgrounds are most able to take advantage of leadership opportunities (O'Neil & Domingo, 2016). Women's choices with regard to leadership opportunities could be influenced or constrained by factors such as the social class and educational backgrounds of parents (Fennell, 2008). Financial and cultural background was

not mentioned by participants, possibly because they all originated from white, middle-class backgrounds. There was limited cultural and socio-economic diversity within the participants, which may require addressing by educational sectors in future.

5.2.4 Motivated by a Passion for Education and a Commitment to Making a Difference for Students in Their Schools

An important contributing factor for participants becoming secondary principals was a passion for education and a commitment to making a difference for students in their school. Participants noted that their passion for education was manifested by leading improvement and change in education and driven by a sincere desire to improve academic results as well as the well-being of all students. The participants' responses resonated strongly with the literature, whereby it was highlighted that a female principal's prime motivation was her love and devotion towards students and education, with an emphasis on students' progress and learning results (Avgeri, 2015; Murakami & Tornsen, 2017). Further, Shaked et al. (2018) noted that a female principal's passion and commitment to education enhanced partnerships, empowered others, delivered effective leadership practices, and increased the possibility of having a positive influence on student outcomes.

Participants commented that they were passionate about education and were committed to engaging with students, lifelong education and learning and working with staff in a collaborative manner, in order to improve students' performance. Participants expressly indicated that their leadership approaches were servant, instructional and transformational (Zacharakis, 2017). Participants remarked that they have strong nurturing and caring qualities. In this respect, Cummings (2005) stated that women take on a more interpersonal style of leadership and tend to be more efficient and better at problem solving than men. Appelbaum et al. (2003) noted that female leaders had strong communication skills, the ability to be good listeners, demonstrated empathy, had good negotiation and conflict resolution skills, and had sound interpersonal skills. Participants also believed that the emotional intelligence of women is stronger than men. However, this belief does stand in contrast to research by Fischer et al. (2018), whose study of more than 5000 participants found no gender differences in a range of target emotions to various stimuli.

Participants remarked that as female principals, they felt they are better at seeing the individual and being sympathetic of others. Participants also added that they are driven to transform schools by their interpersonal and emotional skills. There is evidence in the

literature which noted that women are more transformational than men (Munir & Aboidullah, 2018). In terms of leadership styles, female leadership strongly aligns with a transformational leadership style which emphasises leaders' ability to guide, inspire, stimulate, motivate and support their followers (Sebastian & Moon, 2018). Women excel at particular elements of transformational leadership such as the development of others, inspiration and motivation, relationship building, collaboration and teamwork (Zacharakis, 2017).

Participants emphasised that as instructional leaders, they were aware of how to make change in education and get the best out of their students. Costello (2015) noted that instructional leadership is effective when principals interact and recognise the expertise of other educators and work collaboratively in order to encourage shared responsibility by inviting staff to share resources, materials and ideas at staff meetings. Participants commented that as principals they were driven by their desire to work with staff and young people, ensure that their students are engaged at school and instructing students as the future of the country.

5.3 Summary

The discussion of results that encourage female educational leaders to become principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools focused on four factors: direct encouragement from significant people; opportunities to undertake acting principalship roles; encouragement from family members and family role models; and a passion for education and a commitment to making a difference for students. Participants highlighted the importance of direct encouragement from former principals, members of religious orders, CEWA personnel and colleagues. This positive impact of significant others on female success is evident in the literature (Barber, 2013; Bay, 2020; Hansen, 2014; Mochizuki, 2014).

Participants commented on the importance of acting principalship roles as a means of encouraging them to take on the principalship. This observation is not strongly identified in the literature. Support from family members was seen as an important motivating factor for leadership success. Perhaps surprisingly, only one participant mentioned a parent. Given the strength of literature on parental support for females (Bay, 2020; Fennell, 2008) a greater degree of parental influence might have been expected. Finally, participants voiced that their passion for education and making a positive difference was an important contributing factor which inspired them to become a principal. The literature reflects female principals' passion

and commitment to education (Haim et al., 2018), so this result is no surprise. The leadership attributes and qualities of female principals aligned well with a transformational style of leadership identified in the literature (Appelbaum, et al., 2003; Costello, 2015; Cummings, 2005; Munir & Aboidullah, 2018; Sebastian & Moon, 2018; Zacharakis, 2017).

5.4 Expectations and Demands of Being a Female Principal in a CEWA Composite and Secondary Schools

This section discusses the participants' expectations and demands of being a principal in CEWA composite and secondary schools. The discussion is divided into five subsections: expectations and demands of internal stakeholders; expectations and demands of external stakeholders; expectations of Parish priests; balancing career and family; and high self-expectations and self-criticism.

5.4.1 Expectations and Demands of Internal Stakeholders

Many participants highlighted that the expectations and demands of internal stakeholders such as parents and staff were of concern. Participants acknowledged that parents had become more demanding over the last ten years. Coughlan (2009) noted that for most principals, the parent's role has changed from compliant volunteer to critical and informed partner, effectively changing their relationship with the school.

Participants commented that they felt emotionally drained by experiencing demanding situations such as families in crisis and the expectation of parents. However, they also commented that parents saw them as nurturing and compassionate principals. Udomah (2016) suggested that most female principals acknowledged pastoral leadership within a school, which emphasises the value of nourishing and protecting others such as parents, students and staff. While the participants were compassionate leaders, they also found the expectations and demands of parents difficult.

Some participants remarked that they had parents at their school from a range of cultural backgrounds, some of whom had differing perceptions of women in principalship and their capabilities to make decisions. In particular, participants noted that some parents assumed the principal was male, and they were not accepting of a female in authority. Smith and Hale (2002) also noted that some parents who were unhappy with circumstances at school thought that women principals were easier to manipulate than male principals and attempted to approach them in a negative manner.

Smith and Hale (2002) highlighted that not only do parents hold different expectations for women principals, but teachers also hold different expectations for women principals compared with male principals. Of concern for many participants were long serving senior staff members who had limited external experience of other schools. Participants highlighted that these senior staff members often lacked experience because they had not experienced involvement with other models of administration. Participants also commented that some staff members were demanding and were sometimes unwilling to change old habits. Starr (2011) noted that principals have become aware of increased resistance from staff when change requires to “move out of their comfort zone and relinquish long held values or beliefs and established routines” (p. 647).

5.4.2 Expectations and Demands of External Stakeholders

All participants acknowledged their accountability to external stakeholders, such as state and national education bodies. In particular, participants remarked that compliance and risk management were necessary, but excessive to the point that it had become extremely difficult to manage the associated workload. Participants new to the principalship role believed that there was an unrealistic expectation by external stakeholders for them to solve all problems associated with education and business management. However, the smooth operation of a school requires the effective managerial function of the principal (Bush et al., 2010). Sayce (2014) suggests that principals in particular, are required to balance the demands of the managerial responsibilities of the position and the educational expectations of improving the school’s learning and teaching practices.

Participants noted that they are accountable as principals to meet successful student outcomes. Such accountability can weigh heavily on the participants in their role as principals. The participants’ responses resonated with the research of Leithwood and Riehl (2003), who found that the demands and pressure of policy directives, such as curriculum standards, achievement benchmarks, and other programmatic requirements, create complex and unpredictable school requirements. This issue comes as no surprise as it has been found that the burden of educational administration felt by principals consists of escalating administration and accountability coupled with diminishing autonomy to act locally (Coughlan, 2009).

5.4.3 *Expectations of Parish Priests*

All participants professed their commitment to supporting the mission and ethos of the Catholic Church, together with their allegiance to the school parish, both on a professional and personal level. However, despite their commitment to ensuring that the Catholic identity and its teaching were prioritised, some participants found the expectations of the parish priest challenging. Participants commented on the demanding expectations of maintaining a good relationship with their parish priests. Some participants also commented that some expectations from their parish priests were unreasonable. Participants remarked that expectations ranged from the parish priest having his meals cooked to other additional commitments to parish duties which were outside the responsibilities of the principal. Further, participants observed that priests frequently viewed women in a traditional sense as mothers and caregivers. Belmonte and Cranston (2009) observed that many clergy can seem sceptical of the capacities of female principals.

In 1999, Holohan noted that while Catholic principals and the clergy attempt to demonstrate collaborative approaches to school leadership, often differences can arise from priests' traditional understandings of leadership. Twenty-one years later, participants continue to express their concerns that not much has changed with regard to priests' traditional understanding of educational leadership, especially as far as the role of women is concerned. McLaughlin (2002) also observed the burgeoning demands on the Catholic principal's role of de facto faith community leaders. Even so, participants still noted that the priest and the church community could draw them into other parish commitments in addition to their responsibilities as principals. In line with this perspective, it has been reported that it is the discordant worldviews and expectations and interpretations of the clergy about the role and mission of Catholic principals that leads to the main tension in the relationship between principal and clergy (Coughlan, 2009).

