

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION : PROBLEM AND CONTEXT

It is apparent that headmasters were selected on merit, which was very definitely classroom oriented, as well as seniority. ... Headmasters formed a small select band which was regarded as a cog in the huge centralized machine.

F.C. Hooper, (1987:12).

An essential part of a Bureaucracy is the process by which people are appointed to positions of increasing authority within that structure. This process is so taken for granted that few of the textbooks on Management or Administration refer to it, even though the system of promotion has a marked impact on the lives of organization members. This omission is even more surprising when one considers that promotion processes vary from organization to organization or may change from time to time within the one organization.

In 1983 in Victoria such a change took place. The former promotion system was overturned and applicants for positions were faced with the need to meet new expectations and master a whole new approach to the seeking of Principal Class positions.

Often it is only when change occurs either within the processes themselves or within the attitudes of people involved in or affected by the processes that previous assumptions begin to be questioned and challenged. This study is set against a background of such changes. The Ministry of Education in Victoria has been undergoing major structural and philosophical changes for a number of years and these have directed attention to the assumptions underlying the positions assigned to women in schools and the processes by which promotion to Principal Class positions is achieved.

Historical Context

These two sets of assumptions are not separate and unconnected. As women have changed their expectations of their role in schools more opportunities have been made available to them which, in turn, have encouraged them to further enlarge their expectations. Running parallel to this were changes in the promotion process itself. This gradually opened promotion positions to a wider range of teachers regardless of gender. To understand how this happened it is necessary to look more closely at the changing position of women in schools and the changing promotion system.

The changing position of women in schools. As is evident from the opening quotation, the top position in Victorian High Schools was, at that period of time (1928–34), viewed as an exclusively male prerogative. In reality, it was an exclusively male position from early in the century, when the first High School was established, until 1970 when eligibility for Principal Class positions no longer depended on gender.

The early structures of the Teaching Service reflected the existing structures of society and community expectations. Married women were expected to remain at home to care for their families so it was taken for granted that there was no need to provide them with a career structure because, on marriage, they would leave teaching. To ensure that this happened women were made to resign on marriage. The few single women who remained in teaching could gain promotion to certain positions reserved for women and could eventually attain the status of Headmistress of one of the few Girls' Schools or Senior Mistress in any secondary school. When teacher shortages occurred married women could be employed but only on a temporary basis thus ensuring that they were completely isolated from the promotion system.

This remained the situation until the 1956 Teaching Service (Married Women) Act permitted married women to continue as permanent employees of the Department. Those who regained permanency after this decision did so at the cost

of all the seniority they had gained before marriage and almost half of their years of experience. This reduced their position on the Classified Roll and thus adversely affected future promotion prospects. At the same time it also meant that there could now be more women competing for the available promotion positions.

The Classified Roll also worked against the promotion interests of women teachers. Until the early 1970's men and women were classified separately. In 1925, in an early form of positive discrimination (for males), Frank Tate, the Director of Education, approved the following changes in the structure of the Classification systems:

Each class comprised a definite proportion of teachers. This ratio system placed half the total number of men in Class V, one quarter in Class IV and distributed the remaining quarter between (sic) Classes III to I. However the ratio for women had an ungenerous aspect. For every one in the first class, three were in the next, nine in the next, then twenty-seven, then eighty-one. Eighty-one of every one hundred twenty-one women formed the lowest class.

(Vision and Realization Vol.1, 1973: 1153–1154.)

When the first Secondary Rolls were established in 1926 the same ratios were retained and remained in force for approximately twenty years. This meant that the majority of women were locked into the lowest class and suffered the disadvantages of both low status and low pay because women were paid less than men in the same class.

By 1971 all these former career disadvantages were removed – women enjoyed equal pay, a place in the Common Classified Roll, and the right to be appointed as Principal to any school. (There was one exception to this. In the mid 1970s the most senior applicant for the position of Principal at one of Victoria's prestigious Boys' High Schools was a woman. She was not appointed and did not win her appeal. In contrast, men did gain appointment as Principal to Girls' High Schools.) In 1971 20% of Secondary and 8% of Technical School Principal Class positions were held by women. Because detailed records were not kept it has been impossible to discover how many of these actually held the position of Principal. Since then, despite a few minor fluctuations, the percentage of women Principals in Post-Primary Schools has steadily declined.

The Changing Promotion System. Those women who gained Principals' positions in the early 1970s did so under circumstances that were little changed from that described in the opening quotation. They had, as a result of Inspection, been adjudged suitable for promotion (many were already in the highest class) and they had sufficient seniority to enable them to gain appointments over more junior male colleagues. This promotion system, however, was already changing.

In 1969 the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association (VSTA) directed 'All secondary teachers to refuse to be inspected for promotion purposes by the Board of Secondary Inspectors ... (Quoted in Hooper 1987: 132) and, as a result, a new method of assessment was introduced. Assessment Panels – consisting of a Ministerial Representative, the School Principal, and a Teacher Representative – interviewed the applicant to determine suitability for promotion. At the same time assessment also became optional. In the last stages of this study (mid 1988) the assessment system changed yet again but these changes were introduced too late to affect the study.

In 1983 the most far-reaching change in the promotion process took place – School Councils became involved in the selection of Principals. In schools with a Principal Class vacancy Councils could draw up a job description and advertise for a suitable applicant. The Council would then set up a Selection Panel consisting of the Council President, Council Representatives, Teacher Representatives, Union Representative, Ministerial Representative and, where the vacancy was for a Deputy/Vice Principal, the Principal of the school. The task of this Panel was to shortlist then interview applicants, decide on the relative merits of the applicants in priority order, and submit their recommendations to Council. Council could then accept or reject these recommendations and forward their decision to the Appointments Board.

This change had a dramatic effect on the promotion process because it has meant that any member of the Principal Class or any Senior Teacher who had held that position for three years, was suitably qualified, and was registered by the appropriate Teacher Registration Board was now eligible to apply. Seniority no longer had to be the final deciding factor, nor was merit as adjudged by

assessment. The Education Department, or Ministry of Education as it came to be known, no longer decides on the eligibility of applicants to obtain the position – this is decided by a panel of lay people and professionals. The Ministry has only one representative on this panel.

The Study and its Background

The present study was initially prompted by the alarming evidence regarding the declining number of women High School Principals – the 20% women in Principal Class positions in 1971 had dropped to 12% by 1981 (Appendix 2, Table 3) – despite the fact that, in the same period, the percentage of classified women teachers had risen from 45% to 52% (Appendix 2, Table 1). This meant that not only were the numbers of women in the Principal Class lower than could be expected considering the percentage of women teachers but the numbers were actually growing smaller. Such a situation was extremely puzzling because all apparent barriers to the promotion of women had been removed with the introduction of the Common Roll.

In order to understand how these discrepancies could occur it was decided to identify the various steps in the promotion process and then investigate both how women approached and were affected by the process.

- At the time when the study was first considered (1981–2) there were three main stages in the promotion process:–
- Application for assessment;
- Recognition by an Assessment Panel of the applicant's suitability for promotion; and
- Application for a chosen advertised vacancy.

If the survey found, for example, that fewer women than men applied for assessment or for promotion positions this would lead to a different study than if it were found that markedly fewer women than men were assessed as suitable for promotion.

To test which of these possibilities applied, questionnaires were sent out at the end of 1982 to all Victorian High Schools. All teachers who had applied for assessment in 1981 and 1982 were asked to respond to a series of questions designed to ascertain the following information:

- Age
- Sex
- Classified position in the school
- Composition of the Assessment Panel
- Result of the assessment
- Whether promotion was applied for
- Whether promotion was achieved.

Of the 831 respondents, 131 failed to indicate their sex thus leaving 700 responses that could be checked to see whether there were any differences according to sex. Table 1 shows the responses given.

