Women’s Leadership in Education: A Perspective from Chilean School Leaders

by

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Abstract

This research examines the career progress of six Chilean female headteachers in three different types of schools. Through semi-structured interviews, this study focuses on the facilitators and barriers experienced by these women, to become school leaders. It also considers the challenges they faced while enacting their leadership. The findings demonstrate both differences and similarities in participants’ experiences, across all three school sectors. A major difference relates to the additional barriers faced by public sector leaders, compared to the private and semi-private school principals.

Keywords: Chile, Headteachers, Gender, Education.
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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

Background

Headship positions at high school level are dominated by male managers in many countries (Coleman, 2002; Fuller, 2013). Moreover, evidence has shown that headship opportunities are much scarcer for women than for men, relating leadership position with power and authority, socially acknowledged male characteristics (Coleman, 2002). However, in the Chilean educational context, the numbers show female prominence in headship positions (55%) (Weinstein and Muñoz, 2012). Public sector headship is dominated by men, whereas, in the private and semi-private sector, female representation in such positions is higher, as also in pre-school institutions (ibid, 2012). Public schools typically have a larger number of students than private schools, with which it can be inferred that is more common for women to achieve headship positions in smaller schools.

Chilean Educational Context

In the Chilean educational system, there are three types of schools: public (also called ‘municipal’), private-subsidised and private. Each type of school depends on their financial administrator, correspondingly: the government, through their local authorities, a private sector and their local authority; and finally, on privates. Such school’s administration variety is reflected in the great iniquities public education has in comparison with the private and semi-private sector. Within the Chilean education, there is a structural problem: “the great inequality and segmentation in the educational provision” (Donoso et al., 2018, p.3), which depends on the students’ family socio-economical resources. Thus, the differences in the quality of Chilean education among the most vulnerable population with respect to the privileged one, are the highest among the OECD countries (ibid, 2018), having an important impact on the Chilean educational system. Furthermore, girls in conditions of vulnerability are mainly the one group most affected by the current educational system (Madero, 2011), which can be understood as a close relation between “academic results and family hereditary privileges” (ibid, 2011, p. 137).
The selection process for Chilean principals also varies depending on the type of school; while in public schools there is an open ‘public contest’ that is highly competitive and demands many requirements for its candidates, the selection for both private-subsidised and private school is mainly through a “direct invitation from the owner itself” (Weinstein et al., 2012 p. 63). Such differentiation in the selection process might give the impression that, in order to achieve headship positions in the private sector, there is no need for adequate experience, or professional development; applicants must only know the ‘right’ person to hold the position.

Even though some schools in the private sector do have a competitive selection process (ibid, 2012), there is a need for an adequate selection process that helps to recruit suitable candidates. Similarly, it is argued that this diversity and informality of headteachers recruitment in these sectors have important consequences, where most public school headteachers have a postgraduate training in comparison with their peers from private and semi-private schools (ibid, 2012). Therefore, there is growing interest of school headteachers training programs from the Ministry of Education, in order to address this issue, where it is recognised the importance of an experienced and trained school principal in educational leadership and management.

During the last couple of decades, Chilean public education has often been criticized and undervalued (Donoso et al., 2018). While, there has been a considerable increase in private-subsidised schools, in parallel, the number of public schools has decreased (Weinstein et al., 2012). Thus, Chilean Educational reforms focused on public education improvement, investing particularly in headteachers’ training and their professional development. Furthermore, reforms such as the General Law of Education, which redefine the role of headteachers with emphasis on instructional leadership, and the Law of Quality and Equity of Education that seeks to improve the school principal’s selection process, as well as increase the requirements for school management positions and their salary (Volante et al., 2017), have all been intended to achieve improvement.

The widespread acknowledgement that headteachers are pivotal for learners’ quality of education (ibid, 2017) has been the main reason for such investment and interest. Thus, the Chilean educational system is working towards improvement with a focus on educational leadership and school management. Despite these initiatives, Chilean education is still in need of a profound change, with accurate reforms that respond effectively to the current educational and social
demands and with structural changes inside the educational system, giving school principals autonomy and real authority. (Donoso et al., 2018)

**Gender Equity and Chilean Education**

Gender equity in education is one of the current aspects of Chilean educational reforms. The creation of the Equity of Gender Unit (UEG, in Spanish) in 2014, under President Michelle Bachellet’s leadership, was the first approach towards non-sexist education and an environment without gender violence and discrimination within education (MINEDUC, 2015). Moreover, it acknowledges that, inside the Chilean educational context, patterns of gender role reproduction are still operating (ibid, 2015) not only inside classrooms but within school management as well, despite the higher number of female schools headteachers.

The Equity of Gender Unit proposes a gender approach for educational policies in order to transform beliefs and practices that influence the gender gap (MINEDUC, 2015). The effect of the gender gap leads to segregation and inequity among men and women, which can be seen particularly in the income differences and in their job opportunities (ibid, 2015). Furthermore, the UEG claims that gender is a “constitutive element of social relations” (ibid, 2015, p.9) where relationships are based on power and dominance between men and women. The recognition of gender inequity inside the Chilean educational context is a first step towards responding to such issues. However, most of these reforms refer to gender inequity inside the classroom, rather than what might be happening in other levels of education (including school management). Similarly, the lack of research about gendered educational leadership in Chile needs to be fully addressed to comprehend gender inequity issues in education; moving forward to change and improvement.

Gender role reproduction is commonly seen inside educational institutions, which affects students’ acquisition of knowledge, identity construction and further aspirations (MINEDUC, 2015). Such effects can impact on all ages, meaning that gender role reproduction is also quite common within educational leadership settings. Moreover, it can be evidenced that different roles educational leaders take on, are closely related with gender stereotype, where primary and preschool headship is highly feminised (Bush, 2017), instead managerial roles at a high school level are commonly male positions. Furthermore, women headteachers are commonly related by their
emotions, a characteristic that had no place in educational leadership (Coleman, 2002). However, feminists refer to emotions as part of all humans and not as a pathology (Blackmore, 2013).

Such common stereotypes are the ones that create barriers and maintain the gender gap in terms of career progress (ibid, 2002), where men are in leadership positions. Feminist reconstruction of leadership according to Fuller (2013) empowers both women and men that seek acknowledgment and value diversity within the school at all levels. At the same time, it focuses on gender issues and the purpose of social justice (Blackmore, 2013).

Aims of the Study

The purpose of this study is, firstly, to investigate the experiences of women in school headship positions in Chile, to analyse the difficulties that they had to overcome in order to be in a leadership position, as well as any facilitators. The study has four research questions:

(1) To what extent are women in the Chilean educational school context likely to achieve a headship position?

(2) What are the facilitators for Chilean women aspiring to headship?

(3) What are the barriers for Chilean women aspiring to headship?

(4) What are the challenges facing women when enacting headship in Chile?

The initial assumption of the researcher is that, in Chile, it is harder for women to achieve managerial positions in the public sector. The research will contribute to knowledge in an under-researched area in Chile (gender and leadership) in order to address gender inequity in school leadership.

Structure

This research is divided into six chapters. Chapter two is the thematic review of both international and Chilean educational leadership, as well as gender and educational leadership literature, which seeks to give empirical and theoretical support to the study. Chapter three discusses the chosen research methods and methodology, linked to the research questions;
including the interview method, data collection process and data analysis. Chapter four presents the research findings while chapter five -discussion- compares the data with the literature. The final chapter concludes the dissertation, showing how the research questions were addressed, discussing the significance of the study and offering recommendations based on the findings.
CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter provides a thematic review of the main international research on gender and educational management, giving a substantial theoretical framework to the study. It also introduces the beginnings of women in educational management and highlights the main theories of gender and educational leadership that engages with the main focus of the research. Later, it sets the Chilean educational context explaining the different types of schools, and the main policy reforms that influence headteachers’ role as well as their selection process. It also discusses female representation in school headship positions where the lack of literature on gender and educational leadership is recognised.

The researcher focused her search on women in educational management as one of her main terms, leading to more specific terms; female headteachers, gender and educational leadership and women leaders in education. From that search emerged the main international authors in the field, thus their principal studies, as well as Chilean and Latin American literature which represent her context. Nusearch and Google scholar were the two main search tools used, which allowed her to filter and narrowed the literature needed it. Thus, the researcher’s inclusion/exclusion criteria followed her focus of study, which is to examine women experiences in school headship positions, analysing particularly their main facilitators and barriers, as well as the challenges when enacting their leadership.