Participants remarked that there were significant demands for female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools, given the shortage of priests to support students in a secondary school setting. In particular, participants from regional schools commented that it was often difficult to find priests willing to work with secondary students. Participants noted that they often needed to develop a roster system for priests to be available for their schools. However, participants also highlighted that there was an expectation by the school community to find a priest willing and able to engage with young people in their school. Coughlan (2009) confirmed that the links between the parish and the principal are more

tenuous than in the past, where the priest now has responsibility for a number of parish communities with less time to work in schools.

5.4.4 *Balancing Career and Family*

For many participants the act of balancing family and work commitments was demanding. In particular, participants who were mothers emphasised that they felt a sense of guilt as they tried to juggle the demands of their role as principal and finding time to be with their own children. Heath (2012) supported the participants' reflections indicating that working women 'acknowledge the guilt' that comes with being a working parent.

Participants who lacked time to fulfil the role of motherhood noted how the lack of time impacted on their mental health and wellbeing. McGoldrick (2005) highlighted that many working mothers were overcome by childcare responsibilities. That, combined with domestic and work responsibilities had given rise to feelings of stress, tiredness, and energy depletion for many women. It has been found that women who juggled multiple roles at work and at home, often under tight time restraints, are prone to health problems, stress, anxiety, and other negative outcomes (Chawla & Sharma, 2019). It has also been reported that when negotiating dual roles women, particularly working mothers, are at higher risk of facing potential impacts on their stress levels, health, and well-being (Parker, 2015). In particular, women who are not able to have a work-life balance are more inclined to have work-family conflict, less job satisfaction, and display a tendency to give up due to emotional exhaustion (Heath, 2012).

Participants who were not married, or who had no children, commented that they were aware of and sympathetic to the additional pressures and complexities for female principals with children. These participants remarked that they did not experience the same pressures at home. Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2005) reported that most female principals believed that the imbalance regarding the demands of work and home has led to women's feelings of conflict. Above all, female principals have to deal with work and family conflicts as they struggle to hold positions of leadership (Hansen, 2014).

5.4.5 *High Self-Expectations and Self-Criticism*

Some participants admitted that they had placed high expectations on themselves and were self-critical due to their own personal ambition to lead with perfection. These participants portrayed themselves as leaders who did not want to disappoint nor let anyone

down. They defined themselves as their own hardest taskmasters.

Participants commented that as female principals, they should be a leader who leads more like a male than a female. Participants compared themselves with male principals or how others (school community members) viewed them. This comparison could be a factor in explaining why these participants had high self-expectations and were often overly self-critical. Moreover, female principals who adopt stereotypically male behaviours to compete with male secondary principals are disadvantaged and will suffer negative evaluations and suspicions regarding their effectiveness for violating female gender norms (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Heilman 2001; Heilman et al. 2004). As a result, female principals are often unaware that they are victims of gender bias (Nikolaou, 2017).

5.5 Summary

The discussion of results on the expectations and demands of being a female principal of a CEWA composite and secondary school focused on five issues: expectations and demands of internal stakeholders; expectations and demands of internal stakeholders; expectations of parish priests; balancing career and family; and high self-expectations and self-criticism. Participants noted that they had been confronted by parents from different cultural backgrounds who had differing perceptions of women in principalship. Participants' senior leadership team and staff who were long serving were often reluctant to adopt change. Such concerns highlighting the expectations and demands of both parents and staff within the life of the school are reflected in the literature (Coughlan, 2009; Smith & Hale, 2002; Starr, 2011).

Participants commented on the demands and expectations of state and national education bodies regarding compliance and risk management associated with the principal's administrative role (Coughlan, 2009; Earl & Timperley, 2009; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Sayce, 2014). Despite the participants' commitment to ensuring that the Catholic identity and teaching was prioritised, there were challenges in maintaining a good working relationship with some parish priests. In addition, participants were troubled by the shortage of priests for CEWA composite and secondary schools. The above-mentioned concerns are reflected in the literature (Coughlan, 2009; Holohan, 1999; McLaughlin, 2002). As women, the act of balancing family and work commitments was demanding for the participants in their role as principal (Hansen, 2014; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005; Paddock, 1981). Some participants were self-critical and viewed themselves as less able than their male counterparts

as principals of secondary schools, which accords with the literature (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Filut et al., 2017; Heilman, 2001; Heilman et al., 2004; Nikolaou, 2017).

5.6 *Factors that Support and Sustain a Female Principal in CEWA Composite and Secondary Schools*

The factors that support and sustain a female principal in CEWA composite and secondary schools are discussed under four subsections. These subsections are: significant people; suitable mentors; CEWA leadership programs; and previous experience as a CEWA consultant.

5.6.1 *Significant People*

All participants acknowledged valuable support received from significant people such as fellow principals (male and female), members of their leadership teams and particularly, their personal assistants. Participants noted that these significant people provided personal, professional and moral support. Funk and Polnick (2005) highlighted support from other female and male leaders as critical to the success of women in leadership. Even though all participants agreed that their personal assistant was the person who supported them the most and to whom they felt they could confide, no mention could be found in the literature of the significant role of these personnel.

5.6.2 *Suitable Mentors*

Participants emphasised that sourcing a suitable mentor is important at any stage of the principalship journey. Some participants preferred to select their own mentors, whilst others accessed the support of their School Improvement Advisor (SIA) for leadership support and mentorship regarding school-related matters. Barber (2013) advocated for the provision of supportive mentors as they are important for women in leadership in order to feel confident about their leadership abilities. Female principals who had a mentor themselves often take on a mentorship role for others whom they supervised or informally supported (McManus, 2018).

However, despite the importance that participants placed on having a suitable mentor, some participants expressed concern that they had limited access to mentors when commencing their principalship journey. Previous research noted that women leaders expressed the desire for more mentoring as they had limited access to productive mentoring relationships, including the need for support and encouragement from a mentor (Jarmon,

2014). In particular, Barber (2013) stated that mentors inspire, challenge and encourage the female principal to undertake new experiences or face new challenges. Mentors are important for female principals in order to sustain successful and effective administrative and leadership positions (Perkins, 2011). Principals need assistance from others such as, mentors who can bestow trust and provide support, guidance and constructive feedback as they develop the necessary skills to fulfil the responsibilities of the position (Gettys et al., 2010).

5.6.3 Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) Leadership Programs

Some experienced participants acknowledged the value of certain CEWA leadership programs, which supported them in their principalship. In particular, participants who had been principals for a number of years commented that a previously structured induction program was timely and incredibly useful. Participants believed that opportunities to attend network days at Leaders' Forums were beneficial, noting that the forums were purposeful and provided a supportive opportunity to network with other principals. In this regard, it is important for female principals to have more opportunities and access to leadership training and professional development so that they can attain the necessary skills and knowledge, which supports and sustains their leadership journey (Women & Leadership Australia, 2018).

5.6.4 Previous Experience as a CEWA Consultant

Certain participants found that the opportunity to work at CEWA as an education consultant was a key factor in supporting and sustaining their principalship journey in CEWA secondary schools and composite schools. These participants highly recommended the opportunity to work at CEWA as a consultant prior to taking on a principalship, commenting that the experience was extremely valuable and instrumental in providing them with an overview and understanding of education at the Catholic system level. Participants gained valuable experiences, commenting that learning about the process of Catholic education in Western Australia was most beneficial for the role of principal. Participants suggested that their previous experience as a CEWA consultant was a stepping-stone to a principalship appointment. There was minimal literature highlighting the benefits and advantages for potential female principals gained from working at system level, such as CEWA. Spesia (2016) noted that systematic support for principals, from central Catholic schools' offices, can help leaders in their principalship journey in secondary schools. However, aspirants are not given the opportunity to learn about and experience alternative approaches (Bush, 2018).

5.7 Summary

This discussion of results on the factors that support and sustain a female principal in CEWA composite and secondary schools identified a number of common and unique themes across four subsections: significant people; suitable mentors; CEWA leadership programs; and previous experience as a CEWA consultant. Participants noted varying degrees of support from significant people such as those who had supported them professionally, personally and spiritually. A critical factor in the success of female leaders included support from other female and male leaders (Funk & Polnick, 2005).

Participants commented on the importance of having a good mentor in order to be successful in their role as principal. The participants' reflections were evident in the literature, which highlights the importance of mentors for female principals in order to sustain successful, effective administrative and leadership positions (Barber, 2013; Gettys et al., 2010; Jarmon, 2014; McManus, 2018; Perkins, 2011). Participants noted the value of CEWA induction programs for principals and commented positively about Leaders' Forums for networking with other principals. Participants who had worked at system level remarked that the experience gained whilst working as a consultant at CEWA was an invaluable stepping-stone for principalship appointments.

5.8 Challenges that Female Principals Face as Leaders in CEWA Composite and Secondary Schools

This section discusses the challenges that participants face as principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools. These challenges are discussed under nine subsections: insufficient time to deal with the multifaceted nature of the role; challenges around parental issues and staff concerns; challenges of safety, health and wellbeing of the school community; challenges of working in regional schools; lack of financial and property management skills and knowledge; compliance and regulation; principal preparation processes and gender discrimination towards female principals, and lack of recognition of the value and effectiveness of the leadership characteristics of female principal.