TABLE 1

Number of Applicants for Assessment in 1981 and 1982 by Sex

	Number	Relative Frequency	Adjusted
Males	536	64.5%	76.6%
Females	164	19.7%	23.4%
Unknown	131	15.8%	—
Total	831	100.0%	100.0%

Even if every one of the 131 respondents who did not indicate their sex were female the percentage of females applying for assessment would not rise above 35.5%

There were two other interesting and relevant findings from that small survey. The first concerned the ratings by the Assessment Panels. In 1981, of those applying for assessment, 78.7% of females and 78.3% of males were recommended for

promotion. In 1982 the figures were 66.7% and 72.7% respectively. This would appear to indicate that female applicants were not being disadvantaged by that part of the assessment process. The second concerned the composition of the Assessment Panels – they were overwhelmingly male. Each of the three categories of representation proved to be male in over 80% of cases. This same pattern has been found in Selection Panels for promotion both here and overseas.

The results of this preliminary survey therefore indicated that the focus of the study should be concerned with the problem of why such a high percentage of women did not seek assessment for promotion in Victorian High Schools.

The Focus of the Study

Shortly after this decision was reached the whole promotion process changed, as has been detailed above. There was also another change. Historically the Technical and High School Divisions were separate entities with separate promotion processes but, during the course of this study they began to merge. As can be seen from Appendix 1 (Tables 1–8), the Technical Division was the one section of the Education Department that was overwhelmingly male at all levels. It now is the only Section of the Ministry where women appear to be gaining more promotion positions – in 1980 the percentage of female Technical Principals was 2.33%, in 1987 this had grown to 9.71% (Appendix 2, Table 2).

Despite this, the overall decline in the percentage of women in the Principal Class has continued (Appendix 2, Table 3) although the large decline in the High School positions is counterbalanced by the improved position of women in Technical Schools. This decline has taken place at the same time as the relative number of women teachers has increased. Once again that increase has been particularly evident in the Technical Division (23.13% in 1980 to 29.74% in 1987 – Appendix 2, Table 2).

Overall, the situation has become a cause of increased concern as evidenced by the 1986 State Board Report entitled School Council Involvement in the Selection of Principals in Post-Primary Schools: The Status of Women; a 1986 Ministerial Action Plan for Women in the Teaching Service; and comments by other researchers which indicate an awareness of the problem. For example, in their conclusions to a study on Women Principals in Victoria (1985:1986), Rimmer and Davies put as top priority the need for a study on 'why it is that there are decreasing numbers of women in administrative positions in the Victorian Department of Education ...'.

This question, posed so simply, cannot be answered easily although the answer most commonly given in the Victorian context is that women do not gain administrative positions because they do not apply for them. Those who do apply, it is claimed, have at least as good a chance as their male colleagues. This response, however, does not provide an explanation, it merely leads to another question.

The literature provides answers that could be grouped under three main headings: 1) Sex-role Socialization and Stereotypes, 2) Structure of Organizations, and 3) The Patriarchal Nature of Society. Each of these presents explanations for the absence of women from administrative positions but they too leave a number of unanswered questions. Most importantly, they fail to explain the presence of exceptions. If these three forces are each so powerful individually, when they operate collectively they should be irresistible. They clearly are not. Women do seek and do achieve career advancement.

It was therefore decided to focus the study on the perceptions of a particular group of women teachers – those who were seeking promotion – and to try to gain from them an understanding of how they viewed themselves; their lives; their careers; and, in particular, how they saw this new promotion process affecting their career opportunities and expectations. This meant that the original focus on the application for assessment was dropped because the former methods of assessment had lost their relevance in the new process. It was also broadened to include teachers in the Technical as well as the Secondary Division as all women

applicants in secondary schools now face the same promotion process even though they may have reached their present positions by different routes in different systems. Each applicant brings to that process an individual perspective and it is this perspective that is of major importance. It must be recognized, however, that perspectives are shaped by many different factors and the system in which one works, although important, is but one of these factors.

The study therefore focuses on the perceptions of women teachers who were seeking promotion to Principal Class positions in Victorian Secondary schools in the middle of 1987.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The stress upon personal evaluation, idiosyncratic views and the like, as they are the predispositions of subjective career, should not be seen as leading us into the blind alley of ungeneralizable psychology. These interpretations may still be nonconsensually shared by some or all members of the career group.

Stebbins (1970:41)

The Purpose of the Study

This study focuses on the way women seeking leadership positions in schools perceive themselves, their lives, their careers, and the new promotion process. The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding from these women of how they see their life experiences and, in particular, their work experiences as affecting their career development.

The Identification of the Participants for the Study

It was decided that the women most likely to be aware of career development would be those seeking career advancement and that the best time for contacting them would be when they were actually involved in applying for new positions because the time of application is a time of heightened perception for all applicants. The current selection process, by its very nature, forces applicants to think carefully about the position for which they are applying and to consider whether they have the skills, experiences and training to fit them for that position. For this reason women applying for positions in the mid-year round of appointments in 1987 were contacted and asked if they were willing to take part in the study.

The only way this contact could be made was through the assistance of the Chairman of the Appointments Board because the demands of confidentiality preclude the release of names. He forwarded the preliminary information on the

study (Appendix 6) with a supportive covering letter (Appendix 7) to all women applicants – eighty-eight in all. Of these sixty-two replied on the return slips in the stamped addressed envelopes provided. These women, with one exception, then became the sources of the data on which this study was based. As each return slip arrived it was given a number and that became the number by which the participant was referred to through the study.

Of the original group of volunteers, only one was unable to be interviewed (51). There were, however, sixty-two interviews because a Senior Teacher (53), who had applied for positions in the past and who had intended to do so in the particular round being focussed on, heard about the study from a fellow teacher and volunteered to take part. She was accepted because it was considered that her perceptions would be particularly interesting. When she had contacted the schools she intended to apply for she believed she was discouraged from continuing with the applications by people in those schools.

THE NATURE OF THE STUDY

An initial review and analysis of the literature focused on those factors that help shape the lives of women thus affecting their approach to the world around them it was also used to develop the research methodology most suited to this type of study. As a result of that search it became even more evident that it was important for the study to focus on the experiences and perceptions of women and that this was best achieved by the collection of qualitative data.

This analysis highlighted an important gap – the female perspective was missing in both works on organizational theory and, surprisingly, many works on and even by women.

It became apparent that writers on organization theory have not, to any great degree, taken account of women. They are absent from the texts either

because they have played no part in the development of theory or because their presence is subsumed under the generic term 'man'. Shakeshaft and Hanson(1986) reached the same conclusion after critically examining articles appearing in the Educational Administration Quarterly, during the period 1970–80, for androcentric bias. They concluded that the female perspective was usually missing from problem selection and formulation, review of previous research, selection of samples, data collection procedures, and interpretation of results.

These findings should not be surprising. With few exceptions, until recently, research into administration and management was carried out by males and about males. Because so few women held administrative positions, concepts such as leadership naturally reflected the male image and practice was evaluated by using criteria developed within this male culture. Writers have noted that women's perspective is lacking not only in organizational theory (Demetrulias, 1986; Kanter, 1977:20; Wolff, 1977:2) but also history (Friedl, 1976) and research into education (Llewellyn, 1980:45), evolution (Morgan, 1972:30–1), and sociology (Delphy, 1981; Eisenstein 1984:74).

Researchers and writers have accepted as the norm that males become administrators while females remain teachers and have tended to ignore the few females who do become administrators or have assumed that their career paths and career experiences were similar to those of their male colleagues. This assumption is challenged by, for example, Shakeshaft (1987:79–80) who argued that selection for promotion is complicated for females by the introduction of gender into the process. She then further argued that research on overcoming barriers to group acceptance is nonexistent because it has not been an issue for the dominant group – white males.