Women in Educational Leadership and Management

Women leaders in education have been addressed in the global literature, particularly in the UK, US and Australia for many decades (Coleman, 1994, 2002, 2010; Fuller 2013, 2014; Shakeshaft, 1987, 1993; Blackmore, 1989 a, 1999). The lack of female representation in school management positions in many countries continues to be a critical issue to be addressed, in order to achieve a gender balance in educational management.
Historically, teaching has been a career closely related to women in most countries, where qualities of nurturing and caring were seen as appropriate for the job, so women were “natural teachers” (Shakeshaft, 1987, p.26). In contrast, leadership and management has not been regarded as a common role for women. Grogan (2005) recognises the earliest leadership actions that American women initiate inside their households, that she argues required skills associated with educational leadership “like managing human and material resources.” (ibid, p.26). However, these were not considered leadership activities and they were overshadowed by male leaders, so that women were more valued in a “supporting role” (ibid, p.23). Highly valued jobs as school management positions were male controlled, and both social and political structures helped to maintain gendered divisions (ibid, 2005).

As noted, women constitute the majority of teachers in the UK and in the rest of the world. However, leadership positions in education, such as headship, are dominated by men (Fuller, 2017). This widely discussed disparity has become the starting point for most major studies of women in educational management. This continuing difference has its foundation in social constructs and ideas on gender roles, both male and female, attitudes and their human characteristics. Blackmore (1989b) also explains that leadership is linked to schools in a hierarchical way, and where the authority is usually male, being gendered-blind. Thus, leadership and management are related to features of power and authority, socially linked to men, whereas women’s characteristics are culturally related to caring and nurturing.

Female representation or under-representation?

There has been an increase in the number of women headteachers in England in recent years, but the increase is slight and does not balance the under-representation of women in leadership positions. In secondary schools, only a 38% of headteachers are women; in colleges and universities, women are even less likely to hold a leadership position (Coleman, 2012a); but in primary schools, women hold 73% of headship positions (DfE, 2018). This means that there is a clear relationship between women representation and the type of school. Women are also affected by salary differences and, according to the recent School Workforce in England statistics (2019), there is a sustained difference across all grades and positions. For both teachers and headteachers, men’s salaries are higher than those for women (DfE, 2019).
Gender role stereotypes portray men as authoritative, tough and powerful. Conversely, women’s stereotypes relate to soft and caring characteristics, linked with domestic tasks and childcare. Therefore, women have to defy those stereotypes, and overcome both overt and covert barriers in order to achieve a leadership position (Coleman, 2002). Moreover, once in post, women feel that they have to “prove their worth as a manager” (ibid, p.82) where gender stereotypes continue to be a barrier for women, even when they become leaders. They also have reported discriminatory attitudes from diverse school members, due to their gender characteristics (Fuller, 2017).

In the United States, school management positions are held by principals, while a senior leadership position is the superintendency, which oversees the schools of a district, known as the “most powerful position in U.S. education” (Grogan, 2005, p.21). She adds that it is rare for women to be seen in such position. Shakeshaft (1987) explains that, when schools in the U.S. were reorganized, hierarchical roles were installed (the superintendency) and “male teachers were put in charge and women were looked at as the ideal subordinate” (ibid, p.31). She argues that such type of management left women out of the administrative roles, embedded in the idea that control and power are male attributes, while women are natural supporters. In Australia, there has been an increase in female representation in headship positions but Blackmore (1999) argues that core decisions are being made by male managers outside the school, and that major changes are yet to be achieved in order to balance women’s representation in leadership positions.

Overall, it is clear that there still is under-representation of women in school management positions in many countries, despite reforms intended to address this issue. Fuller (2013) states that, if there is not an appropriate recognition of headteachers’ variety as a group and individually, such diversity is unlikely to have a place in educational leadership. Moreover, a gender role transformation is needed. Women as housewives, and men as career builders and leaders are inappropriate stereotypes that impede women’s career progression and, therefore, their representation in managerial and leadership roles in education. Similarly, Blackmore (2013) also suggests that, in order to properly address inclusion inside the educational context, it “requires inclusive leadership” (ibid, p.148) where opportunities will rise as long as leadership is regarded as a collective practice, carried out by “many in different ways in different contexts” (ibid, p.151).
This notion of inclusive leadership requires a re-distribution of power, but also reframing what is understood by power, where leadership ways work towards a collective purpose.

Gender and Educational Leadership

Gender issues are often related to women in educational leadership and management (Fuller, 2013), where differences between men and women in the field particularly as leaders, have been addressed. It has originated mainly due to the search to comprehend the reasons for the barriers that female teachers have had in order to achieve headship positions, which distinguishes them from their male peers. Moreover, the lack of acknowledgement of women as leaders and managers in education, has led to critique such assumptions, and challenge the notion that male leadership is superior and female values are inferior (Shakeshaft, 1987; Blackmore 1989a).

There are also gendered stereotypes related to the ways of leadership, where the common male characteristics keep influencing leadership forms, seeing female leadership as a “deficit model” (Coleman, 2007, p.391). However, the author claims a contradiction, where she found that there is a tendency to follow a feminine style of leadership among headteachers, arguing that both men and women appeared aspiring to the female form of leadership (ibid, 2007). Notions about ways of leadership based on ‘male or female’ characteristics are a continuum, which has defined historically leadership styles.

Although it is important to recognise that gender characteristics still define men and women socially and, therefore, inside their workplace, it is also pivotal to eliminate gender characteristics that continue dividing and stereotyping one another in order to move towards true diversity where behaviours such as being democratic, consultative, open or determined, visionary and strategic no longer be related to one specific gender, but to be recognised as a human behaviour.

Fuller (2013) explains the influence of gender on headteachers and their impacts on the school community. Therefore, she explores on the importance of headteacher gender discourses due to their high influential positions, where she states that both gender behaviour and gender
leadership are not related to biological sex and, where women as leaders not necessarily will enact feminine ways of leadership and similarly with men leaders.

Gender theories

There are various feminist theories relating to women and leadership (Fuller, 2013). In particular, the feminist theory of equality defends women’s place in educational leadership, arguing that sex exclusion should not occur and so, “women are equally capable as men” (ibid, p.3). The under-representation of women in management positions also relates to equity issues, where liberal feminist theories focus on equality policies to ensure the same opportunities and access (Coleman, 2002). However, equality reforms and policies, as can be seen from experiences in the UK and other countries, do not fully address the issue, as women in educational management are still under-represented.

In contrast, the feminist theory of difference argues that socio-cultural roles of women differ from men’s, relating their responsibilities mainly to the domestic role (Fuller, 2013). It is also argued that feminist understandings offer alternatives views on how leadership is practice and theorized (Blackmore, 2013) not only for female leaders, but also, for those men who are adopting feminist styles when enacting leadership.

Even though gender does have a clear influence on educational management representation, Fuller (2013) argues that continuing to view men and women as “binary opposites” could preserve gender role stereotypes for positions of power in the workplace for future generations (ibid, p.2). Moreover, the author proposes the need for a theory that acknowledges both women and men adopting femininities and masculinities.

Sex and gender: differentiation

Feminist theories also understand gender as a concept that is socially constructed, differentiating between sex and gender, where the first one “refers to one’s biology, and the second one refers to the social meaning given to one’s sex” (Schmuck, 1996, p.345), subject to change
within particular cultures and over time. This links to post-structural gender theories, reconstructing the ways of doing leadership and those who lead to “empower others rather than have power over others” (Blackmore, 1989b, p.94). That feminist reconstruction of leadership understands that women’s lack of representation as leaders in education is beyond numbers. Thus, the focus is to re-construct the male educational leadership model, reformulating its ways into a democratic form of leadership compatible with education, therefore contributing to it.

Fuller (2013) also argues that the school community needs to have a broader view, beyond femininities and masculinities, and in order to achieve that, particularly teachers and headteachers need to adopt post-structural gender theories (ibid, 2013). The author proposes to address not only the way we see women leaders in education but, also, how human beings understand and interact with each other as part of a community, where sex, gender, race, and culture, adds the value to education.

**Barriers for Women’ Career Progression**

The literature on barriers to women’s career progression relate to gender role stereotypes, where gender becomes a crucial part of their working life, impacting both men and women who attempt to challenge social constructs (Coleman, 2005). Gender role divisions from social and cultural notions have had consequences across nations, where stereotypical roles allocate women to supporting roles and men to public leadership. (Coleman, 2002)

Similarly, there is a notion that women do not progress in leadership positions due to their own choice, where “they are opting out” and not pursuing headship positions (Smith, 2011, p.8). Such notions relate to personal or internal barriers that may indicate a lack of confidence. Shakeshaft (1987) claims this is “merely camouflage for deeper, societal roadblocks to women’s advancement (ibid, p.84).” Furthermore, as leadership positions in education continue to be dominated by men, it creates a “perception of leadership as masculine” (Kaparou and Bush, 2007), which reinforces the idea that some female teachers are unfitted for headship posts, therefore unsure whether or not to follow leadership positions.