5.8.1 Insufficient Time to Deal with the Multifaceted Nature of the Role

Participants expressed that it was challenging to find time to attend to the many dimensions of the principals' role. According to participants, the workload associated with the role of principal was a twenty-four-hour commitment. Wise (2015) noted that there is a lack of time for principals to attend to immediate matters, or complete tasks that are time

consuming, because of the challenges that come with being both a manager and an instructional leader. The amount of work associated with the principal's role implies that as principal, "she has too many responsibilities to be able to do an adequate job" (Wise, 2015 p.111).

Apart from the challenges associated with documentation and report writing, participants commented that the main challenges appeared to be insufficient time to complete the range of designated administration tasks in their role as principal. Participants noted that being a school principal came with a huge and demanding workload, which included attendance at an extraordinary number of meetings and various night-time functions. Biagi (2015) stated that within the multifaceted nature of the school leadership role, principals are required to attend, respond to, and think about a vast array of activities that are all time consuming and both physically and emotionally demanding.

5.8.2 Challenges Around Parental Issues and Staff Concerns

Not only could parents and staff, as internal stakeholders, be demanding for participants, but these people could also be a challenge. Participants commented that the biggest challenge for them as principals was managing parental issues such as complaints, family issues and parents' lack of resilience. Participants remarked that issues such as parental complaints could at times, threaten the reputation of their schools. Participants highlighted a number of family issues that they needed to manage. These family issues included, managing young parents with drug addictions, the management of transgender/gender variant individuals and the management of mental health protocols of parents and students. Participants remarked that some parents lacked resilience and there was a need to educate them and their children about resilience, as well as the values and goals set by the schools. Wise (2015) stated that there are challenges in schools related to the home and community environment including poverty, gangs, bullying, apathy of parents and students, and the home language of parents being other than English. Parent involvement is a challenge, where they are not being accountable for their children's behaviour, respect for authority, and basic skill development (Wise, 2015).

Participants also observed that some staff members within their school could be of concern and hence pose a challenge. Beam et al. (2016) noted that the role of the principal was to maintain a day-to-day interaction with teachers, including classroom observations, formal evaluations, teacher meetings, professional development, and general supervision of staff. Participants remarked that they had a variety of challenges ranging from difficult long-

standing staff members who were underperforming to attracting suitable staff to teach in regional schools. Eller and Eller (2016) noted that principals face many challenges, among which these challenges are preserving a positive climate when one or several teachers are resistant or difficult. In addition to managing challenging staff members, participants in regional areas had difficulties in recruiting and retaining suitable teachers in their schools. Pietsch (2013) noted that, apart from difficulties in recruiting staff in their rural schools, it was the responsibility of principals to guide relatively inexperienced staff who were novices in their positions and required high levels of professional support for early career teachers.

5.8.3 Challenges of Safety, Health and Wellbeing of the School Community

Participants commented that they faced challenges regarding the safety, health and wellbeing of the school community. Participants noted that the day-to-day running of the school and the safety of the students were at times, intense. One challenge remarked on included the impact of social media issues on the mental health and wellbeing of the school community, hence a need to educate parents and students about the school code of conduct and the behavioural expectations when using social media. Although powerless when it came to stopping the inappropriate use of technology, participants agreed that for the sake of child protection, they have the power to change the way children use technology. Biagi (2015) highlighted that there are many challenges for principals associated with technology etiquette at school such as the management and usage of mobile phones and the internet. Mahfouz (2020) noted that managing the use of social media in schools was a stressful part of the principals' role, specifically challenging for principals when social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are used by stakeholders and accessed by the public.

Not only did participants highlight their concerns around social media, but they also referred to poverty and drug related issues of parents. Participants commented that these issues also impacted on the mental health and well-being of their school community. Participants remarked that they were especially concerned about families who were living in cars, parents who were ice addicts and the easy availability of drugs in the community. Wise, (2015) noted that issues such as poverty, crime, limited parent involvement and ready availability of illegal drugs were a challenge for principals. Another challenge for school principals is that children in poverty-stricken communities, and in need of mental health services, often remain untreated and the lack of appropriate resources available to them make it difficult for principals to implement and sustain effective services (Cappella et al., 2008).

5.8.4 Challenges of Working in Regional Schools

Participants who were working in regional schools commented on the challenges associated with working in isolation from metropolitan or nearby schools. In particular, participants remarked that there was no escape from the eyes of the community when leading and teaching in small regional secondary schools. Participants noted that part of this challenge was the intimidating behaviour from parents in regional schools. Participants commented that these various challenges could also have a profound impact on members of their own families and their mental health and safety. Participants further highlighted similar challenges that were shared by members of their staff who lived in the community. Pietsch (2013) commented that principals and their families living in local townships were often confronted by parents with complaints, both during and after school hours.

A further challenge for participants in regional areas were the additional operational responsibilities they undertook due to a shortage of staff. Participants from regional schools also commented that the geographical isolation from other nearby CEWA composite and secondary schools made it a challenge to seek face-to-face support and access networking opportunities. Sayce (2014) noted that regional principals experienced feelings of indirect exclusion from the secondary network of principals, noting that there are varying degrees of disappointment experienced by these principals in the support offered by professional associations.

5.8.5 Breadth of Financial and Property Management Skills and Knowledge

Some participants highlighted challenges associated with having minimal knowledge and preparation around financial skills, property management, and building and construction operations. In particular, participants new to the role emphasised the need for more support in the breadth of financial skills and expertise required. Spillane and Lee (2014) stated that the principals' lack of knowledge to carry out duties, such as managing the school budget, is a challenge. Principals do not usually possess the required knowledge and training for property management, and their lack of knowledge to carry on the duty such as managing the school budget has been reported to be of concern (Spillane & Lee, 2014).

5.8.6 Compliance and Regulations

Participants commented that there was a significant impact to their workload due to compliance. Lock and Lummis (2014) highlighted that the burden of compliance for school leaders lies in the context of accountability to external authorities over a range of standards

and legislative requirements. Participants commented that the time involved for compliance and risk management robbed them of their capacity to lead the school and caused unnecessary stress. The weight of compliance for school principals is time consuming, a detraction from the leaders' roles as instructional leaders and diminishes enjoyment of the role (Biagi, 2015; Lock & Lummis, 2014).

All participants commented that they were responsible for creating and maintaining safe school environments, however, this responsibility added another level of paperwork such as risk management reports. Participants who were beginning principals commented that they were not familiar nor confident with the regulations and compliance around complex industrial issues. In 2011, Starr noted that risk management policies had become increasingly complex, requiring more time from principals. External policy intervention, risk management policies had become increasingly complex, requiring more time from the principal; these were "the most significant causes of teacher dissatisfaction and antagonism against change" (Starr, 2011, p. 651). Krone (2016) stated that risk management is not a job for one person. Rather, the responsibility of safety and practice of mutual accountability lies within the school community, not just with the school principal. Although participants commented that they were aware of the importance of compliance, they remarked that what threatens and challenges their capacity to lead is the huge number of compliance activities and the time these consume.

5.8.7 Principal Preparation Processes and Support

Many participants, especially those new to the role, emphasised the challenges concerning principal preparation processes and support protocols. These concerns included the lack of transparency at handover time between the departing principal and the incoming principal, the lack of purposeful professional development programs offered by CEWA for their secondary principals and the need for more professional support for beginning principals. Participants commented that many handover times have not been conducted as well as they might have been. For example, participants stated that the communication between the departing principal and the incoming principal was often infrequent and neither detailed nor clear. Participants remarked that they were not given transparent information of their new school and were not warned of inherited issues before commencing their positions. Some participants remarked that they came in 'blind to the role' and 'were thrown in at the deep end'. As such, participants believed the CEWA should provide clear and detailed communication around protocols and the context of the school to ensure the transition

between the departing principal and incoming principal is smooth and transparent. The preparation for a clear school transition is critical for school leadership. For a new principal to succeed in their new duties, it is vital that he or she understands the specific knowledge that the outgoing principal must transfer, and the knowledge that the new principal needs to acquire (Fink & Brayman, 2004).

Participants new to their role as principal commented that there was a lack of purposeful professional development programs offered by CEWA to support beginning principals. Participants highlighted the need for more structured programs dedicated to beginning principals. They desired purposeful preparation programs, which focussed on areas such as financial and property management and dealing with the complexities of industrial issues. McManus (2018) stated that female principals felt inadequately prepared for principalship and needed professional support in the form of well-planned, continuous professional development to assist them in order to become competent leaders. Gallagher (2017) noted that female principals feel the specific need for quality professional development in the areas of the school business administration such as finance and strategic planning when in the role of principal. Similarly, Rieckhoff (2014) noted the specific need for quality professional development for principals, reinforcing that the level of preparedness for the position, together with the lack of support in the role of principal was challenging for principals. In addition, Schmidt (2010) highlighted that the purposefulness of the professional programs should cater adequately for the individual needs of the principal. In short, there should be more emphasis placed on the emotional preparation for principalship.