While it is true that some males do face group discrimination this is not on the basis of gender. It usually has its source in either class (Kanter, 1977:140) or race (Ortiz, 1980; Valverde, 1980). Growing awareness of this has led to the realization that the responses of these depressed groups are similar to those of females – lowered career aspirations (Kanter, 1977:140–1); and ingratiating and accommodative behaviour in the presence of status holders (Oakley 1972:74).

Those who do write about women, mainly feminist writers, claim that women approach the practice of administration differently from men. Little research has been carried out into these differences. It often appears that the differences are assumed to be present because female characteristics are seen to be different from those of males. Some research has actually found the opposite – no differences in approach to administration (Adkinson, 1981:317–8; Brown, 1979:597). Other studies appear to have been undertaken in an attempt to demonstrate that female administrators are as good as, if not better than, their male counterparts (Frasher and Frasher, 1979).

Shakeshaft (1987:195), after examining this issue, reported: The research on male and female administrators and the voices of the women administrators from interviews conducted, lead me to believe that both male and female administrators use a range of behaviours in their work, but that the patterns of use are different.

This needs to be explored further because:

- if women do have a different view of educational administration from men then the practice of administration according to the male model could be seen as an alien and alienating experience for women who may then be reluctant to take on that role; and
- if there is a difference between the way males and females approach administration it has not been fully explored, nor has it been used to inform or help in the development of administrative theory.

Feminist writers could not be accused of ignoring women but some, at least, do ignore women's perspectives. The feminist writer's own frame of reference, which often appears to be that women are the victims of a patriarchal plot to keep them in subjection, means that they concentrate on negatives – the forces working against the self determination of females and the adverse effects of these forces on their personalities and life choices.

Paradoxically, these same writers tend to judge the women they talk about on male criteria – they are described in comparative terms, for example, as less logical or more emotional. The basis of this comparison is clearly the male or, more exactly, male stereotypes. This could lead to the strange situation where women's strengths can be presented as weaknesses. For example, it is often claimed, despite evidence to the contrary (Hrebiniak and Alutto, 1972) and despite their recognized commitment to teaching, that women lack commitment to work (Rimmer and Davies, 1985:159). Commitment, on close examination, is not defined as 'doing the job well' but is seen to be equated with seeking promotion out of the classroom and into administration (Acker, 1983:128–9).

Stanley and Wise (1983:96) believe this has come about because these writers are looking at the world through the framework of the socialization model:

What feminists who adopt the socialization model seem unwilling to confront is that this model embodies the values and power divisions of sexist society.

The use of this model, then, encourages the categorization by gender terms and supports the maintenance of gender divisions.

In addition, as noted earlier, most of the literature fails to explain why women would attempt to establish a career when they had been rendered so unsuitable for this by their socialization and when they are so unwanted in administrative positions that such a move must have unpleasant consequences for them. Only the women could explain that anomaly and in many cases they were not asked except, for example, in two of the more recent studies by Shakeshaft (1987) and Edson (1988).

This appeared to be an important omission. Asking the women themselves would seem to be an essential step in gaining an understanding of the ways women view their careers in general and the promotion process in particular. This gap in the literature reinforced the need for this study to focus on the perceptions of women interested in career progression.

It is recognized that the views of the group of women selected for the study may not be representative of those of all women teachers. There is a high probability that the women taking part in the study are different from their colleagues – they had applied for promotion and they had volunteered to take part in the study. However, this narrowing of the focus onto the group of women who are most aware of and most involved in career progression opens up the possibilities of developing a better understanding of how women view a 'career' and how they see their career progress being helped or hindered.

The choice of this particular group was therefore made to improve the quality of the data by involving women who were made more aware of their situation by the pressures of the application and selection process.

Approach to the Study

Once the focus and purpose of the study were established it was clear that there was only one research methodology that would meet its purpose. It had to be a qualitative study using an emergent design that would generate theory from the data collected.

Consideration was also given to using both qualitative and quantitative methods, i.e. triangulation, as advised by Jick (1979). He argues that this mixing of approach helps to improve validity. It was decided that such a methodology would be inappropriate for a study that is based on perceptions.

Perceptions represent the personal responses of the individual and two people can 'see' the same situation quite differently. Hart (1978:394), describing the learning process, noted:

We now know beyond question that (the brain) is elaborately "gated". That is, it will admit only those inputs it decides to admit, and each brain processes what it does admit in its own individual way. ... The processing depends little on what or how the teacher has presented and greatly on the total, previous, stored experience in that particular brain.

Stebbins (1970:35) similarly drew attention to how 'these products of past experience impinge upon our awareness, equip us with a specific view of the world, and guide behaviour in the immediate present'.

This influence of perceptions on behaviour is crucial. Whether the perception is right or wrong is irrelevant because the behaviour is based on the perception not the objective reality (Hargreaves, 1975:33). The accuracy of the perception may become relevant at a later stage if one is considering how to influence behaviour.

A qualitative approach also encourages the researcher to focus on the data and what they reveal rather than on the proving or disproving of an hypothesis and thus to remain open to new ideas that may be presented by the data. However, it is often argued that, because the researcher is, in effect, the instrument of the research the findings are subjective and there is a danger of bias.

While it is not possible to enter any study without one's own perceptions and preconceptions it is possible to clarify them. The motivating forces behind this study were curiosity and concern. The writer was puzzled by the absence of women from administrative positions and was concerned that their expertise was being lost from that area. She did not hope to prove that women were being discriminated against or that the new promotion process was going to make the situation better or worse. She expected to learn from those participating in the study and she expected complex rather than simple answers.

This encouraged the use of a qualitative study as this approach enables one to 'deal with the complex interactions and patterns of human behaviour' (Guba and Lincoln, 1981:81). This is not the only advantage: it also ensures that individual differences are preserved and not lost in aggregations of data and that the development of hypotheses and theories are based on the data collected.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Once it was decided to use a qualitative approach based on the perceptions of those applicants for positions who agreed to take part in the study it was then necessary to choose the most appropriate means of discovering those perceptions. Two methods of data collection were selected – questionnaire and in depth interview – and the development of these was informed by the needs of the study and the findings from earlier research studies.

The Development of the Questionnaire and Interview

The decision to use both a questionnaire and interview was reached after considering the kinds of data required – factual (e.g., age, place of birth) and descriptive/perceptual (e.g., What do you think are the experiences necessary for someone hoping to take on the role of the Principal?). While it would have been possible to collect both these types of data in the interview alone such a process could have deflected attention from its main purpose (to focus on perceptions) and it would certainly have made the interview too long.

It was therefore decided to seek the information by both questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire (Appendix 5), which was intended to provide a profile of the participants, consisted mainly of questions that could be answered by ticks or a few words. Rarely were the participants asked to elaborate because it was realized that they were busy people who would have a chance to give more details in the interview.

The first draft of the questionnaire was trialled with three people and, as a result, questions were added (e.g., Q.33, the question on work experience outside schools) and others were restructured as the original questions on leadership positions (Q.18) and professional reading (Section E) were seen as value laden and possibly threatening to those who could respond only with negatives.

Not all short answer questions were included in the questionnaire. Some were used in the interview to provide ease of entry to the interview situation and, during the interview, to provide a change of pace. As far as possible questions were kept open ended and value free to enable the participants to present their own ideas.

The structure of the interview (Appendix 4) was designed to move the interviewee from the present, to the past, and on to the future; from facts, through perceptions to analysis. There was a deliberate change of topic after Question 29, 'If you are unsuccessful this time will you keep trying?' so that when the selection process was later discussed the interviewee would have more chance of being objective. Prior to the interviews the researcher felt some concern about the abruptness of that transition but in practice found it provided an important safety valve for some of the participants who found the discussion of the application processes very stressful.