In the literature, two types of barrier, covert and overt, are discussed. These represent internal and external aspects. According to Shakeshaft (1987) the first type of barriers can be addressed by individual change, whereas external barriers depend on social and structural change.
However, she also argues that the origins of internal barriers are situated in the societal constructs of stereotyped gender roles (ibid, 1987), encouraged in every patriarchal society. Similarly, lack of confidence, low self-esteem and lack of motivation are also recognised as internal barriers, although this notion is challenged by Shakeshaft (1987). However, barriers for women’s career paths are present, as well as discrimination inside the workplace (Coleman, 2002), where pressures and stereotypes act as constraints on women’s school career progress (Coleman, 1997).

Although opportunities for women’s career progression in education are commonly denied by barriers and discrimination, women that succeed have found a way of “striking a balance”, particularly between personal and professional life (Coleman, 2002, p.8). In order to eliminate the barriers and acts of discrimination, social and cultural notions must change from all angles; structural, cultural, and attitudinal (Shakeshaft, 1987).

**Chilean Schools and their Headteachers role’s Development**

A brief overview of the development of Chilean schools is pivotal in order to understand their diverse system, and therefore the role of their headteachers. Donoso et al., (2018) explains that the national educational system has been greatly affected by “the great inequality and segmentation in the educational provision” (ibid, p.3), where post-dictatorship policy-reforms have not been able to properly address this. Moreover, they argued the importance in giving a substantial role to schools’ managers in order to establish management capacities in their daily practices.

Weinstein et al., (2012) states that until the 80`s most schools belonged to the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), where the headteachers’ main focus was to “meet timely and correctly the instructions from the central authority” (ibid, p.14). Over time the municipalisation of public schools was promoted, depending on two entities: the MINEDUC for educational matters and their local authorities for managerial. Similarly, the widespread of the subsidised education began, which tend to follow some models from the public sector (ibid, 2012). This shows a secondary role of principal’s where they mainly had to follow instructions, and not having a pedagogical lead role in their schools. Thus, an “educational empowerment” of headteachers started, giving them more attributions and responsibilities in their schools, promoting educational leadership.
It is clearly that the role of headteachers in Chile has been affected by the educational system development, as well as their selection process, which during dictatorship school principals were “immovable” (Donoso et al., 2018, p.6) and its modification took several years. With that, the headteacher labour started slowly to be more appreciated, where they went from just answering demands to be a school leader. Similarly, it implied more responsibilities, and demand a better knowledge about educational management and leadership, which involved the development of headteachers training programs.

Headteachers’ training program

With the acknowledgement that headteachers are crucial for their students learning process (Muñoz et al., 2019) and the evolution of their role, in Chile training programs became a priority, in order to appropriately develop good school headteachers. Currently, there are a range of different training programs, from diploma courses to master programs aiming to either improve headteachers knowledge or prepare teachers who want to pursue this career. Similarly, Muñoz et al., (2019) identified that headteachers training in Chile have had an important curricular change that responds to the national educational reforms where the focus has been on developing theoretical knowledge and capabilities to practice. However, this model of programs does not prioritise practical instances of professional development, preventing a substantial impact on the learning and performance of school leaders (ibid, 2019).

Even though Chile has a wide range of leadership programs, it has been recognised that most of these “do not respond effectively to the current national demands” (ibid, p.46) and are not managing to impact either in the work of school leaders. Thus, there is a need to improve training programs, where the capabilities of all school leaders will be developed and enhanced, which implies developing a quality agenda for its preparation.

While the role of headteachers and training programs has evolved in Chile, gender issues inside educational management have not been addressed, where the promotion of gender equity in leadership roles is accounted as an important matter in other countries, in Chile these issues have been disregarded. Apparently, the Gender Equity Unit (2015) that aimed to implement gender
focused educational reforms and policies did not take into account educational leadership and management.

**Educational Leadership and Management in the Chilean Context**

Leadership and management have become pivotal for education improvement in many countries (Bush, 2012a). This is also true in Chile, where the volume of literature and research has increased in the past decade, acknowledging its importance. The studies are mainly focused on school leaders and their contribution to the quality of the education, where it is suggested that headteachers’ action can positively affect students’ learning outcomes (Volante et al., 2017).

Similarly, the selection and professional development of school headteachers “constitutes a national priority” (ibid, p.27). Therefore, policy reforms focus on redefining principal roles’ as well as improving the selection process and increase the requirements for the post. The Law of Quality and Equity of Education (2011), details headteachers’ selection processes, stating that vacancies for the post will always be under open public contest, where each designation will last five years (ibid, 2011), ending with lifelong headship positions. This is quite common mainly in the public sector.

As previously stated, the Chilean educational system has three types of schools: public, private-subsidised and private, funded by the government, the private sector and government, and the private sector respectively. This differentiation shows a great variety of schools and, therefore, headteachers’ selection and experiences.

According to the latest Education Statistics from the MINEDUC (2018), semi-private schools make up almost 50% of the total schools, with 44% public and 5% private (ibid, 2018). The increase in private-subsidised schools arises from criticism of public education, particularly in respect of quality and equity (Donoso et al., 2018), leading to frequent reforms and policies in order to improve the public educational system.
Headteachers’ Selection Process

The selection process is pivotal in order to secure good headteachers (Weinstein et al., 2012). The position has enormous responsibility and complexity. Therefore, the process should attract the most suitable professionals for the position. The recruitment process differs according to the school type, where only public schools abide to The Law of Quality and Equity selection process, whereas both semi-private schools and private’s selection are mainly through a “non-competitive and informal recruitment” (ibid, p.63). However, nearly 60% of semi-private headteachers were selected through an invitation from the owner, surpassing private schools headteachers recruited through that same process (55%). Moreover, almost 23% of private school’s headteachers were selected through a competitive process, compared with only 10% of semi-private heads (ibid, 2012).

Gender Equity in the Chilean Education

Gender equity in education commonly focuses on student learning, measured by national standardised tests, and it also refers to employment opportunities for women compared with their male peers. (Avalos, 2003). In Chile, girls perform better in language tests rather than in maths or science, where in their male peers have a higher performance (ibid, 2003). However, Madero (2011) argues that in poorer sectors “girls have lower performance than boys within the same socio-economical class” (ibid, p.136), where social class is another variable in terms of equity matters. These performance differences are also related to teachers’ expectations, that are mainly associated to gender, where boys are assigned better expectations from their teachers (Mizala et al., 2015).

Disparities such as these, between boys’ and girls’ learning outcomes, are the main focus of gender equity reforms inside education, which also establishes a national picture in terms of gender equity in the Chilean educational context.

The Equity Gender Unit (2015) is responsible for incorporating gender approaches into educational plans, where it will “allow an integral and equal development of boys and girls of the country” (MINEDUC, 2015, p.7). It recognises gender role stereotypes inside education, which
ultimately results in disadvantages for job opportunities as well as salary differences between men and women.

Although, this important reform does not address gender equity in educational leadership and management, it does recognise that males are dominant among general inspectors (57%) and management (44%), stating that “the work of management and greater authority within the establishments is mostly assigned to men”, even though there are more women in the teaching profession than men (ibid, p.18)

Similarly, in 2018 the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity is created and the Equity of Gender Unit (2015) becomes the Gender Equity Education Plan, with broader aims than the previous plan, that lacks a former document and it is portrayed as a government campaign, which continues to disregarding addressing gender issues in educational leadership and management.

**Women in Educational Management in Chile**

In Chile, women’s representation as school heads is higher than men (55%) (Weinstein et al., 2012). However, Chilean women represent a higher percentage of teachers than men (73%) (MINEDUC, 2018), showing that women are under-represented among heads.

In terms of school management, women’s representation has increased in recent years. However, when it is differentiated by school type, female representation varies. According to the statistics of the MINEDUC (2018), in public schools there are more male headteachers than female, yet in the private and semi-private school sectors, women representation is higher, particularly in subsidised schools where female heads almost double their male peers. Moreover, in rural areas, and in professional-technical schools, male representation is higher but not in special schools and pre-schools, which are exclusively led by women (Weinstein et al., 2012).

It is clearly that women school leadership representation in Chile varies according to school type, but these figures are not separated for primary or secondary schools. There is little evidence regarding the experience of women heads in Chile, in respect of accession or enactment of headship. This provides the warrant for the author’s research on female school heads in Chile.
CHAPTER THREE:
METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The nature of this study, which investigates personal experiences, reflects a qualitative type of research. This approach was chosen by the researcher, to provide in-depth data and, therefore, contribute to an under-researched area in Chile. The use of semi-structured interviews as a research tool, allows participants to create knowledge through an “inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee” (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.2).