Participants remarked that CEWA needed an improved approach to induction programs for principals. Mahfouz (2020) stated that principals reported that their preparation programs failed to prepare them to take on the reality of the leadership role. Biagi (2015) emphasised that principal preparation programs are important and an essential means of providing principals with the required skills necessary for leading an educational community. Participants highlighted that CEWA needed to provide more quality professional support for beginning principals. In particular, participants commented that they were frustrated by a lack of ongoing support and regular visits by CEWA consultants, at a time when they needed it the most.

5.8.8 *Gender Discrimination Towards Female Principals*

Participants highlighted challenges associated with various forms of gender discrimination towards female principals. These challenges included feeling dismissed and

marginalised by male members of the school board, male professionals in building constructions and male CEWA composite and secondary principals. Pirouznia (2006) emphasised that the gap between female and male principals persists. Women principals who worked with a majority of male principals in their region or at networking meetings often experienced feelings of isolation or marginalisation (Coleman, 2005). According to Schmidt and Mestry (2015) patriarchy in schools is prevalent, and discriminatory views often stereotype women as being incapable and emotionally unstable. As a result of these perceptions, men are more likely to be nominated by the members of the school board for a principal position over equally qualified females due to gender role stereotypes and cultural beliefs (Schmidt & Mestry, 2015). Gender discrimination is one of the many challenges that female secondary principals need to deal with in their role as principal (Avgeri, 2015).

Women colleagues can feel like outsiders in their own institutions where they are often separated or excluded from network and social groups where male leaders convene only with other men (Hardy, 2019). Participants commented that the existence of the male culture characterised as the network of ‘the old boys’ club still exists within CEWA and contains a generation of men defined as untouchable and who were allowed to do what they wanted. Hardy (2019) noted that the ‘good old boy’ network is a phenomenon that can exclude females from beneficial networking and development opportunities.

Eckman (2003) noted that female principals expressed concern at being excluded because of ‘the old boys’ network, which encouraged male principals in schools to gain further promotions in the high school network. Participants remarked that selection to principalship should not be gender biased and there should not be gender discrimination of any kind nor distinction when a principal of a secondary school is appointed. Gender discrimination, which excludes women from the ‘old boys network’, can impede women’s opportunities for promotion (Pirouznia, 2006). Yet, as Crosby-Hillier (2012) warned, as long as ‘the old boys’ club or network exists and is sustained, then educational administration remains largely a ‘man’s world’. As recently as 2020, Volkenant identified the absence of relevant narratives pertaining to laywomen principals in Catholic schools. Volkenant (2020) stated that female principals in Catholic schools work together with their priests’ patriarchal orientation while trying to balance their feminist beliefs. Female principals may be afraid to speak out or may have been silenced by the patriarchy of the Church (Volkenant, 2020). In addition, Volkenant states female principals felt like being an ‘outsider’ in a man’s world as a Catholic school principal.

5.8.9 *Recognising the Value and Effectiveness of the Leadership Characteristics of Female Principals*

Even though participants believed that their contributions as female principals to CEWA composite and secondary schools were noteworthy, they felt that there was a lack of recognition of the value and effectiveness of the leadership characteristics of women. Participants remarked that they have leadership characteristics, which they believed were better suited to handling the complexities of secondary schooling than their male counterparts. Participants also highlighted that their ability to get the best out of their students, their sympathetic and nurturing qualities to the needs of staff, together with their emotional intelligence characteristics were not always recognised. Murakami and Tornsen (2017) stated that females are not always valued for their effectiveness as leaders even when successful. When female principals are not valued for their effectiveness, they run the risk of being evaluated negatively (Murakami & Tornsen, 2017).

5.9 Summary

This discussion of results on the challenges that female principals face as leaders in CEWA composite and secondary schools focused on nine issues. Participants commented that there were challenges around finding time to attend to the many facets of the principals' role and dealing with parental issues and staff concerns, as was also identified by Wise (2015). Principals noted that managing the use of social media platforms was challenging, as also identified in Mahfouz's research (2020). As in research conducted by Cappella et al. (2008) and Wise (2015), participants commented that they were concerned about poverty and the use of illegal drugs. Participants noted that often the impact of isolation for female principals in regional areas can develop into a sense of loneliness and a feeling of indirect exclusion from the secondary network of principals (Biagi, 2015; Sayce, 2014). Participants remarked that there has been an increase in the number of legal responsibilities, such as compliance paperwork, as confirmed by other researchers (Biagi, 2015; Starr, 2011; Teh, 2009).

Participants commented that as beginning principals, there was a lack of quality and purposeful professional learning opportunities provided to them, which was also identified by Fink and Brayman (2004). Participants expressed their concerns about the lack of transparency at handover time between the departing principal and the incoming principal and a need for more professional support, a fact strongly indicated in the literature (Biagi, 2015; Fink & Brayman, 2004; Gallagher, 2017; McManus, 2018; Schmidt, 2010).

Participants remarked that there still exists ‘the old boys’ club mentality, and the subsequent exclusion of women from this ‘old boys network’. Lastly, the participants felt that their contribution as a principal was often ignored, as reflected by Crosby-Hillier (2012), Eckman (2003), Pirouznia (2006) and Volkenant (2020). Moreover, as identified in the literature, they believed that their leadership attributes and contributions as female principals were more suited to handling the complexities of current leadership in secondary schools (Coleman, 2005; Crosby-Hillier, 2012; Eckman, 2003; Murakami & Tornsen, 2017; Pirouznia, 2006).

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter provided an interpretive and analytical discussion of the data provided in Chapter Four. The results for each of the four research questions were analysed along with the relevant discussion of literature. This chapter provides the basis for the final chapter, Chapter Six: Review and Conclusions.

CHAPTER 6: Review and Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explore the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools (CCSS). Specifically, the research focused on the experiences of fourteen female principals. The study investigated four perspectives relating to CCSS female principals: factors that encourage female educational leaders to become principals; expectations and demands of being a female principal; factors which support and sustain a female principal; and challenges female principals face as leaders. The epistemology underpinning this research was constructivism with an interpretive paradigm of qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Symbolic interactionism was the chosen theoretical perspective of this study. Symbolic interactionism focuses on a process of interaction between individuals where the researcher attempts to interpret how individuals think about themselves and others, and how they draw on symbolic communication when they socially interact (Neuman, 2011). The methodology employed in this research was that of an instrumental case study, which sought to gather qualitative data from female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools.

There were three methods of data collection which included semi-structured interviews, document search and researcher field notes. Data analysis complied with the Interactive Cycle Process as outlined by Miles and Huberman, (1994): data condensation; data display; and verification and conclusion drawing. Four specific research questions underpinned this inquiry:

1. What factors encourage female educational leaders to become principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools?
2. What are the expectations and demands of being a female principal in CEWA composite and secondary schools?
3. What factors support and sustain a female principal in CEWA composite and secondary schools?
4. What challenges do female principals face as leaders in CEWA composite and secondary schools?

The discussion found in Chapter Five drew from the analysis of the data and critical reflection of the relevant literature.

6.2 Research Questions Answered

The following sections address the participants' responses to the specific research questions proposed by this inquiry.

6.2.1 *What Factors Encourage Female Educational Leaders to Become Principals in CEWA Composite and Secondary Schools?*

The results of the research indicated four factors that encourage female educational leaders to become principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools. These factors were direct encouragement from significant people, opportunities to undertake acting principalship roles, encouragement from family members and family role models, and a passion for education and a commitment to making a difference for students. Participants highlighted the importance of direct encouragement coming from significant people such as former principals, members of religious orders, CEWA personnel and colleagues. Participants identified significant people as those who encouraged females by acknowledging their abilities and communicating a strong message that they are talented. Various authors highlight the positive impact of significant others on the aspirations of female leaders to become principals (Bay, 2020; Mochizuki, 2014).

Participants commented on the importance and value of taking on acting principalship roles. The experience of undertaking an acting principalship role had given participants considerable confidence and belief in themselves. They felt encouraged and believed they were capable of handling the responsibilities that come with being a principal. There does appear, however, to be little literature that explicitly links the notion of an acting principalship role as a means of encouraging women to become secondary school principals in Australia. Participants identified that the support and encouragement of family members was an important motivating factor for becoming educational leaders. The participants' reference to the importance of family members was evident in the literature (Mochizuki, 2014; Piterman, 2008).

Participants indicated that they were encouraged and motivated to become principals because of their dedication and passion for education. Furthermore, participants were encouraged to lead improvement in education in general, that is improve academic results, as well as the well-being of all students. The literature, however, focuses more on love and devotion, which are closely related to dedication and passion. That is, the female principal's prime motivation was her love and devotion towards students and education, with an emphasis on students' progress and learning results (Avgeri, 2015; Murakami & Tornsen,

2017). Furthermore, a female principal's passion and commitment to education enhanced partnerships, empowered others, delivered effective leadership practices, and increased the possibility of having a positive influence on student outcomes (Haim et al., 2018).