The Content of the Questionnaire and Interview

A review of the literature had indicated that certain factors could be important in encouraging or inhibiting the career advancement of women. These could be summed up as:

- 1) Qualifications.
- 2) Experiences.
- 3) Characteristics.
- 4) Opportunity.
- 5) Nature of the role being sought.
- 6) Support.
- 7) Constraints.
- 8) Priorities of applicant.
- 9) Application process
- 10) Nature of the selection process.

The questionnaire and interview were then constructed using these as a basis.

Qualifications. A number of writers suggest that women are underqualified (e.g., Deem, 1980:3; McCulloch, 1984:8), have the wrong qualifications (e.g., Griffiths, 1980:128; Sampson, 1985:19; Stockard and Kempner, 1981:82), or, in contrast, are well qualified (Jones and Montenegro, 1982:6; Silver, 1977:207; Varley, 1973:2–3). The first two situations are seen as limiting career choices and career progress while the third alternative is said to come about because women feel they need some substitute for experience (Sagaria, 1985:28).

As well as formal qualifications there are also inservice courses available which increase expertise in specific areas and there are numerous professional publications available. It is claimed that women are often not given opportunities for inservice or are barred from it because it is not made available at times suitable to them (Mennerick, 1975:581; Malcolm, 1979:105; Wolff, 1977:7).

To explore these points further it was decided to use both the questionnaire and the interview. In the questionnaire participants were asked questions on type and level of schooling attained, tertiary qualifications gained, and the type and duration of inservice courses they had attended. In the interview this was explored to find out why they did or did not proceed further with their education, which study areas they selected and why they made that particular choice, whether they were given any encouragement and financial assistance to continue, how useful they had found the further study (personally and in terms of their careers), whether they had plans for any further study, and how they thought the selection panels would regard qualifications.

By an examination of the answers to these questions it was hoped to see what importance the participants placed on qualifications and professional development for their own personal and career growth. As the interviews proceeded a third dimension emerged. Participants made it clear that they were conscious of the views of members of selection panels and that this could have an effect on the use they made of their qualifications and attendance at inservice courses when presenting their case. This was then incorporated into the questions.

Experiences. The review of the literature strongly indicated that women, because they are seen as short term temporary workers or as unsuitable for career advancement, are denied opportunities to gain the kinds of experiences necessary for career progression. Writers claimed that women are kept in subsidiary roles and are isolated in marginal positions (Adkinson, 1980, 1981:321; Adkinson and Bailey, 1981:10–13; Chisholm and Woodward, 1980:165; Ditchburn and Martin, 1986:9; Kanter, 1977:207; Mahoney, 1985:23; Matheson, 1985:21; Mennerick, 1975:580; Ortiz, 1980:2).

While this sexual division of labour is more easily identified for those working in commerce and industry it is also true of the professions. There too women are concentrated in the lower levels of the hierarchy (Mahoney, 1985:23; Ortiz, 1980:4).

It is further suggested that prior to commencing work they do not take part in activities that would help them in the working world. For example, Hennig and Jardim (1978:41–46) claim that women in management are disadvantaged by the fact that they did not take part in team games as children.

There are counter arguments offered to all this. These put the case that, because of the stress on the male, the value of female experience is not recognized. For example, research in the United States indicates that women administrators have been classroom teachers for longer than their male colleagues and that their major specialization has been in curriculum rather than administration. Shakeshaft (1987:87, 177) would argue that skills in these areas should help improve instructional leadership and should therefore be seen as an asset rather than a liability for aspiring school administrators.

Again it was decided to explore this through both the questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire asked for details of subjects and levels taught; leadership positions held in school, both as a pupil and teacher; and the value that was placed on the holding of these positions. Participants were also asked about any previous or present involvement in community activities.

When the questionnaire was trialled one of the participants pointed out that she had not spent all her working life in schools and that these other work experiences had proved very valuable. As a result a question was added to discover whether participants had work experience outside schools, what kinds of work they had engaged in, and what value they placed on it. Then, because the literature suggested that women's work is given low esteem, they were reminded that they could include home duties in that section.

The interview explored these experiences in much more detail with the focus on the positions aspired to. Participants were asked what prior experiences they thought were necessary for someone wishing to move into Principal Class positions and whether they thought they had these experiences. The stress was deliberately positive, on the experiences they had. Again they were asked what they thought the perceptions of panel members would be.

They were also asked whether they had changed their behaviour as a result of the new understandings gained from the process. For example, those who expressed concerns about lack of certain experiences were asked whether they intended to do anything about it.

The answers to these questions, it was hoped, would not only indicate the prior experiences of the participants and the values they placed on these when measured against the experiences they saw as ideal but would also make clear the ways participants responded to the situations in which they found themselves.

Characteristics. This factor was explored only through the interview. Some writers suggest that managerial characteristics are male normed (Chapman and Luthans, 1975:174; Foster and Kolinko, 1979:628; Frasher and Frasher, 1979:5; Kanter, 1977:22–3) and that female stereotypes make it difficult for selectors to see women in leadership roles and for women to see themselves in these roles. Aspiring managers are expected to exhibit leadership, objectivity, competitiveness, self-confidence, ambition, aggressiveness, forcefulness, and desire for responsibility (Sargent, 1981:55). These are not the characteristics normally ascribed to women (See Table 2) who are seen as compliant, dependent, relationship oriented, non-competitive, and emotional.

Characteristics Associated with Females

Sex Linked Attribute	Source
Passive, submissive, yielding	Chapman and Luthans (1975:173), Clarricoates (1980:28), Day (1983:58), Eisenstein (1984:8), Grimshaw and Strahan (1982:2), Hocking (1983:7), Sargent (1981)
Dependent Less independent	Grimshaw and Strahan (1982:2), Rimmer and Davies (1985b:6)
Gentle, not aggressive or Less aggressive	Mennerick (1975:582), Rimmer and Davies (1985b:6) Sargent (1981:582),
Less competitive, able to cultivate cooperativeness	Eisenstein (1984:65-66), Rimmer and Davies (1985b:5)
Too emotional, More emotional, Able to experience, express and interpret emotions	Eisenstein (1984:65-66), Hocking (1983:7) (1985:155), Marshall (1984:79-80), Mennerick (1975:582), Rimmer and Davies (1985a:155)
Able to express vulnerability More sensitive Shy	Eisenstein (1984:65-66), Rimmer and Davies (1985b:6) Sargent (1981)
Altruistic, sensitive to the needs of others, understanding and sympathetic, supportive, Greater orientation to relationships and interdependence	Aldefer and Guzzo (1979:351), Gilligan (1982:80), Grimshaw and Strahan (1982:2), Hocking (1983:7), Sargent (1981), Schaef (1981:108)
Maternal, nurturing, more tactful, affectionate, loves children, warm, tender and compassionate, eager to soothe hurt feelings, soft spoken, does not use harsh language	Marshall (1984:80), Rimmer and Davies (1985a:155-6), Sargent (1981)
Less objective and logical, gullible, childlike, open to manipulation by flattery	Rimmer and Davies (1985b:6) Sargent (1981)
Sex Linked Attribute	Source
Less competent	Rimmer and Davies (1985b:6)
Placebound	Mennerick (1975:582), Singer and Collin (1979:9), Whitcombe (1981:156)
Loyal	Sargent (1981)
Cheerful	Sargent (1981)
More neat	Rimmer and Davies (1985b:6)

If these female stereotypes are correct it is surprising that any woman would apply for administrative positions.