The research is focused on the career progression of six Chilean female headteachers, particularly on the barriers and facilitators they faced. Morrison (2012) notes that the choice of methodology and research methods should be based upon the nature of the study, linked to how each researcher “gain[s] knowledge in research contexts and why” (ibid, p.15). Similarly, since the researcher aims to contribute to an under-researched field in the Chilean literature, her choice of individual semi-structured interviews also allows her to employ an interview guide with specific questions, as well as follow up questions, tailored to participants’ responses. The researcher’s rationale links to the interpretivist paradigm, aimed at understanding participants’ experiences and views, where there is no intention to generalise and each story contributes to the aims of the study.

Sampling

The participants were identified and selected through a mixture of techniques; convenience and snow balling sampling. The first technique involves choosing the sample to whom the researcher has “easy access” (Cohen et al., 2018, p.218) to a particular group of people, from a previous workplace for example. While the second technique, which its essence is social (ibid, 2018), allows the researcher to identify a small group of people that might put her in touch with possible participants who meet the requirements of the inclusion. (ibid, 2018). The researcher then, relies on friends, acquaintances or contacts. Thus, for this study, the first contact the researcher made was to a headteacher of her previous work inviting her to participate, who then contacted other possible participants. The researcher also recurred to personal contacts and friends of friends, in order to complete the proposed sample.
The researcher deliberately chooses for her study, participants from three different types of school. This stratify way of sampling, responds to the researcher’ aim for capture the nuance of career progression and leading from different schools. As suggest by Cohen et al., (2018) every aspect is planned and deliberate, so it can fit the purpose of the study, also determining the authenticity of the research.

**Participants**

The participants who agreed to take part in this study were six Chilean women headteachers from the three types of school; public, private - subsidised (or semi-private) and private schools from the central region of Chile.

Initially, the researcher aimed to have two participants from each type of school, but this was not possible, and the final sample comprises two headteachers from semi-private schools, one from a private school and three from public schools.

All participants were adult women in an average age range of forty-six years, and all of them have children. Five of them are married while one of them is divorced. Half of them are in their first headship; two from private school sectors (but only one private school participant) and the other from a public school. The other three are in their second headship; two from public schools and one from the private sector. Moreover, only one of the six headteachers has been in post for more than a decade, in two different schools.

To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, the participants’ names were replaced by numbers, following a numerical order according to the sequence in which they were interviewed; Headteacher nº1 (public), Headteacher nº2 (private-subsidised), Headteacher nº3 (public), Headteacher nº4, (private-subsidised), Headteacher nº5 (private) and Headteacher nº6 (public). These numbers will be use in the findings chapter to identify participants’ comments.
Research Instruments

A semi-structured interview was the chosen instrument, allowing the researcher to meet “the identified research purpose and helping to answer the research questions that arise” (Coleman 2012b, p.251), taking an interest in each individual experience. Using a semi-structured approach enables more detailed and in-depth answers, gathering valuable information for the study. The interview guide (appendix nº1) has thirteen questions as well as certain potential probes, “to extract more information on a topic” (ibid, p.252), as the researcher feels appropriate.

The researcher based the questions on literature (Coleman, 2002), and on the research questions. An interview guide was developed, design to explore participants’ journey to headship, along with their views on how gender affects career progression. The questions addressed the following aspects:

- Main challenges for women in school management.
- Facilitators and barriers for women aspiring headship.
- Challenges for women when enacting headship.

Data Collection

The interviews were conducted through one-to-one online videocalls, using platforms such as Skype or Hangout, due to the distance of the researcher from the participants. Such online platforms allowed the researcher to see the participant in order to build rapport and develop an appropriate interview ambience. The interviews were conducted at dates and times convenient for the participants, given their tight schedules.

The interviews were audio recorded, with the consent of all the participants, and subsequently transcribed. Recording ensure that “all nuances of the answers can be retained, and the richness of individual statement is not lost” (Coleman, 2012b, p.261). The record was also supported by hand-written notes that the researcher took occasionally, when some technological mishaps occurred, acting as insurance of the records (ibid, 2012b).
In order to carry out the interviews, very few materials were used, such as an audio recorded device, computer with Internet access and the interview guidance. All six individual interviews were conducted in a period of two weeks, where each interview were approximately fifty minutes long.

Data Analysis

A transcript, and a simultaneous translation from Spanish to English, of all six interviews was the first process in order to accurately gathered participants’ responses. The analysis of the six interviews was carried out thematically, using the four themes linked to the research questions as well as those emerging from the literature. Sub-themes were also identified during data analysis.

The researcher adopted a grounded theory approach (Corbin and Strauss, 2015), allowing her to “construct theory grounded in data” (ibid, p.6), identifying themes and concepts in order to develop theory from the data collected. The analysis identified certain similarities and differences as well as some patterns. The aim of grounded theory is to give an explanation “for why events or happenings occur” (ibid, p.12), in this case, understanding of women principals in Chile.

Ethical Approach

The research is embedded within the ethical guidelines of; the Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics (2019) of the University of Nottingham, as well as the British Educational Research Association’s Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018). These guidelines allowed the researcher to conduct her study fairly and respectfully. According to BERA (2018), researchers should conduct their studies with respect for all participants.

Therefore, ethical issues were addressed before conducting the research, taking into consideration the main ethical principles in an educational research. According to Cohen et al., (2018) the researcher has a responsibility to their participants in preserving their “dignity as human beings” (ibid, p.112), where ethical principles are defined as having “sensitivity to the right of others” (Cavan, 1977, p.810 cited in Cohen et al., 2018, p.112). Thus, the main ethical principles
considered by the researcher were informed consent, avoiding harm, confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher also followed Cohen et al., (2018) views on ethical principles, who explained that these are not ‘absolute’ but, related to the research context. Therefore, participants language was taking into consideration and all the ethical procedures and forms were translated from English to Spanish, which is the language of the participants.

Informed consent applies directly to interviews, where the researcher outlines and explains his/her intentions to each participant (Coleman, 2012b). It also protects and respect participant’s freedom for choosing to participate or not in the study, as well as their right to withdraw at any moment of the research, once they been informed what the research is about and what consist their participation (Cohen at al., 2018). The researcher issued an information sheet (appendix nº2) to all six participants explaining her study and their involvement in it, along with a written consent form (appendix nº3), sent through e-mail, agreeing to their voluntary participation and their right to withdraw from the study, at any time, for any reason, as well as agreeing to be audio recorded. Due to the distance with the participants the written consent form helps to brings formality to the process (ibid, 2018).

Avoiding harm, requires considering “carefully the possible consequences of the research on participants” (ibid, 2018, p. 127). Thus, participants should not be damaged by the research in any form. It might appear as obvious this ethical principle, however, is not quite clear what constitutes as harm; where for some, little harm can be tolerated, but not for others. (ibid, 2018). Similarly, it is expected from the researcher to inform the potential risks in the study to participants, which is linked to their responsibility of care to participants (Bush and James, 2012). Therefore, in this study, risk as time consuming and/or talking about their personal experiences, which might evoke sensitive memories and cause some emotional harm, were appropriately communicated in the information sheet.

The researcher’s understandings of harm considered carefully participants welfare in all stages of the study; when designing the interview questions, and during the interviews, where she adopted a close and conversational style, making the participants feel comfortable while talking about their experiences. This can also be linked with relations of power between the researcher and their participants, where the interviewee has the lead during the conversation and participants might feel nervous due to not knowing what is going to be asked. Therefore, the researcher
provided the interview guide to her participants before the interview, which allows participants to be more familiarised and comfortable with the interview. Thus, the researchers’ demeanour helped balanced the power relationships between interviewer and interviewees.

Anonymity and Confidentiality are a consequence of privacy, both are methods to protect participants (Cohen et al., 2018). Anonymity’s main purpose is to not reveal participants identities so, participants are considered anonymous when they cannot be identified by others (ibid, 2018). Such guarantees participants’ privacy, where “the principal way of ensuring anonymity, then, is removing any means of identification” (ibid, 2018, p.129). Cohen et al., (2018) also recognise that giving pseudonyms or aliases is another strategy to ensure anonymity. In this study in order to ensure this, the researcher used numbers for each participant (as was previously explained), where their individuals names, as well as the names of their schools was left were not disclosed. Only the type of schools was specified in the research, for analysis purposes of the research. The researcher kept the information of individuals under a password- protected document (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992, cited in Cohen et al., 2018). Moreover, a General Data Protection Regulation privacy notice was issued to all six participants, informing how their personal information would be held.

Confidentiality refers to not disclose information in any way from a participant that could be identified, as well as not comment about any of the research participants with others (ibid, 2018). Cohen et al., (2018) also states that the essence of confidentiality is that the researchers must honour and respect the trust of their participants, who have helped them. Particularly, confidentiality was promised by the researcher through the consent form. Finally, the research obtained ethical approval from the University of Nottingham (appendix nº4) in order to proceed with the study and later data collection.