6.2.2 What are the Expectations and Demands of Being a Female Principal in CEWA Composite and Secondary Schools?

Participants highlighted five issues associated with the expectations and demands of being a CCSS female principal. These issues were related to the expectations and demands of (a) internal stakeholders, (b) external stakeholders, (c) parish priests, (d) the balancing of career and family, and (e) high self-expectations and self-criticism. Participants identified internal stakeholders as parents and staff members. Participants highlighted that some parents had differing perceptions of women in principalship roles and were reluctant to accept a woman in a leadership position, especially a school principal. Participants indicated that these parents could hold different expectations for women principals compared to those of male principals. They commented that some male parents could be confronting. The literature reflects the participants' concerns that parents who were unhappy with circumstances at school thought that women principals were easier to manipulate and attempted to approach them in a negative manner (Smith & Hale, 2002). The literature also suggests that female principals experienced the challenge of being confronted by rude male parents who were confronting at the parents' meeting (Ntaka, 2013).

Participants noted that some long serving senior leadership team members and staff were often reluctant to adopt change. These staff members' attitudes and their complacency were often demanding of the principals' time and energy. Starr (2011) noted that principals have become aware of increased resistance from staff when required to move out of their comfort zone.

Participants found that the demands and expectations of external stakeholders, such as state and national education bodies could be onerous. In particular, the demands and expectations regarding compliance and risk management associated with the principal's administrative role were a concern for participants due to the time-consuming paperwork involved. Participants commented that this responsibility took them away from their instructional leadership roles. Furthermore, the literature suggested that the weight of compliance for school principals is time consuming and a detraction from the leaders' roles as instructional leaders (Biagi, 2015; Lock & Lummis, 2014).

Even though participants stated that they were strongly committed to ensuring that Catholic identity and Catholic teaching were prioritised, the demands for and the expectation of maintaining a good working relationship with some parish priests proved challenging for many participants. Participants indicated that certain expectations from their parish priests were unreasonable. These expectations ranged from the parish priest having his meals cooked to commitments to parish duties, which were outside the responsibilities of the principal. The participants observed that priests often viewed female principals in traditional roles as mothers and caregivers. Belmonte and Cranston (2009) reflected the participants' observation that many clergy can be sceptical of the capacities of female principals as leaders.

Participants also highlighted that they were perturbed by the shortage of priests committed to work within their schools and noted that this issue needed addressing. Participants from regional schools commented that it was often difficult to find priests willing to work with secondary students. Participants highlighted that there was an expectation by the school community to find a priest willing and able to engage with young people in their school. They commented that it became necessary to develop a roster system for priests to ensure availability for their schools. Coughlan (2009) noted that the priest increasingly has responsibility for several parish communities with less time to work in schools. There was minimal literature highlighting why there was a decline or shortage of parish priests who were willing to engage with CEWA secondary school students.

Participants stated their concerns regarding their struggles to balance family and work commitments. Many participants felt a sense of guilt due to the limited time they had to spend with their families, especially if they had small children. Similar sentiments were reflected in the literature, which reported that most female principals believed that the imbalance regarding the demands of work and home has led to women's feelings of guilt (Hansen, 2014; Heath, 2012; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005).

Finally, participants admitted to being self-critical of their performance as leaders. Some participants compared themselves with their male counterparts and indicated that they felt that they needed to lead more like male principals. Participants who were self-critical of their performance had a personal and striving ambition to lead with perfection. The literature reflects participants' high self-expectations and self-criticism and suggests that female principals who adopt stereotypically male behaviours to compete with male secondary principals will suffer negative evaluations and suspicions regarding their effectiveness for violating female gender norms (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Heilman, 2001; Heilman et al., 2004).

6.2.3 What Factors Support and Sustain a Female Principal in CEWA Composite and Secondary Schools?

Participants indicated four factors that support and sustain a CCSS female principal. These factors were: significant people; suitable mentors; CEWA leadership programs; and previous experience as a CEWA consultant. Participants indicated that significant people such as fellow principals (male and female), members of their leadership teams and particularly, their personal assistants were key in supporting them in their principal role. All participants acknowledged that significant people provided valuable support were considered crucial in influencing and supporting the participants in their leadership journey. Hansen (2014) noted that the support of and dependence on key people is integral for females to fulfil the role of principal. The literature suggests that colleagues encouraged female educators to become principals by acknowledging their abilities, and by communicating a strong message that they are talented (Bay, 2020; Mochizuki, 2014).

Participants highlighted that sourcing a suitable mentor who was experienced and able to provide them with ongoing support was essential during their principalship journey. The literature reflected the participants' views on the support of a good mentor. Female principals who had a mentor themselves often take on a mentorship role for others whom they supervised or informally supported (Funk & Polnick, 2005; McManus, 2018). Perkins (2011) noted that the support of mentors was vital for female principals, in order to sustain successful and effective administrative and leadership positions.

For some participants, the opportunity to work as consultants or as leaders at education system level (CEWA) provided them with invaluable knowledge and experience prior to commencing the principalship role. The knowledge gained from working in the role of consultant or leader at CEWA was not only invaluable but provided an opportunity to gain a principalship appointment. Participants noted that working at CEWA provided them with the depth and breadth of educational knowledge in a Catholic context. This opportunity enabled participants to refine their conceptual and pedagogical skills in teaching and learning. It provided them with effective professional learning in educational leadership at system level, and it upskilled them in the latest educational strategies or strategic directions implemented by CEWA. Experiences gained whilst working at CEWA provided participants a better overview of Catholic education, and a head-start for the principalship role in a CEWA school. There was minimal literature highlighting the benefits and advantages for potential female principals gained from working at system level, such as CEWA.

6.2.4 What Challenges do Female Principals Face as Leaders in CEWA Composite and Secondary Schools.

Female principals in this study identified nine challenges they faced in their role as leaders in CCSS. These challenges included: insufficient time to deal with the multifaceted nature of the role; parental issues and staff concerns; safety, health, and wellbeing of the school community; working in regional schools; lack of financial and property management skills and knowledge; compliance and regulation; principal preparation processes; gender discrimination; lack of recognition of the value and effectiveness of the leadership characteristics of female principal.

Participants commented that the role of school principal came with a huge and demanding workload. Participants noted that the workload was time-consuming and included attendance at an extraordinary number of meetings and various night-time functions. Biagi (2015) observed that the principal's role is emotionally and physically demanding and requires the principal to work long hours. A significant challenge for principals was a lack of time to complete daily administration tasks that comes with the role (Wise, 2015).

One of the challenges identified by the principals was managing parental issues such as formal complaints, family issues and parents' lack of resilience. Participants commented that such challenges could at times, threaten the reputation of their schools. The literature suggests that female school principals face differing expectations from parents. Smith and Hale (2002) noted that some parents who were dissatisfied with circumstances at school thought that women principals were easier to intimidate than male principals. Participants also stated that there was a need to educate parents and their children about values and goals, and about resilience. On this point, Wise (2015) noted that parents were not taking responsibility for their children's behaviour, respect for authority, and basic skill development.

Participants noted a variety of challenges they had to manage with staff members. These challenges included long standing staff members who were underperforming to attracting suitable staff to teach in regional schools. Participants raised concerns regarding staffing challenges relating to maintaining a day-to-day interaction with teachers, classroom observations, formal evaluations, teacher meetings, professional development, and general supervision of staff. These challenges can be an overwhelming task for the principal (Beam et al., 2016). Furthermore, the literature suggests that principals face more challenges with regard to maintaining a positive climate when one or more teachers prove to be challenging and difficult to work with (Eller & Eller, 2016).

Female principals in this study highlighted that there were challenges encompassing and managing the safety, health, and well-being of the school community. Participants stated that the use of social media platforms and cyber bullying have become more prominent over time within a school context. Participants' concerns with regard to the use of social media platforms and cyber bullying were suggested in the literature, which stated that the management of the use of social media in schools was a stressful part of the principals' role, especially with student use of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter (Mahfouz, 2020). Furthermore, Cappella et al. (2008) and Wise (2015) noted that issues such as children in need of mental health services in poverty-stricken communities often remain untreated, and effective services are difficult to implement and sustain given the lack of available resources.

Participants remarked that taking on principalship roles in regional areas came with a range of specific challenges. For example, participants commented on difficult long standing staff members who were underperforming, a sense of loneliness, a lack of qualified and experienced staff and the dangers of being bullied by aggressive parents in the local community. Lock et al. (2012) noted that issues for principals in regional areas included recruiting and retaining good teaching staff, obtaining suitable general staff, isolation and separation from principal colleagues, exercising community functions, and handling and dealing with community tensions. Further, Pietsch (2013) noted that principals living in local townships found that they and their families are vulnerable to being threatened.

Participants commented that they had minimal knowledge and preparation in the areas of financial and property management skills and building construction. Participants noted that this knowledge was necessary before commencing the principalship role. In particular, participants new to the role emphasised the need for more support in specific knowledge around financial skills. Spillane and Lee (2014) and Rieckhoff (2014) noted that the principals' lack of knowledge in areas such as managing the school budget is a challenge for principals, as balancing the books is not a skill that all principals feel confident in achieving.