One explanation offered for this apparent contradiction is that females who seek to move into areas defined as male are different from those who do not. Explanations of these differences are presented in Table 3:

TABLE 3

Characteristics of Women Who Apply for Promotion

Characteristic	Source
Possession of self assurance, self knowledge, or definition of self as capable	Day (1983:56), Foster and Kolinko (1979:627), Hennig and Jardim (1978:179)
Personal motivation Redefinition of the female role in their own terms	Ortiz (1980:12) Mc Intosh (1974:39)
Determination to follow a career despite the fact it will take them into a group that will see them as alien	Marshall (1985:132)

Women who seek promotion must be prepared to be seen as different from their male colleagues and from women who do not wish to seek career progression.

This isolation of women seeking or achieving managerial positions means that they are often lonely, they are seen as different, and their very scarcity makes them highly visible (Kanter, 1977:207). This has led to the coining of such phrases as 'token' or 'marginal' or 'stigmatized' women in an attempt to highlight their difficulties. They are seen as attempting 'to play a man's game' and the reaction to this is often negative.

Participants were therefore asked what image they thought members of the community have of the Principal/Deputy, whether they thought they fitted that image and, if not, whether they intended to do anything about it. It was hoped that such an approach would give the participants a chance to describe themselves without being confined to stereotypic terms and thinking.

Opportunity. Many writers claim that women lack opportunity for career advancement (e.g., Frasher and Frasher, 1980:246; O'Donnell, 1984:5, Robertson, 1979:637; Stockard and Kempner, 1981:82). A variety of reasons is given for this. For example, it is suggested that women are more place bound than men and that they may be seen as more suitable for particular kinds of positions, those seen as 'feminine' (Ortiz, 1980:3-6; Rimmer and Davies, 1985:158-9; Shakeshaft, 1987:69) or that they have more chance of success in male dominated occupations (Smith, 1979:370).

To find out whether their choice of schools was limited to a particular geographic area, to a particular size, or a particular type, the early part of the interview concentrated on the actual application for vacancies that had just been made and the reasons for the selection of the particular schools. In the round being studied there were also positions available in some Girls' High Schools so this provided an opportunity to gauge attitudes to these as compared to co-educational schools. Those who had applied for positions in the past were asked similar questions about previous selections of schools.

Other factors which could also increase or limit opportunity for career advancement were suggested by the literature: family attitudes (McIntosh, 1974:39; Woodward, 1981:182), engaging in activities that increase confidence (Carpenter and Western, 1983:31; Gray et al, 1982:19), application for a position in the present school (Marshall, 1984:124; Morgan et al., 1983:65-6), and the suitability of the job description (Ballenden, 1985:21). These were explored through both the questionnaire and interview. Other long term aspects of opportunity were explored through the questions on schooling, qualifications and prior experiences.

Nature of the role being sought. The role of the Principal can be arduous and stressful despite the fact that some recent research (Sarros and Sarros, 1987:225) suggests it is less stressful than that of the classroom teacher. There is no doubt that it is time consuming and this could create problems for women who often feel overloaded by home and work pressures and do not wish to take on any more commitments (Hall, 1972:473; Marshall, 1984:189; Shakeshaft, 1987:89).

It is also male dominated and could therefore be alienating because of the managerial stereotypes that have developed and the way the role is carried out by current practitioners. Women who apply know that they may be seen as unsuited to the role because they do not display the desired characteristics. They may also be alienated by a role that concentrates more on management of resources than the people management and educational leadership that women appear to prefer (Shakeshaft, 1987:177).

These possibilities were explored in the interview only. Participants were asked about the experiences necessary for taking on the role of Principal or Deputy, the image of these roles held by the general community, whether they felt they matched these images, whether they intended to try to change themselves if they did not match the images, and, finally, how they would like to be seen once they achieved the role they were seeking.

Support. Much of the writing on support for women paradoxically concentrates on negatives. Women appear to lack many of the support structures available to men. Research indicates that consciousness of gender differences makes it harder for women to receive career help from influential males who may fear that such help could be misinterpreted (e.g., Marshall, 1985:133). This means that women who as a group have the greatest need of sponsorship, have least chance of receiving it (Hennig and Jardim, 1977:67; Jones and Montenegro, 1982:2; Valverde 1980:16) because male sponsors are unwilling and there are too few women in leadership positions to take on the role of sponsor.

It is claimed that the small number of women in management also robs aspiring women of another form of support: role models to demonstrate how women can successfully balance the pressures of work (and family) and not only survive but even do well (Jones and Montenegro, 1982:2; Marshall, 1980:5; Robertson, 1979:645–6; Shakeshaft, 1987:115; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979:247).

In addition to the need for strong role models it is suggested that, for women, sponsorship is especially important. Hennig and Jardim (1977) found that all the women in their study who rose to the top levels of management received help from an influential male. Apart from this example there is little other evidence to support this claim, mainly because so few women receive sponsorship. Like the belief in the importance of role models it appears to originate more in the idea that it should be useful in advancing the careers of women rather than in actual reported practice.

Other writers argue that women are further disadvantaged in that they lack peer support, do not belong to networks (Adkinson, 1981:326; Gray et al., 1982:22; Jones and Montenegro, 1982:2; Lincoln and Miller, 1979; Marshall, 1980:11; Stockard and Kempner, 1981:82;) and do not see their value (Marshall, 1984:95; Sagaria, 1985:29). In addition they may even be actively discouraged from seeking career advancement.

There is one final and even deeper level of support that is lacking – expectations that women could or should engage in a career, i.e., work that entails the idea of progression to higher responsibilities. Expectancy theory postulates that a person is motivated to perform effectively if there is some hope of achieving a reward and if the reward is one that is desired (Lawler, 1973:161). Similarly Merton (1968:200–5) explores the adverse effects of stressing success goals for the population at large but then closing off the possibility of achieving those goals for many members of that population. He suggests that, in self defence, those who are cut off from opportunity lower their aspirations. Mennerick (1975:582) concluded that low expectations for women prevented them from seeking certain jobs and limited their chances of success if they did.

This whole process becomes circular. Richards (1983:144–5) notes that when a group is excluded from certain activities these activities begin to develop in a way unsuited to the excluded group. This in turn discourages members of the excluded group from seeking to take part in these activities because they no longer see them as suitable.

To find out the kinds of support that the participants had received both the questionnaire and interview were used. The questionnaire sought information on only one form of support – financial help and/or time release that the women may have received from their employing authority to enable them to pursue their studies. The other aspects, support offered, support sought, and support received were explored in the interview. In addition, to gain some idea of whether they had any female professional role models, they were asked if they had ever worked with a woman Principal, if they knew any, and what opinions they held of women Principals.

Constraints. So many of the research findings are so negative that every one of the factors identified as affecting women's career development could be seen as offering constraints. There are, however, two barriers that are seen as major by many writers. The first of these is marriage.

Because a woman's primary role is seen as the maintenance of the home and family and because her outside work is seen as taking second place (Ashton and McGuire, 1980:118; O Donnell, 1984:6, 166; Shakeshaft, 1987:61-2) it is assumed that she will: do all, or most, of the housework; that she will take primary responsibility for the childcare and will take time off work to carry out this role if necessary; that she will give up her own job and follow her husband if his career necessitates this; and that her outside work is undertaken only to provide the necessary second income to support the home. A career and marriage are seen as mutually exclusive (Llewellyn, 1981:156). These attitudes are changing in a small section of the community – mainly the professionals – but, even there, the husband tends to see himself as 'helping the wife in her home duties' (Woodward, 1981:182). These attitudes are also shared by women themselves (Chisholm and Woodward, 1980:173; Llewellyn, 1981:156; Malcolm, 1979:103-4; Matheson, 1985:22).

These assumptions also affect the position of women in the work place. It is assumed that they do not want careers; that they would not be working if they could stay home; and that they are unreliable because they are likely to leave either to have children or to look after them.