**Authenticity**

In order to assess the research authenticity, explanation of how the researcher addressed validity and triangulation are necessary. As proposed by Bush (2012b, p.99) “there is no perfect truth”, yet a researcher must focus to give to the reader a study reliable, valid and authentic. Demonstrating quality of the research is pivotal in the field of educational leadership and
management, where decisions about methodology helps to determined schools’ outcomes in many cases (Bush, 2012b). Therefore, a researcher’s decisions for methodology choice sets the basis for their studies, thus how trustworthy his/her study is.

Particularly, the researchers’ methodological stance is based upon her understandings on building knowledge in a specific reality context (Morrison, 2012, p.15). Therefore, using an interpretative approach and semi-structured interviews as research tools, she seeks to comprehend in depth her participants’ views and experiences in their diverse type of schools (context). It is known that qualitative research and semi-structured interviews, as the only choice of method to collect data, are difficult to prove authenticity, however it varies how validity and reliability are applied to different methodological approaches (Cohen et al., 2011).

Validity

In order to address this concept correctly and be able to “achieve an acceptable level of validity” (Cohen et al., 2018, p.245) the researcher’s focuses on what is valid for her study respecting her instruments of data collection. In this matter, the concept of trustworthiness, helps the researcher to achieve validity, where the data collected, participants and the objectivity of the researcher are sound in the study. Furthermore, external validity (Bush, 2012b) can be ensured from the generalisation made of the findings with the results from similar studies (of other contexts), in the literature and further discussed in the fifth chapter. Similarly, it is suggested that the description provide be clear, detailed and descriptive, in order to appropriately generalise the findings to another study (Cohen et al., 2018).

The notion that Bush (2012b), suggest about imperfection in research, is supported by Cohen et al., (2018) argument on validity, where sustains that absolute validity in a research is impossible and that “validity should be seen as a matter of degree rather than as an absolute state” (ibid, p.246), thus, validity increase becomes pivotal for the researcher’s aims.
**Triangulation**

Comparing using various of methods the same phenomena, triangulation will be accomplished, where different approaches focuses on a particular study. Its aim is in human behaviour and explaining more in detail what occurs in a specific phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2018). Thus, in order to address triangulation, it seems more appropriate to use a theoretical type; “where more than one theoretical position is used in interpreting data” (Bush, 2012b, p.97). Such type of triangulation requires to analyse the research “through different theoretical lenses” (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 266). By focusing on addressing validity and triangulation, it will ensure authenticity of the findings and therefore the study.

**Overview**

This qualitative research has its essence in the analysis of the six participants’ experiences, collected through individual semi-structured interviews, as the chosen instrument. This type of interviews can be related to a feminist-based, where listening to women’s narratives can help reveal experiences never before discussed (Coleman, 2012b), as it is the case of this Chilean study. As in every research, ethical principles are ensured, where privacy is valued and respected through anonymity and confidentiality. Finally, the quality of the research is addressed through validity and triangulation, using a theoretical approach that secure the authenticity of the study.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the interviews with the six female principals interviewed for this research. The participants are six Chilean female headteachers from three types of school in the central region of the country, mostly from Santiago. Three of them are heads of public schools and three are from the private sector (two from a private-subsidised school and one from a private school). All of them are mothers, and the majority are in their forties. Three of them are in their first headship.

Participants names are anonymised, numbers are used to identify participants comments as following: headteacher nº1 (public), headteacher nº2 (private-subsidised), headteacher nº3 (public), headteacher nº4 (private-subsidised), headteacher nº5 (private) and headteacher nº6 (public).

The findings are presented thematically:

- Female Headship Opportunities
- Barriers for Headship Achievement
- Facilitators for Headship Achievement
- Leadership Enactment Challenges

These themes were identified partly from the research questions and partly from the literature.

Female Headship Opportunities

The interview data show different perceptions of headship opportunities for female school leaders, according to the school sector they represent. However, a similarity of perceptions was found from the semi-private and private school headteachers, which indicates a considerably
similar experience and vision. There is also unanimity around the idea that women in Chile remain under-represented in managerial positions.

*Semi-private and private school versus public school experiences*

The female leaders from the private sector (including both private-subsidised and private schools) claim that female representation has improved, with enhanced opportunities to hold leadership positions, with women in the majority.

“I participate in a principals’ table (from private schools of this sector) and I would say that there is equity of gender in terms of representation.” (Headteacher n°5, p.2)

“I believe that today women have won a space in educational leadership, there are more women teachers than men, so it's natural that women hold managerial and leadership position” (Headteacher n°2, p.3)

This positive experience is linked to the selection process for headteachers in both private and private subsidised schools, which is mainly by invitation (Weinstein at al., 2012). However, they also claim that, even though there is equity in terms of achieving positions, there is also a pay gap between women and men. They comment that women earn less money than men with the same managerial positions:

“They offer less money to women, saying that, being a woman, we are in a lower payment grade than men” (Headteacher n°5, p.2)

In contrast, headteachers from the public sector argue that, while the selection process has been more transparent, and privileges professional achievements regardless of gender, men still dominate headship positions in that sector.

“I also think that there are more spaces now, the public contest for school headteachers has enhanced women into school leadership, I believe there is a bit more equality...although there are more men as heads.” (Headteacher n°6, p.2)

“In all the headteachers’ training programmes, or seminars, I can easily notice that there are so many men but few women. The decision towards headship causes difficulties for women, but this is not because the system prioritizes men over women. Women are the ones that do not want to take that 'jump’” (Headteacher n°1, p.2)
Women’s lack of empowerment

Some participants say that there is a need to empower women, which is linked to the perceived lack of role models for women leaders in education:

“Hearing so many stories from male teachers, that speak from their own stories, their male conditions, are much too different from a woman’s perspective. We need to hear also from women, their successful stories, it is much easy to relate to, we go through similar things and challenges... The model to follow was male teachers not female teachers... So, that also tells us something, what is the model to follow? Who is the reference to follow?” (Headteacher nº4, p.4)

They also suggest that a social and cultural aspect is embedded in the idea of leadership models:

“I think there is a cultural and social thing that notice men with more skills and capabilities than women. I think that society still looks at women as weak” (Headteacher nº3, p.5)

“Women leaders in education have not been visualised. So, it's great that women start to empower ourselves, so we can see ourselves” (Headteacher nº6, p.4)

While headship representation is quite different across the sectors; the three groups agree on the need for women’s empowerment and that there are significant barriers, both overt and covert, that prevents them from achieving higher positions.

Barriers to Headship Achievement

The data show three barriers perceived by Chilean women heads; personal, political structure and social-cultural barriers. Most headteachers identified family responsibilities, particularly related to motherhood, as a major barrier for women’s career progress in educational leadership.
**Family responsibilities and motherhood.**

The participants stress the impact of domestic roles, which they refer to as social pressure, inherent in the Chilean society. These stereotypical roles lead to career progression being postponed and, consequently to women not planning their careers:

“We had to be married and have kids before 30” (Headteacher nº1, p.5)

“We women are always being postponed, so from the moment that one has that decision power to choose what to do with their own life, equity has been earned” (Headteacher nº4, p.5)

Motherhood has also influenced their career progress. All six participants, achieved their headship positions when their children were grown up, and most of them argue that they could not achieve such a position at an earlier stage:

“I decided to work in a managerial position like such, when my daughters were old enough” (Headteacher nº1, p2)

“I wouldn’t know how to do it with a baby…I don’t know how people do it with a baby. I think that is incompatible, this job, with a baby.” (Headteacher nº5, p.5)

“Motherhood does have an impact on your work life decisions, so for me it was decisive being able to have another child, because there is a pressure for professional training and to be accessible for the job” (Headteacher nº6, p.4)

**The system as a barrier**

All three public sector participants regard the system as a barrier, but they acknowledge that it has improved in recent years, and no longer has a gender bias. However, they also argue that it was a barrier when they were seeking headship positions:

Chilean public education is municipalised, which depends on the local authority; and there is a political power and authority, who is the mayor, so in order to look for school management the “old” ways were under a political favour. So, the old system of management achievement was a big barrier. (Headteacher nº1, p.2)
I did not think that I was going to win the position; not because of insecurity about my capabilities, but because of prejudice of the politics involved inside the decision, as the mayor has the final decision. I did not appeal to any of my contacts and I was unknown in this area. " (Headteacher n°3, p.1)

Political alliances- the selection process is made by the mayor of the council and the education director and there are too many political views and sides that influence their decision. Nowadays there are fewer but, there are still lots of social connections to get the position. (Headteacher n°6, p.2)

These extracts clearly portray the system, due to its political aspects, as a major barrier that affect women heads in the public sector, as well as the “social connections” that also influence the final decision for school heads’ selection.