One of the challenges noted by the participants was insufficient time to attend to the many dimensions of the principals' role. Specifically, participants highlighted the burden of compliance and the significant impact to their workload due to the associated paperwork. The literature suggests that the weight of compliance is a burden for school principals as it is time consuming, a detraction from the leaders' roles as instructional leaders and diminishes the enjoyment of the role (Biagi, 2015; Lock & Lummis, 2014).

Participants highlighted the challenges incurred from a lack of quality and purposeful professional learning opportunities, which were not always available to them as principals. Lock et al. (2012) highlighted the need for adequate provision of professional learning suited to needs of managers and leaders. Furthermore, the participants noted challenges associated with the lack of transparency at handover time between the departing principal and the incoming principal. These participants commented that they were left to fend for themselves without the ongoing support they needed in their early stages of their career. Fink and Brayman (2004) noted the importance at handover-time where the outgoing principal needs to pass on knowledge which the new principal requires to effectively lead the school.

Participants highlighted the challenges associated with various forms of gender discrimination towards female principals. Such gender discrimination included the feeling of being dismissed and marginalised by male members of the school board, male professionals in building construction and CCSS male principals. Participants noted the existence of ‘an old boys’ club within CEWA. The participants indicated that the ‘old boys club’ contains a generation of men defined as untouchable and who were allowed to do what they wanted. Hardy (2019) noted that the ‘old boys club’ network is a phenomenon that can exclude females from beneficial networking and development opportunities.

Female principals in this study also remarked that they found it challenging when they were excluded by their male colleagues during professional secondary network meetings. Participants commented that they were ignored or not part of the men’s conversation. The separation of male and female principals was at times, obvious to the participants. The participants commented that gender discrimination is one of the many challenges female secondary principals need to deal with. The literature suggests that female principals felt like being an ‘outsider’ in a man’s world as a Catholic school principal (Volkenant, 2020). Hardy (2019) noted that women can feel like outsiders and are often excluded from men’s networks, where socialising and confiding in other men are the norm in groups of male leaders.

Finally, participants argued that their contributions as CCSS female principals were noteworthy. However, they commented that there appeared to be a lack of recognition of the value and effectiveness of the leadership characteristics of women. Participants indicated that they believed that their leadership characteristics were well suited to handling the complexities of secondary schooling and they were able to get the best out of their students. However, the participants noted that their sympathetic and nurturing qualities in dealing with the needs of students and staff were not always valued or recognised by internal and external stakeholders. The literature suggests that female principals are not always valued for their

effectiveness as leaders, hence they run the risk of being evaluated negatively (Murakami & Tornsen, 2017).

6.3 Benefits and Limitations of the Research Design

This research design has three potential benefits. Firstly, the constructivist approach enabled the researcher to ‘give voice’ to the fourteen female participants and value their personal and professional experiences in this study. Secondly, the study explored four perspectives relating to CCSS female principals: factors that encourage female educational leaders to become principals; expectations and demands of being a female principal; factors which support and sustain a female principal; and challenges female principals face as leaders. This study allowed for a rich and detailed description to emerge in the resulting data. Thirdly, the constructivist perspective acknowledged the place of the researcher. Specifically, the researcher has a background as a CCSS educator with thirty years of teaching experience along with six years’ experience as Team Leader and Coordinator of Curriculum in the Teaching and Learning Directorate at system level (CEWA). This background gave her insight into exploring the personal and professional experiences of CCSS female principals.

There are two potential limitations in this study. Firstly, the research may have limited generalisability as it is confined to fourteen female principals in CCSS. This study did not include the contribution of female principals from Western Australian Independent and Government composite and secondary schools. However, this study provided a descriptively rich account of the participants’ accounts, which allows for readers to make their own judgements as to the relevance of the study to their own context. The second potential limitation is bias due to the researcher herself being female. This potential bias was counteracted by employing criteria to assure trustworthiness as explained in section 3.8. The researcher used two strategies to ensure confirmability. First, the researcher’s field notes were used to supplement interview data in order to allow robust research consistent with qualitative approaches. Second, excerpts from the digitally recorded and transcribed interviews were analysed and used to provide examples of emerging themes.

6.4 Knowledge Added to the Field

This thesis added knowledge to the field in four ways. Firstly, participants commented very favourably on the opportunity to undertake acting principalship roles, which were instrumental in setting them on the path to principalship. This experience gave the

participants an insight into the nature of the role and helped to build in them a sense of confidence, which enabled them to progress to the next step of their professional leadership journey. In particular, the experience provided participants with a realisation that they had the potential to take on the principalship role. For all the importance that some participants placed on the value of an acting principalship, there appears to be little literature that explicitly links the notion of an acting principalship role as a means of encouraging women to become secondary school principals in Australia. There is limited literature on models such as co-principalship (Marks, 2013) or acting principalship in general (Cannon, 2004).

Secondly, participants who had worked at CEWA educational system level remarked that this experience had provided them with additional credentials when applying for principalship appointments. That is, participants believed there were positive professional gains from working at system level. There does not appear to be literature that has examined the direct effects on those female principals who have had professional experience as a result of working at Catholic Education system level.

Thirdly, participants commented that they trusted their Personal Assistant (PA) and relied on them for their ongoing support. All participants noted that their PA provided them with confidential administrative and secretarial support, whilst attending to school administrative matters. There does not appear to be a body of literature that has explored the important role which PAs play in supporting female school principals. That is, there is minimal literature available acknowledging the importance of the secondary principal's PA's multifaceted role, the level of support and trust required in her role, and the professional working relationship developed between the female principal and her PA.

Lastly, this thesis is the only known study on the current topic of female principals in Catholic composite and secondary schools in Western Australia. From the results of this study, the researcher provided knowledge about the lived personal and professional experiences of fourteen female principals in CCSS. Such knowledge can be useful in improving the working conditions of current and future female principals in CCSS. This study highlighted various ongoing concerns for female principals in secondary education and could be part of the dialogue used in principal preparation programs. Female principals stated that they experienced less credibility and support than their male counterparts.

6.5 Implications for the Profession

The results of the study have implications for the following groups or individuals:

1. Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA)
2. Bishops and Parish priests' communities

As the executive arm of the CECWA, the Bishops are responsible for the quality development and care of Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) principals and potential leaders. Future CEWA leadership preparation programs should be sensitive to the needs of women and provide support in the development of future female leaders. The leadership programs provided by CEWA should not only reflect the skills required of current and future Catholic leaders within their system, but develop strategies to attract more female leaders to take on the role of principal in CCSS.

The results of this research indicated that many participants, particularly those beginning their leadership journey wanted further quality professional learning opportunities. These professional learning opportunities should be based on relevant understandings for contemporary school principalship. Leadership programs should include ongoing training in finance management skills, and ongoing support with compliance and risk management reports, in order to improve the time management of principals and provide a comprehensive document stating guidelines for the handover process from one principal to another. CEWA could highlight the important role that past and current women have played in leading CCSS. Concerns raised by the participants included: work and family conflict; limited access to good mentors; gender stereotyping; perceptions of female leadership effectiveness; and gender discrimination and gender inequity that still exists in CCSS.

The results from this study may provide the Bishops with an insight into the female principals' concern with regard to the shortage of parish priests who are willing to engage with secondary school students in CCSS. Furthermore, the results from this study indicated that the participants' interaction with parish priests was not always at an optimal level. The demands and expectations of some parish priests regarding female principals need to be addressed. In particular, the clergy's traditional view of female's roles in CCSS is currently not only inappropriate but dated, and there is a need to develop a more effective partnership between the clergy and female leaders in Catholic education.

6.6 Implications for Future Research

Recent research about female leadership experiences in composite and secondary schools in Western Australia and other states of Australia is limited. Therefore, further studies are called for to enhance the current research base. Over the past two years, there has been an extraordinary feminism insurgency focused on the safety of women and men's abuse of power that has put these two issues at the forefront of the national conversation. This study provides a basis for extended or further research in the personal and professional experiences of female principals in other national Catholic, Government and Independent composite and secondary schools. There are benefits to be gained from extending the study across other states and territories, to contrast and compare experiences of Catholic female principals across Australia. The results of international research would enhance global conversations about female secondary school principals' professional identities, equity issues in leadership, why female principals in Catholic secondary schools are under-represented, female principals' professional relationship with the clergy, international cultural viewpoints of women in educational leadership, gender discrimination in educational leadership, and factors that encourage and motivate women to apply for principalship positions.

The study's findings may be important for the establishment of clear gender equity/discrimination policy(ies) in the employment of leadership positions in all CEWA, AISWA and DoE composite and secondary schools. Future research could explore how these positions are developed and marketed. In addition, studies investigating the perceptions that systems and sectors hold about secondary leadership positions would provide insight into hiring practices that seem to favour employing male principals (according to current gender imbalance in these positions).

6.7 Recommendations

Six key recommendations are drawn from the results of this study. It is the CEWA's responsibility to develop and deliver appropriate school leadership programs for principals. The following recommendations include the need for CEWA to be proactive in the recruitment of female principals in CCSS, provide additional support for beginning and continuing female principals; address the 'culture' of gender discrimination; and recognise female principals and leaders in CCSS. While not directly related to female principals, priest engagement in CCSS should be enhanced by the Archbishop and Bishops to work with priests. These recommendations are now presented.