This means that for most women marriage does not provide the same career support as it does for males (Fogarty et al., 1972:27; Marshall, 1980:6; Woodward, 1981:182). Not only does it increase the workload for women who try to combine both marriage and a career but husbands may also be unsupportive (Fiske, 1979:20). This could be because it can actually disadvantage the career of husbands who are employed in professional or managerial areas (Ezrati, 1983:109) and who need career support from their wives (Pfeffer and Ross, 1982).

Ezrati (1983:106-8) reported that female academics responded to this dilemma by remaining single; by limiting the size of their families, which were much smaller than those of their male colleagues; and by restricting their job applications to those which did not necessitate moving to a new geographic location. Similarly Shakeshaft (1987:62) found that fewer women principals than men principals were married and that the married women were more likely to be

divorced or widowed than their male colleagues. Hennig and Jardim (1977) found the women in their study either postponed marriage or remained single.

Some research indicates that marriage adversely affects women's careers by: discouraging a long term view of work (Dyson and Szirom, 1983:61); causing women's vertical ambitions to fall (Fogarty et al., 1972:25); and causing work overload through simultaneous multiple roles (Hall, 1972:473). Childbearing, by leading to broken service, also can disadvantage women's career prospects (Ezrati, 1983:112-3; Marshall, 1984:188).

For many women, then, marriage and a career can be mutually exclusive, particularly when there are children. Women, therefore, have to make a choice between a career or marriage or a career combined with marriage. It is suggested that those who attempt to combine the two face work overload and the realization that broken service, or the expectations of broken service, can affect career prospects.

This, however, is not true in all cases. For example, McIntosh (1974:39) found that married women teachers were as likely to apply for promotion as single women and the same was true for married women with children where the husband was supportive. Bowker et al. (1983:78-9) found that women university faculty members were as interested in gaining promotion as men. Matheson (1985:21), in a review of a research study into the changing role of women in Australia, reported that sixty-four per cent of those defined by the study as career women were both married and had children.

Both Matheson (1985:22) and McIntosh (1974:35-6) reported that the key element in women's satisfaction with their lives was their certainty that they had made the right decision for themselves. Elkind (1984:148) similarly found that what mattered was not whether women did or did not go out to work but their attitude to their decision. Hall (1972), in his study on the way women cope with role conflict, concluded that women who had managed to negotiate with role senders and achieve a new set of expectations for their behaviour were more likely to be satisfied than those who attempted to meet all demands by doing everything perfectly or even than those who attempted to decide which demands would be given priority over others.

The other major barrier and one that may lie at the heart of all others is the reality of gender. Management of organizations is seen to be an exclusively male function and is defined in male terms. Management characteristics, as typified by male managers, have become the accepted standard for good management practice (Chapman and Luthans, 1975:174; Foster and Kolinko, 1979:628; Frasher and Frasher, 1979:5; Kanter, 1977:22–3) although Brown (1979:597) did report some exceptions to this. Despite these exceptions he did not deny that sex role stereotyping is pervasive.

This pervasiveness of gender, with its associated expectations and stereotypes, creates a major difficulty for women aspiring to administrative positions. When seeking career progress, they have an additional hurdle to overcome – the perception of others (including members of the same gender) that they, as women, are attempting to move outside their proper sphere (Spender, 1982:102–3). If they display effective leadership skills they are seen as unfeminine but if they present a feminine image they are seen as unsuitable for leadership (Gray et al., 1982:21).

In practice, that additional hurdle tends to multiply and permeate all other areas of the career progression. It leads to the assumptions that women do not want careers (jobs are there as a temporary expedient until marriage or to provide a second income after marriage) and that women in the workforce are limited in the kinds of work they can do as shown in Table 4:

TABLE 4

The Effects of Gender on Assumptions Concerning Women's Career
Progression

Assumptions	Source
Women are better suited to jobs that match their expressive needs	Cass (1983:77), Marshall (1980:4), Mennerick (1975:582), Ortiz (1980:4), Rimmer and Davies (1985:157)
Women do not need training or wider experiences to fit them for increasingly responsible positions	Ashmore and Maguire (1980:120), Griffiths (1980:130), Malcolm (1979:105)
Women in a managerial role will not be strong or decisive enough to be effective	Marshall (1984:14-19), Singer and Collin (1979:4)

These issues were explored in the interview. Firstly they were expected to emerge when the participants gave their responses to questions on reasons for current application, selection of schools, and kinds of support or discouragement given. In addition the participants were asked four specific questions (51, 62, 63, 64) relating to some research findings on: the effect of the managerial role on the femininity of women, women and ambition, the perceived attitude of subordinates to women in managerial positions, and the greater suitability of promotion processes to male applicants.

Priorities of applicant. No one would deny that a career in administration, while it has its rewards, also demands the sacrifice of considerable personal time and energy. Those seeking such a career would therefore have to give this top priority if they hope to succeed. Women, it is claimed, put other priorities first as is shown in Table 6:

TABLE 5

Factors Given a High Priority by Women

Priority	Source
Women place home and family before a career	Ashton and Maguire (1980:118), Malcolm (1979:103-4)
Women place teaching before administration	Kronemann (1983:9), Malcolm (1979:104)
Women prefer a wide range of activities to concentrating on one thing only.	Fogarty et al. (1972:10), McIntosh (1974:39)
Women like to have a balance between these activities	Fogarty et al. (1972:10), Marshall (1984:133)
Women see interest in work and personal growth as more important than promotional opportunities and security	Day (1983:57), Hennig and Jardim, (1977:33), Llewellyn (1981:146), Marshall (1984:144)

All of these writers suggest that women are more likely to remain in positions that will not endanger their top priorities.

Apart from two questions (41 and 42) on membership of community groups in the questionnaire there were no specific questions on this factor. It was expected to emerge during the interview when participants discussed their reasons for choice of schools, choice of positions, and gave their perceptions of those positions.

The application process. The recent introduction of the new process has meant that applicants have not yet become completely accustomed to it and are therefore more aware of it. Their attitudes were explored only in the interview by direct questions which culminated in the question whether they intended to apply again. The emphasis at this point was on the factors affecting the decision to apply, the steps taken by the applicant as part of the process, and the reaction of the applicant to the outcome.

An examination of the characteristics normally attributed to women (Table 2) would appear to indicate that the participants, except those with broken service, would have preferred the former process which relied on quality of work and seniority rather than one which would require a far more active seeking of positions and the ability to present well at interview. Fogarty et al. (1972:46) found this was the case when they investigated differences in women's career progress in the English Civil Service and the BBC. It is also suggested (Shakeshaft, 1987:67) that women will cease applying after a few unsuccessful attempts.

Nature of the selection process. Writers suggest that because the notion of a career has, until comparatively recently, been restricted to males this has meant that career theories and practices evolved that were more suited to males than females. An essential component of a career is 'progress' and the processes for achieving that progress have been developed largely in the absence of females.

As a result, women are seen as different: they have not been socialized into organizations in the same way as men and the experiences they have are not seen as valuable for potential administrators. For example, women are not trained or groomed by sponsors for the positions they are seeking and they tend to be experienced in teaching and curriculum rather than administration. As a result, because of what Kanter (1977:48) describes as men seeking to 'reproduce themselves in their own image' and Adkinson (1980:1) describes as 'reduction of uncertainty' women are rejected because they are different.

The type of promotion system used does not alter the effect of these two factors. Whether career progress is achieved by invitation to positions of higher responsibility or whether more structured processes are used the promotion chances of females are reduced by both their lack of training and their perceived differences from managerial stereotypes.

This desire to retain the status quo in organizations encourages the selection of individuals who conform to the 'social characteristics of personnel in upper strata' (Dalton, 1951:414). Morgan et al. (1983) discovered that Secondary School Headteachers in Great Britain were selected for particular schools because they were already experienced in that type of school, because they exhibited certain personality characteristics, and because they 'looked like' Headteachers. This latter 'criterion' has to work against the promotion interests of women because, as the authors rightly point out, most Headteachers are male. They also discovered that, in the three local areas where there were more women Headteachers than usual, selection panels were more receptive to the idea of a woman Headteacher.