Insecurity and lack of support

The participants reported that they felt insecure when applying for headships or after accepting the position:

"I was getting the opportunities and I took them. Although, when I knew I won the contest I was very scared; 'what do I do, do I take it?'" (Headteacher n°3, p.2)

"When I got the job, I didn’t know what to do, I was scared; 'what did I get into...?'" (Headteacher n°6, p.1)

"I thought that I didn’t had the tools, skills to do it, I did not know how to do it." (Headteacher n°4, p.1)

Lack of support was another important fact that participants commented on, that may discourage women from achieving a leadership position:

"Men of my age are not willing to change their roles, because there is a social constructed characteristic very strong in men, that they are the provider. I wonder if my husband would have sacrificed a couple of years and stayed at home with the young children while I was working’’" (Headteacher n°1, p.3)

"The family waits for the man’s career, they put everything on hold, but when it comes to a woman’s career it is not the same case" (Headteacher n°4, p.4)
“If that support does not exist, it is very unlikely that women have access to this kind of positions, because at the end of the day for us always the most important thing is going to be our families”  
(Headteacher n°.5, p.6)

Although insecurity and lack of support are major factors in women’s decisions to move into a leadership position, demonstrating that a women’s career is often postponed, they all acknowledge that, with the support of their husbands and family, they were able to thrive and overcome their fears and self-doubt.

Facilitators for Headship Achievement

The findings show two types of facilitators perceived by the Chilean women heads; internal and external. The first one relates to their own personal characteristics, pivotal for their final decision, along with their family support. The second one is linked to their professional career and the support from either mentors, or from school owners in the case of headteachers in the private sector; both private and semi-private schools.

Personal characteristics and passion for education

Most participants explained that, at some point, in order to make the final decision their own conviction was crucial:

“Having the capacity to say to myself: ‘let’s do it’. Believing in myself.” (Headteacher n°3, p.3)

“I dared to apply for a public headship contest” (Headteacher n°6, p.1)

“I think that to dare to do it.” (Headteacher n°5, p.2)

“I think it was a personal conviction, knowing that I had the same opportunities as others”  
(Headteacher n°4, p.2)

These convictions are very much linked to their commitment and passion for education:

“I love my profession. So, I always want to contribute to it and generate change. I believe in public education” (Headteacher n°3, p.2)

“I’m very committed about my job, and passionate about education.” (Headteacher n°1, p.2)

“I have always liked education, particularly public education” (Headteacher n°6, p.1)
“Also, I think that to dare to do it. Plus, that I really love education and it is what I am passionate about.” (Headteacher nº5, p.2)

Family support

Most of the headteachers recognise that the support from their husband and family were pivotal in helping to apply for, and/or to accept, the headship position.

“There are moments that emotionally you feel down, that’s why in those moments the family support is vital to overcome those feelings” (Headteacher nº1, p.3)

“The support of my husband, we have a well-established family I think that is very important” (Headteacher nº2, p.4)

“My husband is key in my life as well; he has always supported me he took part of the house responsibilities. So, I think the support of one’s partner is vital, I felt valued as well which is very important”. (Headteacher nº4, p.2)

“I’m lucky that with my husband the roles are shared, and I feel very lucky to have that” (Headteacher, nº6, p.4)

The support these women mention is also linked to the notion of gender role transformation, arguing that such roles nowadays are changing and are much more shared than before.

Mentors and school owners

In discussing mentors, there was also a difference between headteachers from the private and public sectors. Most public school headteachers mention that people within the education world, especially other headteachers, were mentors and facilitators:

“I always respected my previous headteachers, who I learned from. In life you always have mentors and referents” (Headteacher nº1, p.1)

“I got into headship also due to others that believed in me, in my capabilities and skills and they encouraged me to apply for it. I met people through the journey that guided me and helped me” (Headteacher nº3, p.1)

Similarly, headteachers from the private sector recognise the school owners as a support and facilitator for their positions:
“I received an invitation due to destiny and then, they (the owners) proposed me the headship position” (Headteacher n°4, p.1)

“The support as well from the Catholic foundation, they supported me and believed in me. So, due to my philosophic and religious formation, it was the intention to lead a school, to become a headteacher, so it was like a natural thing “(Headteacher n°2, p.1)

“I think that the confidence the employers/owners of the school had in me was very important. The clarity that they wanted someone like me as a headteacher.” (Headteacher n°5, p.2)

For all six women heads, their previous work being known by their mentors, or the school owners, also became a facilitator to achieve the position.

**Professional experience and professional capabilities**

The participants all recognise as a core facilitator their previous school leadership role, as well as the capabilities gained through professional development and training courses.

“As a UTP (technical and pedagogical role) you also start to know the managerial work from the inside and you get experience in that area, so afterwards in headship is not that hard and unknown” (Headteacher n°3, p.2)

“I think that in order to get a headship position you have to get professional training, studies and experience in different other management positions. ” (Headteacher n°1, p. 6)

“I started to do training courses and [I did] a master's in educational management. So, I begin to study in order to be a headteacher” (Headteacher n°2, p.1)

“As a teacher for so long and [as a] UTP helps you to know the system. I also did a master's in educational leadership and management” (Headteacher n°4, p.2)

**Leadership Enactment Challenges**

The participants offer similar perceptions about the challenges of enacting leadership, regardless of their school sector. Despite their diverse schools, there is little difference when it comes to challenges for women leaders in education. They claim that their challenges are mostly
based on two common notions of leadership; who is a leader and how should they lead? The perceived attitudes relate to gender.

Resistance towards female leadership

The six women heads report resentment towards their leadership, from teachers and other colleagues:

“*It is hard for him to recognise women in leadership positions, he is an old teacher (...). He avoids asking me certain things, so he asked them through the general inspector who is a man.*" (Headteacher nº3, p.4)

“They (men) dismiss their managements just because they are women, and even comment: ‘well you know what she is like, she is a woman’” (Headteacher nº1, p4)

“If it were a man firing him surely, he would not have stood up the way he did it with me, he wouldn’t raise his voice either..." (Headteacher nº2, p.3)

The participants report that such resistance comes only from male colleagues, while relationships with female colleagues were mostly characterised by trust and closeness:

“In respect of women, it's much more equal, I feel that they trust [me], they are very open, and, in a way, there is less hierarchy with them.” (Headteacher nº5, p.3)

“Women respond differently, they feel more relatable to one, like an equal, so they are comfortable knowing that I will understand them when they have any issues at home, for example”. (Headteacher, nº1, p.4)

These insights reveal differences between male and female reactions towards women’s leadership, which can also be linked to what is familiar, comfortable and known, particularly for female colleagues. This also relates to a different type of leadership, less hierarchical and authoritarian.

Leading ‘differently’ from men

All six participants claim that their leadership is not grounded in power and authority, but is democratic and balanced:

“It is not easy to let them know one’s convictions so others do what you are asking. I haven't exercised an imposing leadership but quite democratic. " (Headteacher nº2, p.3)

“I’m too calm, I don’t shout, I like to install balance inside the workplace. I remember that some people told me that I wouldn’t do a good job for a character thing” (Headteacher nº3, p.4)
“I really like to play and run around the school, one day the directory president tells me: ‘headteachers do not run’” (Headteacher nº5, p.5)

I don’t lead from power or authority, but as being a human, believing in change and in the public education. (Headteacher nº6, p.1)

However, they notice that leading ‘firmly’ is still a common perception and what is expected of them:

“At least this community demands you to, they say: ‘well but somebody has to do the dirty work, someone has to put their firm hand’” (Headteacher nº5, p.4)

Because in order to be a leader, you have to have a strong character, which I learn from my male colleagues.” (Headteacher nº3, p4)

Gendered stereotypes of leadership are quite embedded in how leaders should act but these women heads feel that their own way of leading does not have to follow such stereotypes in order to be successful.

Being expected to lead like male heads

Some participants argued that they have had to learn or adopt male forms of leadership from their colleagues in order to be regarded as well as their male peers:

“I notice how they (male heads) talked to the administrator and I saw the difference, so I said to myself: ‘ok, for them it works that way, so I have to do it like that’, because clearly it wasn’t working with my way, and their way did! And said: ‘OK, I have to change my way’” (Headteacher nº3, p.3)

“I felt the need to lead like a man, but not to be accepted but because I had the impression that my way was being mis read, because people were used to the other way; more vertical and hierarchical.” (Headteacher nº4, p.4)

“They gave me nicknames because I was a woman... It was very hard, I had to develop a thicker skin.” (Headteacher nº6, p.2)
All the participants argue that there is a link between gender role stereotypes, that are immersed in the Chilean culture, and challenges to their career:

“Chile is a very prejudiced country and I feel that for us (women headteachers) they make it trickier and more difficult. And that’s because we have a very sexist culture” (Headteacher n°3, p.3)

“There is also a social pressure when they ask you; ‘when are you going to have a second child, how are you going to study again?’ For women this is always an issue, not so for men” (Headteacher n°6, p.4)

“Women have always had to assume responsibilities in both her house and her job, not so in the case of men, so that role is not associated yet in men. (Headteacher n°4, p.3)

Such strong notions towards what is socially established and accepted, have become a challenge for women in educational leadership, particularly when enacting their position, arguing that there is still a belief that women’s character is not typical for leadership. Moreover, while all women heads stand by their way of leadership, they also acknowledge a certain requirement to ‘fit in’, in order to be regarded equally with their male peers.