Recommendation 1. CEWA to be Proactive in the Recruitment of Female Principals in CCSS

CEWA should be proactive in seeking out and supporting female educators to undertake the principalship, to increase the recruitment of female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools (CCSS). It is recommended that CEWA provides a leadership framework specifically for female educators, which recognises the value and effectiveness of the characteristics of female leaders. All female leaders in CCSS should be encouraged to contribute strategically, in order to improve representation of female leadership in CCSS.

Recommendation 2. CEWA to Provide Additional Support for Beginning and Continuing Female Principals in CCSS

It is recommended that CEWA provides additional support for beginning and continuing female principals in two ways. CEWA can directly address the current format of the leadership programs offered to aspiring, beginning and experienced CEWA leaders and principals. Participants indicated there is a great need for leadership courses that provide ongoing quality administrative and management training for all principals. In particular, it is recommended that CEWA provides adequate in-depth training and ongoing support relating to the knowledge and skills of finance, legal matters, and compliance with reporting bodies.

Recommendation 3: CEWA to Support Female Principals' Wellbeing

It is recommended that CEWA provides female principals with ongoing and adequate support, in order to maintain good mental health and wellbeing. It is recommended that CEWA prioritises leadership training programs for principals on work-life balance. This recommendation would allow principals with valuable time to attend to recreational activities, in order to maintain good mental health and well-being.

Recommendation 4. CEWA to Address the Gender Discrimination of Female Principals in CCSS

It is recommended that CEWA address gender discrimination of female principals in three ways: through the use of gender-neutral language; by surveying female principals in confidence about their experiences; and by developing training resources for principals around minimising gender discrimination. Firstly, CEWA promote gender equality by

ensuring that gender-neutral language is used in all formal documentation and communication with principals. Secondly, CEWA survey all female principals in CEWA secondary, composite, and primary schools, in order to attain examples of gender discrimination which they might have experienced. This survey would provide a voice for all CEWA principals to highlight specific areas of gender discrimination that impact on their leadership role. Thirdly, CEWA develop training resources which focus on curtailing gender discrimination in general and these resources are used as part of any beginning principal formation program as well as ongoing principal formation.

Recommendation 5. That the Archbishop and Bishops of Western Australia Work to Enhance Priests' Engagement in CCSS

It is recommended that the Archbishop and Bishops of Western Australia investigate the possibility of delivering educational training and support for priests, to enhance their engagement with students/young adults in CCSS. One concern highlighted in this research was that parish priests were not always willing to interact or establish a pastoral relationship with CCSS secondary students. It is recommended that the Archbishop and Bishops of Western Australia permit school principals to select and to seek the assistance of young chaplains or Catholic youth ministers /catechists who would be best suited for CCSS school students. This recommendation should address the low number of suitable parish priests willing and available to work with CCSS students and female principals.

Recommendation 6. CEWA Recognises Female Principals in CCSS

It is recommended that CEWA prioritises and promotes the recognition of female principals and leaders. Participants indicated that female principals should be given more recognition for their contributions as principals to CEWA composite and secondary schools (CCSS). Elevating the contributions made by many past and current female principals and leaders in CCSS could support and encourage more females to become future principals in CCSS. It is highly recommended that CEWA acknowledges the works and contributions of successful long-serving female principals when naming schools, educational centres, or other specific educational CEWA buildings.

6.8 Conclusion

This study was concerned with exploring the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CCSS. The study sought to identify the core demands and expectations of their role, as well as factors that encourage, sustain and challenge female principals. Motivational factors identified in this study included the support and encouragement of significant people, opportunities to undertake acting principalship roles, encouragement from family members and family role models, a passion for education and a commitment to making a difference for students. All these factors impacted upon the female principals' decision to take on the principalship position.

This study has given female principals in CCSS a voice, has raised concerns that female principals face in their leadership role, has provided insight and sensitivity to the needs of women in leadership and has established what female principals offer to secondary educational leadership. The study highlighted five issues associated with the expectations and demands of being a CCSS female principal. These issues included the expectations and demands of internal stakeholders, external stakeholders, parish priests, balancing career and family, high self-expectations, and self-criticism. The research also identified nine challenges facing female principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools. These challenges included insufficient time to deal with the multifaceted nature of the role, parental issues and staff concerns, safety, health, and wellbeing of the school community, working in regional schools, lack of financial and property management skills and knowledge, compliance and regulation, principal preparation processes, gender discrimination, and lack of recognition of the value and effectiveness of the leadership characteristics of female principals in CCSS schools.

6.9 Personal Impact Statement

This research has had a significant impact on me. The initial motivation for the study was drawn from a drive to explore why there is still a lower number of female principals, compared to the number of male principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools (CCSS). However, the study became bigger than numbers. My interaction with the fourteen participants uncovered information that allowed me to understand factors that impact the personal and professional experiences of female principals in CCSS. My research has enabled me to appreciate the struggles these women have had to endure and the courage they showed in order to become CCSS principals. The opportunity to hear the participants' personal and professional leadership journeys has encouraged me to be more aware, proactive, and

supportive of female educators aspiring to become educational leaders in CCSS. I would hope that the implementation of the six recommendations highlighted in this study might enable and encourage women to become principals in CEWA composite and secondary schools in the future.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions



Interview Questions:

1. What factors motivated or encouraged you to become a principal of a CEWA secondary school?
2. What formation experiences did you have to prepare you for leadership? Are there any changes you would like to see in relation to formation?
3. What do you believe are some of the particular gifts that you bring to your role as a principal?
4. Could you share with me some of your success stories as a female principal in a CEWA secondary school?
5. How would you define leadership in a Catholic school?
6. What challenges have you experienced in your role as principal?
7. Would you please share some examples, if any, of how you have communicated with other female principals about challenging situations?
8. What are the expectations and demands that come with being a female principal in a CEWA secondary school?
9. What internal and external support do you receive as a principal and how is this overall support sustained?
10. What advice would you give to potential female leaders aspiring to become principals?
11. In what ways, if any, do you believe that gender makes a difference when it comes to the role of principal in a CEWA secondary school?
12. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Appendix B: Approval from the University of Notre Dame Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)



19 Mouat St (PO Box 1225) Fremantle WA 6959
+61 8 9433 0555 | enquiries@nd.edu.au

4 April 2019

A/Prof Shane Lavery & Ms Maria Outtrim
School of Education
The University of Notre Dame Australia
Fremantle Campus

Dear Shane and Maria,

Reference Number: 019052F

Project Title: "Female Principals in Catholic Secondary Schools in Western Australia: How they perceive themselves as leaders."

Your response to the conditions imposed by a sub-committee of the University of Notre Dame Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has been reviewed in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007, updated 2018). I am pleased to advise that ethics approval has been granted for this proposed study.

Other researchers identified as working on this project are:

Name	School/Centre	Role
A/Prof Dianne Chambers	School of Education	Co-Supervisor

**All research projects are approved subject to standard conditions of approval.
Please read the attached document for details of these conditions.**

On behalf of the Human Research Ethics Committee, I wish you well with your study.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Natalie Giles
Research Ethics Officer
Research Office

cc: A/Prof Dee O'Connor, Acting SRC Chair, School of Education

Broome Campus 88 Guy St (PO Box 2287) Broome WA 6725
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Appendix C: Approval Letter from CEWA

10 April 2019



Mrs Maria Outtrim
The University of Notre Dame Australia
PO Box 1225
FREMANTLE WA 6959

Dear Mrs Outtrim

FEMALE PRINCIPALS IN CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA: HOW THEY PERCEIVE THEMSELVES AS LEADERS – CEWA REFERENCE RP2019/09

Thank you for your completed application received 18 March 2019, whereby the aim of this project is to explore how female principals in secondary Catholic schools in Western Australia perceive themselves as leaders.

I give in principle support for the selected secondary Catholic schools in Western Australia to participate in this valuable study. However, consistent with Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) policy, participation in your research project will be the decision of the individual principal and staff members. A copy of this letter must be provided to principals when requesting their participation in the research.

Responsibility for quality control of ethics and methodology of the proposed research resides with the institution supervising the research. CEWA notes that the University of Notre Dame Australia Human Research Ethics Committee has granted permission for the duration of this research project (Approval Number: 019052F).

Any changes to the proposed methodology will need to be submitted for CEWA approval prior to implementation. The focus and outcomes of your research project are of interest to CEWA. It is therefore a condition of approval that the research findings of this study are forwarded to CEWA.

Further enquiries may be directed to Jane Gostelow at jane.gostelow@cewa.edu.au or (08) 6380 5118.

I wish you all the best with your research.