Another factor that may be placing women applicants at a disadvantage is the composition of the selection panels. Most of those involved in the selecting are male (Morgan et al., 1983:68) whatever the selection process being used. This may be discouraging for female applicants. It may also indicate that selectors would not be receptive to the idea of women in positions of management although Morgan et al. (1983:68) report cases where male selectors claimed they were more prepared to consider female applicants than were female selectors.

In addition, application and interview processes which are time consuming and personally threatening because they demand the ability to present well at interview could be expected to alienate women who already feel overloaded by home and work pressures and who have been socialized to be self-effacing.

This implies that a number of factors are present that could disadvantage women in the promotion process: perceived lack of relevant experience; the gender balance of the selection panel; the desire of selectors to retain the status quo; the criteria on which selection decisions are based; and the demands placed on the individual by the process used.

These were all raised and discussed during the interviews by direct questions or as a response to information volunteered by the participant. Participants were asked what they thought was good about the new process, any problems they encountered with it, whether they thought it was better than the former process and whether they thought they had a better chance of gaining a position under the new process.

Summary. Success for women in this situation therefore depends on their ability to find the right coping mechanism for each new situation. Marshall (1985) describes this coping process as 'managing stigma' and suggests that some methods of doing this are counter-productive, e.g., pretending there is no problem or accepting culturally defined roles. She suggests that, for success, women have to work hard at maintaining a balance between behaviour that is seen as gender appropriate and behaviour that is necessary to ensure they maintain a professional image.

The literature demonstrates that the decision by females to engage in a career is extremely complex. They not only have to decide which career to follow but they have to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of such a choice. Many are not conscious that they even have a choice. Their education and socialization reinforce their own desire for home and family and they are content to consider work of secondary importance.

Others choose the more difficult path. They attempt to establish a career for themselves and find that such behaviour is not regarded as gender appropriate; that they possibly lack the necessary qualifications and will have to acquire them; that internal training and support is limited; that marriage can lead to work overload; and that they can find themselves professionally and socially isolated.

Those who persist in the face of these difficulties require a strong sense of self that can withstand attack; persistence in the face of difficulties; the capacity to cope with stress; a certainty that they have made the right choice; and the ability to balance the conflicting demands on their lives. In addition they must find that the work they are doing holds sufficient interest and challenge to make it all worthwhile.

It was these factors that the questionnaire and interview set out to explore.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE INTERVIEW

An analysis of the literature on research methods revealed some of the problems associated with Naturalistic Research and some ways of approaching these problems. In this form of research both the object of the research and the instrument for the collection of data is a human being, or human beings. In such a situation the 'instrument' acts upon and is acted upon by the 'object' of the research as is evidenced by the numerous reports of ethnographers 'going native' so it is important that the researcher be aware of this danger while, at the same time, being deeply involved in the process.

In this study the 'instrument' was to be someone who shared the experiences of those being interviewed so it was important to discover from previous research if this would adversely affect the validity of the findings. It appeared to advantage the researcher when attempting to gain access to women teachers but it was important to find out if there could be hidden problems in this apparent advantage.

There are many books available which give advice on how to gain entry to the field (e.g., Schatzman and Strauss 1973); establish rapport with the subject (Smith 1972, Kidder 1981); and frame questions so as not to bias responses (Blum 1952, Smith 1972, Kidder 1981). Despite this, Hyman (1975) notes that much of this advice is based on common sense rather than research. For example, it is assumed that the interviewer may consciously or, more often, unconsciously distort responses by the type of questions asked or the non-verbal cues given. Hyman's study (1975:80-1) suggests that in most situations the effect of the interviewer on response patterns is negligible. He also questions the value of the standard advice to establish rapport and a non threatening situation claiming that some interviewees respond better to challenges.

As part of his study he attempted to discover whether the establishment of rapport was facilitated by similarity between the interviewer and the respondent or hindered by disparity between the two. Working on the assumption that rapport was highest when both interviewer and respondent enjoyed the interview he crosstabulated responses to discover the effect of sex. With regard

to male interviewers it was found there was some linkage, i.e., proportionately fewer female subjects than males enjoyed the interview (18% as compared with 31%) and proportionately more did not enjoy the interview (43% as compared with 28%). This was not true for female interviewers: 34% of male subjects and 33% of female subjects enjoyed the interview while 26% of males and 29% of females did not (Table 29, p.155).

This would appear to indicate that females should be interviewed by females if one wishes to establish better rapport.

The analysis of the literature on interview techniques revealed another problem for the researcher attempting to develop the best approach to a situation such as the one involved in this study. While there is a plethora of material on interviewing techniques – usually for employment or job evaluation purposes – there is a dearth of material on peer interviews. Most writers assume that the interview will be conducted by a team of interviewers who are employed simply for the purposes of the interview or by the researcher who is outside, and above, the interviewee.

This means that much of the advice on structuring the interview is designed to overcome the difficulties created by the use of interviewers who are outside the study so, while some of the advice was found to be relevant, much of it was not. Therefore it was valuable to discover the problems encountered by Jennifer Platt (1981) when interviewing her peers. Her conclusions suggest that interviewers in these situations need greater social and ethical sensitivity than is often demonstrated in other interview situations (although she suggests that these too could benefit from a more sensitive approach) and that unstructured interviews are more suitable when dealing with peers for, as Galtung argues, 'survey methods inherently suggest that the interviewer has high status' (p.83).

For similar reasons Dexter (1970) advocates the unstructured interview for elite and specialized interviews. His use of the term elite does not necessarily imply a person in an elevated position but refers more to the kind of treatment

accorded by the interviewer who stresses the interviewee's definition of the situation and encourages the interviewee to structure the account according to that person's view of what is or what is not relevant.

This is not to say that the interviewer in these circumstances allows the respondent to wander completely off onto other topics, or does not probe by some means when key issues are merely touched on, but it does mean that the researcher recognizes that the respondent, by the selection of certain issues and the rejection of others, is also providing valuable information on perceptions and values.

He further suggests that it is probably better in interviews such as these to tape record all discussion so that nuances will not be lost (Dexter, 1970:59) and also so that the tapes can be played over a number of times in search of further information. Some writers caution against the possible ill effects of tape recording the interviews but others such as Smith (1972:118) found that it did not adversely affect accuracy and that it did allow the interviewer to concentrate on the interview and produce a better analysis later.

It was therefore decided that the best approach would be an intensive interview using a number of open ended questions which would allow those being interviewed to explore their ideas aloud. This meant that the interview could be expected to be relatively long in order to allow the deeper (rather than superficial) responses to emerge so tape recording, as well as brief notes, was used for the data collection as it was believed this should lead to improved management of data.

In addition an Interview Schedule was used as a guide for the interviewer to ensure that no major areas were missed but it was not used in an inflexible way. As the interviews progressed it was modified by dropping some questions and adding others. For example, in the early interviews participants were merely asked whether they had visited the schools for which they were applying. In answer to this question some began to describe their reception in the schools and it became apparent that this could be very important in affecting their attitudes to the school and decisions about the school. A question was therefore added to ensure they had the opportunity to elaborate on this.

The stance of the interviewer. The other important aspect of the interview is the attitude of the interviewer to the interviewee. Much of the advice on interview technique suggests that the interviewer should be pleasant, courteous, friendly (but not too friendly), and clinical in approach. The following two brief extracts from Sellitz et al. (1981:179–80) convey the flavour of this advice:

The idea should be to put the respondent at ease, so that he or she will talk freely or fully.