Findings from all six participants showed both, common and differences, these are linked to the type of school they represent. Thus, female principals from semi-private and private schools showed similar experiences when it comes to post achievement and women representation in senior management positions, who claim that opportunities for women as headship has improved and that are well represented. In contrast, female principals from public schools argued more difficulties to achieve the position and that men still dominate senior leadership posts. Even so, similarities were found from the six female heads interviewed, where family responsibility was a common barrier experienced. Furthermore, gender attitudes were the most mentioned challenge these women heads dealt with when enacting their leadership, where they argue that gender roles stereotype are still present in the Chilean society, regardless of the type of school.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter discusses the differences and similarities from the findings of the six interviews, linked to international research and literature.

The findings of this study indicate both differences and similarities amongst the six participants. Significant differences were found between headteachers from the public sector, compared to the private and semi-private school headteachers. Moreover, findings of participants from the semi-private sector were similar to those of the private school headteachers, particularly in their views of women’s leadership opportunities and management representation. There were also many similarities across all participants, which indicate, that regardless of the type of school, these women heads had to overcome the same barriers, and experienced similar challenges while enacting leadership.

The chapter is structured thematically, based on the main findings of the research.

Female Headship Opportunities

The under-representation of female leaders in secondary school management positions is a continuing feature in international research and literature, particularly in Europe (Coleman, 2001, 2002; Fuller, 2013, 2017) and the US (Shakeshaft, 1987), as well as in Australia (Blackmore, 1999). However, in Chile there is no major study addressing the position of female educational leaders in schools. Women leaders are well represented in both private and semi-private schools in Chile but, in the public schools, the managerial positions are dominated by men (Weinstein, et al., 2012). However, the statistics do not show differences across pre-school, primary and secondary schools in their figures about women’s representation (MINEDUC, 2018), so there is a need for accurate data about this. Coleman (2002) shows that women in the UK and other countries are “less likely to achieve managerial positions than their male peers”, particularly in the secondary sectors, colleges and universities (ibid, p.2), but such data are not available in Chile.
Differences

Participants from private and semi-private schools had a common vision about women’s representation in educational management, arguing that there has been an improvement over the years, and there are now more women heads than men in these sectors. This differs from the public schools’ participants, who argue that, even though the selection process has improved, women are still under-represented in senior management positions. This experience is similar to other countries, where senior management school positions are dominated by men (Coleman, 2012; Blackmore, 1999; Shakeshaft, 1993), mainly due to gender role stereotypes.

The differences across the three Chilean school sectors are, mainly due to the selection process. Most, public school participants argued that the system is founded on political power and authority, which works as a barrier for headship achievement. Coleman (2012) refers also to the selection process where the role of the “gatekeepers raises questions” particularly about “equality and opportunity” (ibid, p.601). Even though Chilean female heads claimed that the selection process has improved, they also acknowledge that a balance is yet to be achieved and that both political views and social connections, still influence that final decision.

Similarities

Coleman (2002), discusses, the importance of mentoring in the future development of female leaders in education, arguing that it is “essential in inducting someone new to a post” (ibid, p.26). Mentoring has yet to be adopted in educational leadership in Chile. Moreover, in Coleman’s (2002) study, most women were mentored by men, who are seen as more capable to carrying this task, due to their seniority and representation in the post (ibid, 2012).

Even though women representation’s in Chile varies across the school sectors, the participants from all three types of school argued that there is a need for female role models for women leaders in education. Most of these women heads claimed that had a male role model at some point in their careers. However, as Coleman (2002) states, female leaders provide more appropriate role models. Moreover, Hall (1996), argues that the lack of role models for girls, affects their aspirations and contributes to women’s unbalanced representation in management posts.
Many participants commented that, due to being first time headteachers, they preferred to apply to small schools, where they were more confident about doing a good job. This preference for working in small schools was common for the participants across public, semi-private and private schools.

The Chilean findings showed that participants’ experience aligns with previous studies about women views of role models in leadership positions, where they recognised a need to tell women leaders’ stories, arguing that it can help to empower themselves as leaders, and may also motivate potential future female leaders. They also argued that hearing successful stories from women perspective is more relatable to their own experience and can provide a model to follow.

**Barriers for Headship Achievement**

The literature also focuses on the constraints for women’s career progression. Coleman, (2001) found that women may be perceived, due to their domestic role, as “ill-fitted” (ibid, p.83) for school management positions. The author also refers to the apparent lack of confidence that women have, holding them back when planning their careers, in comparison with their male peers. (Coleman, 2001). Moreover, Shakeshaft (1987) describes internal and external barriers. Internal barriers “can be overcome by individual change”, while external factors “require social and institutional change” (ibid, p.82). She also argues that internal barriers have their origins in a male dominance culture, functioning as camouflage for women’s career progression.

The Chilean study shows similar barriers, which the six participants had to overcome in order to achieve their posts. Gender role stereotypes, such as like domestic roles and motherhood, were a common barrier for most participants, preventing them from planning their career, as also found in most international studies (Coleman, 2002; Shakeshaft 1987; Hall, 1996). However, the nature and extent of barriers varied across the different types of schools.
Family responsibilities and motherhood

Five of the six women heads reported that domestic responsibilities, particularly motherhood, affected their career planning decisions, arguing incompatibility with their jobs. While all six participants are mothers, and must still balance work with motherhood, they all achieved their positions once their children were grown up and at a more independent stage. Shakeshaft (1987), claims that women’s career paths are different from that of men’s, due to their work lives being often interrupted to have, and care for children. Motherhood still affects women’s professional careers in many countries, and Chilean experiences are no exception. Coleman (2002) states that it has becoming more common for young women heads to “opt out” of balancing work with childcare, and more women professionals have delayed motherhood in order to established themselves in their work. (ibid, p.53). This is also true in the Chilean context, as commented by most participants that the new generations of working women are becoming mothers older than their generation.

Moreover, achieving headship positions when all six women were past the period of childcare responsibilities can be constructed as a pattern, where all participants felt comfortable in both, their careers and family, to apply for the position.

Participants also recognised social pressures as a barrier, because roles in Chilean society are still stereotyped; with women usually expected to fill domestic roles, and men seen as the main providers. This is similar to Kaparou and Bush’s (2007) study, where Greek female principals also acknowledged domestic roles as barriers that affects their career, where “women face expectations that they will prioritise family over work” (ibid, p.227). Even though participants also argued that, in Chilean society, the new generation is different, there are still gender roles stereotypes that continue to constrain women’s career development.

Insecurity and lack of support

Participants from all across three sectors, experienced insecurity either when applying for the post, or after accepting the position. Unlike Coleman’s (2002) study, these women did not relate their insecurity to their gender, but simply saw them as part of the process. However, they
acknowledge that most of their lack of confidence, was due to doubts about their skills and capabilities to perform the job, which is a common barrier for women (ibid, 2002)

While the findings from the interviews showed that participants were supported by their families or spouses, they also acknowledge that the lack of support can prevent women from progressing with their careers, arguing that stereotypical roles are still present when it comes to work life, where men’s career are usually more privileged than women’s inside family structures. Most participants felt lucky, and grateful for those who supported them, showing that such support is pivotal for the success of women’s careers.

Facilitators for Headship Achievement

Similarities

The six participants all identified two facilitators; passion for education and personal convictions, and family support. Personal convictions are also referred in the literature, as “own ambitions”, and “own motivation”, (Coleman, 2002, p.18) highlighting the importance of self, but passion for education as a facilitator is not mentioned. The Chilean data may be different from the international literature, because all six participants claimed a love for education, believing that can contribute to it, motivate them to pursue a leadership career path. Moreover, such results agree with Weinstein et al.’s (2012) study on Chilean headteachers, which showed that most, show high satisfaction with their work, in contrast with their Latin American peers.

Regarding family support, the majority of the female heads mentioned their husbands as crucial when making their final decisions, which agrees with Coleman’s (2002) findings where spouses are portrayed as the big influence on headteachers’ careers. Moreover, participants related this to role transformation at home, with many domestic tasks being shared with their spouses.