Yours sincerely



Dr Debra Sayce
Executive Director



Appendix D: Information Letter for Principals



School of Education
University of Notre Dame Australia
PO Box 1225
Fremantle, WA 6959
Telephone: +61 8 9433 0150
Facsimile: +61 8 9433 0160
Email: education@nd.edu.au

Dear _____,

My name is Maria Outtrim and I am a PhD student writing to you in regards to a research project I am conducting that aims to explore how female principals in secondary Catholic schools in Western Australia perceive themselves as leaders. The results of this research may provide recommendations for future programs, and may assist the CEWA authorities to improve support for, and the representation of female principals in CEWA schools. This research is a case study approach, involving 17 female principals in CEWA secondary schools who consent to participate. The project is being conducted with Associate Professor Shane Lavery, Senior Lecturer (UNDA) and Associate Professor, Dianne Chambers (UNDA)

I would like to invite you to take part in the project. This is because your input as a female principal of a composite girls' college will be much valued.

What does participation in the research project involve?

If you wish to participate you will be contacted by the researcher via telephone to organise a meeting time for the interview and will be sent the interview questions before the negotiated interview time(s), which will take 45 minutes to an 1 hour.

To what extent is participation voluntary, and what are the implications of withdrawing that participation?

Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. If you decide to participate and then later change your mind, you are able to withdraw your participation at any time.

For ethical considerations yourself and your school will not be identified, the researchers will keep all information pertaining to you confidential and secure. You can withdraw at any stage prior to data analysis and any unprocessed identifiable data will be withdrawn without penalty.

There will be no consequences relating to any decision by an individual regarding participation, other than those already described in this letter. Decisions made will not affect the relationship with the research team or the University of Notre Dame Australia

What will happen to the information collected, and is privacy and confidentiality assured?

Information that identifies anyone will be removed from the data collected. The data is then stored securely at the University of Notre Dame Australia and can only be accessed by myself or the Supervisor Associate Professor Shane Lavery and Co-supervisor Associate Professor Dianne Chambers. The data will be stored for a minimum period of 5 years, after which it will be destroyed.

The identity of participants and the school will not be disclosed at any time, except in circumstances that require reporting under the Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) *Child Protection* policy, or where the research team is legally required to disclose that information. Participant privacy, and the confidentiality of information disclosed by participants, is assured at all other times.

The data will be used only for this project, and will not be used in any extended or future research without first obtaining explicit written consent from participants. Consistent with Catholic Education Western Australia policy, a summary of the research findings will be made available to CEWA. You can expect this to be available when the research is completed.

Is this research approved?

The Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Notre Dame, Australia has given research ethics approval for the conduct of this research. In addition, the Executive Director of Catholic Education, Dr Debra Sayce, has also given her consent to the research. If you have any concerns regarding the research, you can contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Notre Dame Australia, ph: 9443 0870 or fax 9433 0855.

Who do I contact if I wish to discuss the project further?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study, please contact me on [REDACTED] or maria.outtrim@nd.edu.au. My supervisors are Associate Professor Shane Lavery (UNDA) 9433 0173; shane.lavery@nd.edu.au and Associate Professor, Dianne Chambers (UNDA) 9433 0170 dianne.chambers1@nd.edu.au who are also available to discuss any aspect of this research.

Finally, your potential contribution to this research will be of significance in supporting all female secondary principals in Catholic education. The significance of this research is twofold. Firstly, there is an under-representation of female principals in CEWA secondary schools. It is important, therefore, to explore the needs and leadership experiences of female principals in Catholic secondary schools as a means of potentially understanding this imbalance. Secondly, gaining an insight into what motivates and supports female principals in CEWA secondary schools may provide new knowledge to address the challenges they encounter in their daily professional and personal journey.

I thank you for your consideration and hope you will agree to participate in this research project.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Maria Outtrim
Doctor of Education Candidate
maria.outtrim1@nd.edu.au [REDACTED]

Student ID: [REDACTED]

Appendix E: Consent Form for Principals



Female Principals in Catholic Secondary Schools in Western Australia: How they perceive themselves as leaders.

- I agree to take part in this research project.
- I have read the Information Sheet provided and been given a full explanation of the purpose of this research project and what is involved.
- I understand that I will be interviewed for the duration of forty minutes to one hour which will take place at a mutually convenient private location and that the interview will be audio-recorded.
- I understand that I can request for an external interviewer to conduct the interview if required.
- The researcher has answered all my questions and has explained possible risks that may arise as a result of the interview and how these risks will be managed.
- I understand that I do not have to answer specific questions if do not want to and may withdraw from participating in the project at any time without prejudice.
- I understand that all information provided by me is treated as confidential and will not be released by the researcher to a third party unless required to do so by law.
- I agree that any research data gathered for the study may be published provided my name or other identifying information are not disclosed.

Name of participant			
Signature of participant		Date	

- I confirm that I have provided the Information Sheet concerning this research project to the above participant, explained what participating involves and have answered all questions asked of me.

Signature of Researcher		Date	
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Appendix F: Leadership Framework for Catholic Schools in Western Australia

PURPOSE OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Catholic schools are important means through which the Church proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ and evangelises in the world of today. They are privileged places of evangelisation. It is for the principal to give leadership to the school community, promoting its evangelisation purposes, aims and ethos, its development as a faith community, its religious dimension and the outcomes of curriculum, including the religious education program.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This conceptual representation of the framework uses the metaphor of a growing tree to capture the organic unity of Catholic School Leadership. Behind this metaphor lies the parable of the sower.

Jesus is the soil in which the tree is planted. He is the source of nutrients. The four capabilities in which Catholic leadership is expressed are the roots, which anchor and draw nutrients into the tree.

The trunk is the structural support and system, which circulates the religious dimension that makes the Catholic school distinctive.

The branches, the five domains in which leadership is exercised, are the various ways in which the tree expresses its identity.

Catholic school leadership is devoted to the total formation of the individual and works towards this goal guided by a Christian vision of reality. Its task is fundamentally a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life. The first is reached by integrating all the different aspects of human knowledge through the subjects taught in light of the Gospel: the second in the growth of the virtues and characteristics of the Christian.

Catholic school leadership is complex, dynamic and organic:

I have come so that you may have life, and have it to the full.

Support for this conceptual representation can be found in the literature. The quality of contemporary school leadership is influenced by the **professional practices** of school leaders (what they do), the specific **contextual factors** and situations with which they engage as school leaders (why they do what they do) and the **capabilities** of leaders (how they lead).

Quality school leaders possess a range of **Personal, Relational, Professional and Organisational. Capabilities** that they employ effectively in complex and changing circumstances.

School leaders' professional practices have to be highly adaptable and attentive to their ecclesial, economic, political and socio-cultural contexts. The domains of leadership of Catholic schools in Western Australia have been identified as **Catholic Identity, Education, Stewardship, Community and Future Focus.**

DOMAINS

Domains are leaders' significant action areas in promotion of the educational mission of the Catholic Church.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Catholic leadership promotes the purposes and aims of evangelisation. School leaders develop the school community as a faith community, its religious dimension and the outcomes of its curriculum. School leaders ensure that Christian values are reflected in attitudes, policy and practice in their schools. They also recognise

the ecclesial nature of Catholic education and maintain links with the diocesan Church, actively contributing to the Church's mission of evangelisation.

EDUCATION

Leadership in the domain of education requires a strong sense of the educational mission of the Church. It involves the capacity to lead, manage and monitor the school improvement process, attainment of knowledge, the acquisition of Christian values and the discovery of truth. Educational leadership supports learning across the local school and the wider system, offering a multiplicity of learning experiences that nurture a lifelong love of learning and enquiry leading to wise and moral choices that support a fullness of life. The educational leader demonstrates the capacity to model important values and behaviours to the school community, including a commitment to creating and sustaining effective professional learning communities within the school and across all levels of the system.

STEWARDSHIP

The domain of stewardship recognises that God is creator of the universe and that policies and organisational structures serve individual and communal development, as well as care for the earth. Stewardship involves policy development, the provision, use and maintenance of the human, physical and financial resources of the school and appropriate processes to monitor, review, report and provide accountability to Church and government authorities and to the wider community. Stewardship requires responsible management and allocation of resources so as to add value to the Catholic education provided in schools; to take account of equity and diversity of school needs and to be open, transparent and accountable to public scrutiny.

COMMUNITY

Leaders sustain and promote the Catholic life of the school community. Community leaders demonstrate the ability to foster a safe, purposeful and inclusive learning environment, and a capacity to develop constructive and respectful relationships with

staff, students, parents and all involved with schooling. A community in the Catholic tradition is underpinned by principles of Catholic Social Teaching including the Common Good, subsidiarity, solidarity and participation. Consequently, leaders of school communities design organisational structures characterised by service, collaborative decision-making, genuine participation and patterns of cooperation.

FUTURE FOCUS

Future-focused leaders recognise their role in the ongoing story of Creation, Redemption and furthering the Kingdom. School leadership is grounded in present realities but not constrained by these realities. Beyond maintenance and improvement, school leaders imagine new visions through which sustainable change is realised. This form of school leadership involves creative thinking that blends intuition with rationality. Future-focused leaders demonstrate the capacity to promote a vision for the future, underpinned by common purposes and values that unify the school community in realising the potential of all students.