[The interviewer] should assume an interested manner towards the respondent's opinions and never divulge his or her own. If the interviewer should be asked for personal views, he or she should laugh off the request with the remark that the job at the moment is to get opinions, not have them.

Advice such as this which is common in much of the literature may be suitable for professional interviewers who have not been involved in the development of the study and who are trying to coax responses from possibly unwilling interviewees. It seemed quite irrelevant to someone who did not have to *assume* an interested manner and who would lose all credibility with volunteer interviewees if she 'laughed off' questions in the way suggested. Peer interviews and elite interviews as defined earlier obviously require a different approach – one that does not reinforce a superordinate/subordinate relationship.

Oakley (1981:41) suggests that such an approach is not only 'morally indefensible' but that it also less effective in achieving its goals than an interactive approach where the interviewer and interviewee are seen as engaged in a 'joint enterprise' (p.44). She therefore recommends the interview will be much more successful if it is non-hierarchical and interactive. This seemed to match the situation in the present study. The women being interviewed were also curious about the reasons for the few women administrators in schools, they wanted to talk about their experiences, and they wanted feedback on some of their ideas.

Therefore at all stages in the contacts with the participants it was made clear that the researcher was there to learn from them but that it was hoped that they too would gain something from their participation in the study. Some participants, therefore, used the interviewer as a source of information about the selection process, about practical administrative matters, and about professional matters.

It was clearly an interactive process. One, for example, sought help in finding suitable professional reading because of the questionnaire. Others contacted the researcher to tell her that they found the transcripts of their interviews valuable in helping them analyze and modify their interview style. Many expressed gratitude for the opportunity to clarify and express their ideas to someone who was prepared to listen. One even described the interview experience as a catharsis. It was evident from the responses that the period of application and interview is a stressful one, whatever the outcome, and the opportunity to talk about it with a neutral but understanding person was valued.

This approach to the interview also explains why, throughout the study, those taking part are described as participants not subjects. They were seen, and saw themselves, as actively involved as shown by phonecalls after the interview to add points missed and contacts after receiving the interview transcripts to express thanks and offer corrections where the typist had missed or misunderstood the spoken word.

Once the interview design was complete and the appropriate methodology decided upon the women identified for the study were approached.

Contact with participants. As described earlier, information concerning the study was circulated to the applicants for positions by the Appointments Board. As the response sheets attached to the introductory letters were returned the respondents were contacted by phone, a brief explanation of the study was given, and arrangements for future contacts were made.

There was no need to persuade them to take part in the study as they were all eager to help and some had already written short supportive comments on the return slips. The phone comments were equally supportive and some immediately took advantage of the contact to start voicing their concerns.

At this stage there was no time fixed for the research interviews because the women were in the middle of the selection process, either waiting to hear if they had interviews or preparing for interviews. Arrangements were made, however, to send them a copy of the questionnaire which they could fill in when they had time, it took approximately thirty minutes to complete, and return at the time of the interview when any questions or problems could be dealt with. Some returned them by mail almost immediately.

The return slips arrived over a period of several months and the phone conversations with later respondents often included questions from them about the number of women who had applied for positions or whether others had yet heard whether they had interviews. At no stage was any participant given the name of any other participant even when there were two working within the one school.

Once the selection interviews were completed the participants were contacted again and arrangements made for the interviews which were held at a time and in a place selected by the participant. Most preferred to be interviewed at the workplace but a few nominated their own homes or offices elsewhere.

The interview. Prior to the interview there was usually a short conversation about matters in general, a quick check to ensure the questionnaire was complete and there were no problems with it, and finally an explanation of matters directly relating to the interview. The following wording gives some idea of how the interview itself was introduced:

With your permission I'd like to tape the interview because, although I'll be taking brief notes, I may miss some important points. You'll be sent a copy of the transcript and you can then contact me if there's anything that is not correct or that you want deleted.

At no stage will your names or the names of the people you refer to be included – they will be left off the transcript. The lead-in on the tape and the heading on my notes simply has your number and the today's date. If at any stage you want to stop the tape this is the pause button.

As I told you on the phone, the interview will take about an hour but that's really up to you. Some have taken longer.

With regard to the interview questions there are some that merely require factual information, e.g., "How many times have you applied for the position of Principal?" but there are others where I want your perceptions. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions because what I'm looking for is how you view these matters.

Any problems with that?

Right. Let's start.

APPROACH TO DATA ANALYSIS

As each of the completed questionnaires was returned, fifty-six in all, its responses were checked and entered in a file. The audio tapes of each completed interview were typed to make the information more manageable for analysis. The typist was asked to type the words of the participants exactly as they were spoken; to delete any personal or place names; and, after the first few, to give only an outline of the questions asked.

The review of the literature had indicated that intensive interviews usually yield a mass of data which require some means of ordering if inferences are to be drawn from them but information on how to carry out this process was sketchy for qualitative studies. This is, of course, partly as a result of the approach used and the quantity of data collected and partly as a result of the intention behind the collection. If, as in Classical Research, the intent is to test an hypothesis then it is relatively easy to know what data are relevant and how they should be sorted and tested.

If, on the other hand, the purpose is understanding and hypothesis generation then any piece of material may be important in 'stimulating reflections and collecting meanings' (Macpherson 1983:50). This includes 'negative evidence' (Miles 1979:596) as this too may lead to new insights or avenues of research.

One writer who does give quite considerable attention to qualitative evaluation methods is Patton (1980). He suggests that in certain situations case analysis is the best procedure. Another approach he recommends is an analysis of the 'verbal categories used by the participants' (p.307) to enable the researcher to identify things from the view of the participant but, as this alone is not adequate, he advises the analyst to look for patterns and build up categories from these. This, he suggests, can be done by looking for 'recurring regularities' (p.311) in the data. Once categories are established it is then important to test that the ideas in the category do fit together (internal integrity) and that each category is clearly different from all others (external integrity).

It was this approach that was used to analyse the data generated by this study. At first the attempt was made to take each transcript as a whole and, by working through it, identify the salient points. It was quickly realized that such an approach would prove to be unmanageable – that the data had to be broken down into groups in such a way that would not restrict the analysis to certain frameworks that would preclude the emergence of possible new factors.

For this reason, although the ten factors outlined above had been used as the basis for the construction of the questionnaire and interview it was decided that concentration on these factors in the data analysis could be too limiting. Such a focus could provide a framework that would prevent the recognition of new data.

Five broad areas were then selected as the focus for the analysis: the application, the interview, the nature of the roles being sought, the selection process as a whole, and the life histories of the participants. The first of these,

the application, was seen as the central issue as, without it, there could be no career progress for these participants. It was also, in a very real sense, the entry point into the study. For these reasons it was decided to start the data analysis with the application.

The second area, the interview, was applicable only to those participants who had been shortlisted for interview but, as it provides the main basis for selection, it was an area that could be expected to raise important issues. The third, the nature of the roles being sought was again relevant to all participants and could reasonably be expected to have affected career decisions. These three elements of the selection process, because they looked only at specific features of the new system could not be expected to provide a broad perspective on the process as a whole. For this reason a separate section has been given to a consideration of the participants' reactions to the process, not just its constituent parts.

Finally, the life histories, which are applicable to all participants consider the experiences of the women and the effect of these experiences on their lives and career progress.

Data from the transcripts were then sorted into these five main areas which were then read and re-read to discover the issues that were emerging and any patterns they formed. This process also allowed individual differences to emerge.

In the presentation of the data, quotations from the transcripts have been used extensively because it is the participants who are providing the data and it is important that their individual voices be heard. Full transcripts of the interviews are included in Appendix 9 on microfiche.

The next chapter then will present the main features of the application process, the interview, the roles being sought, and the process as a whole as seen by the participants. Chapter 4 will present the life experiences of the participants.