Another crucial similarity for six participants, was their professional experience. All these headteachers had a previous managerial role, mainly as middle leaders, before achieving headship. They stress the importance of having experience in management, as well as training in the area, that gave them the skills, knowledge and confidence to apply for headship. Even though only two of them explicitly planned for headship, all of them argued that professional training was pivotal for their careers as heads.
Differences

Despite these similarities, there were also certain differences, particularly between headteachers from the public schools with both private and private-subsidised sectors. They differ regarding those who influenced them inside the educational context.

Whilst participants from the public sector claimed to be motivated by other headteachers, who were also regarded as mentors and role models, those from private and semi-private schools stated that they received important support from the owners of the schools. The semi-private school participants both mentioned that their previous job was recognised by their school owners. The private school head explained, that school owners were looking someone like her for the post, where her previous work has been noticed. The experience of the public sectors principals mirrors those in Coleman’s study (2002), where principals recognised other headteachers and colleagues who influenced their development.

Leadership Enactment Challenges

The findings showed that, regardless of school sector, there are far more similarities than differences for the six participants, in respect of leadership enactment. These findings are also consistent with international studies.

Resistance towards female leadership

According to Coleman (2002), difficulties continue for women after they achieve headship. This is also the case for all six participants, who felt resentment from male colleagues, who also disregard themed and did not acknowledge them as leaders. Such attitudes mainly relate to gender stereotypes that men have towards women, who still believe that women are unsuitable to be managers. This is similar to Coleman’s (2002) study, where comments referred to complications “with the concept of woman as a boss”. The reasoning behind such resentment from men, can be grounded in the idea that leaders are stereotypically male, and that men can “see it as a threat to their autonomy as teachers” (ibid, p.88).

The six participants claimed that such resistance came only from their male colleagues, whereas relationships with their female colleagues were closer and more trustworthy. Most of them
added that female teachers felt more confident in talking to them about problems, while men seemed uncertain if they could do the job, particularly at the beginning of their headship.

Coleman (2002) also comments about the isolation that women heads commonly experience, which is “one of the major impacts of gender on work” (ibid, p.80). In contrast, none of the six Chilean participants referred to being isolated, but some did experience mockery and difficulties for their ‘different’ ways of leadership, which, if not properly supported, may lead to isolation.

Leading ‘differently’ from men

Although the six participants represent three different types of schools, all of them claimed to lead in a more democratic way. While it was clear that each participant has their own styles, all stated that leading based on power and authority was not their way. Most of them claimed to be calm and no to shout to others to impose themselves. These experiences also echo Coleman (2002) study, the main stereotype relates to men being tough leaders, while the women would be too soft.

The six participants also mentioned expectations of their leadership, that they should be firm and authoritarian, but they add that there is no single way of leading and that their approach can also be successful. However, some of the participants admitted adopting some ‘male’ characteristics, in order to be considered.

Being expected to lead like male heads

Three of the six participants claimed that they learned male forms of leadership, two from the public sector and one from a semi-private school. While expectations to follow a male type of leadership are present across all three types of school, these assumptions are stronger in the public sector. Therefore, it can be argued that the more men are present in the sector, the greater is the pressure to maintain a male type of leadership. This resonates with the assumption that the male way is seen as “the only correct way to manage” (Coleman, 2002, p. 89).

Another similarity amongst women headteachers from the public sector, relates to difficulties in particular dealing with finances and the administrator, claiming that being accounted equal to their male peers is difficult. Coleman (2002) also refers to this issue, arguing that there is
an assumption that women cannot deal with finance, so giving them these roles is a way of testing to see if they can meet the challenge.

Chilean society

All six participants claimed that Chilean society is still embedded in patriarchal ways, where domestic responsibilities are women’s role, whereas men’s role is being the head of the household. Although participants argue that these social notions are starting to change in Chilean culture, they add that there is still much work to be done, in order to transform these gender roles. Similarly, Kaparou and Bush (2007) also refer to Greek society as patriarchal, where there is job differentiation between men and women. However, there is a change in society, where younger generations do not follow women’s stereotypical domestic roles. These cultural changes, however, cannot depend only on the new generations, and educational leaders have a moral responsibility to model equal gender opportunities to their students, which relates to Hall’s (1996), views about leadership and power:

“It meant being able to make things happen by distributing the resources, interacting in ways that left others confident in their actions, enabling others to do things, being thoroughly organized and prepared, having a vision and shaping a culture.” (ibid, p.145)

Participants also argued that they have felt the social pressure of balancing work and family, claiming that this is an issue for women, and not for men. Regardless of their different school sectors, all six participants had similar experiences and views, particularly about stereotypical roles in Chilean society.

International studies also refer to the relationship between gender stereotyped roles and jobs, which also limits women’s careers. While men are seen as more visible leaders, women are related to caring and “pastoral roles which are less visible” (Coleman, 2002, p.19). The role of women as caring is the most stereotypical, and it is assumed that women will naturally take the equivalent role in their job, therefore taking care of young children, as in primary schools, is seen as an ‘obvious’ role.
Overview

This research on Chilean female principals demonstrates both differences and similarities between and among the six participants. Even though they represent three different types of school, they had similar challenges to confront as female leaders. The most significant differences were between the public school sector, and the private and semi-private schools, mainly due to the selection process and their views on women in educational management.

Many similarities were also found with previous studies of women in educational management (Coleman, 2002; Hall, 1996; Shakeshaft, 1987; Kaparou and Bush, 2007), notably that women in many countries are still disregarded as educational leaders, and that gender role stereotypes are still much immersed in society. These views continue to challenge female educational leaders, both to progress in their careers, and after they have achieved headship.
CHAPTER SIX:

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This final chapter reviews and answers the research questions, as well as showing the differences and similarities identified by the six participants. Subsequently, it describes the implications of the study for policy, practice and research. This research focused on the experiences of six women in school headship position in Chile and, particularly, in understanding the main facilitators and barriers they experienced. The first section shows how the four research questions have been addressed through the perspectives of the participants.

Answering the Research Questions

*Research question 1: To what extent are women in the Chilean educational school context likely to achieve a headship position?*

The findings show a close relationship between women’s career progress and the type of school. Each school type (public, semi-private, and private) has different selection processes, so women’s representation in headships varies, and the facilitators, barriers and challenges experienced by the participants also differed by school sector. In the public sector the selection process is through an open public contest, which all public female headteachers claimed that, although it has improved, still is influenced by political favours and social connections, withholding their intentions for applying. In contrast, the recruitment process in the other two types of school, is through and invitation by the school owner, resulting in a non-competitive selection, which is mainly the case for semi-private schools. Thus, these differences in selection process, have an impact on women’s achievement to headship, resulting in a lack of female representation in management positions in the public sectors, but no so in the semi-private and private sector. Indeed, the recruitment process underlies and influence on women’s representation in school management positions in the Chilean educational context.
Research question 2: What are the facilitators for women aspiring to headship?

The participants reported some similar, and some different facilitators. Family and partner support were common features for all the women heads, as noted also in the literature. Another common facilitator for the six participants was their passion for education, which all of them claimed to be a motivational factor to aspire to headship. In contrast, the selection process was regarded as a facilitator for participants from semi-private and private school, but not for the three participants from the public schools. Participants from the semi-private and private school stated that school owners acted as supporters and facilitators for their positions, since they were the ones who selected them. Whereas for the three public school heads, the selection process was their major barrier. They acknowledge as mentors and facilitators previous headteachers from whom they learned or people within the education world, but not the school owner, which would be inappropriate and hampered the selection process.

Research question 3: What are the barriers for women aspiring to headship?

The findings show that, for participants from the public school sector, the selection process was a major barrier, discouraging them from applying for the post and leading them to think that they would have little chance of being selected, due to political favours and social connections influencing the selection process. This view links to the finding that, in Chile, it is harder for women to achieve school management positions in the public school sector. This is a significant discriminator by school type, as the participants in private and semi-private schools did not report this problem. A major barrier common to all six participants was that of family responsibilities and motherhood, where all acknowledged that they achieved the position after their children were grown up. They all, agree that childcare can constrain women’s career progress, confirming insights from the literature.

Research question 4: What are the challenges facing women when enacting headship?

Although the participants represented different school types, the findings show that they had similar challenges when enacting their leadership. In particular, gender role stereotypes were evidenced as the main challenge these participants encountered. Resentment from male colleagues
towards their leadership was an attitude that all had experienced or observed. The participants also claimed that they practiced a more democratic and non-hierachal type of leadership, arguing that the ‘male’ type of leadership is not the only successful form of headship.

The six participants also claimed that the Chilean culture is sexist, where stereotyped roles still dominate society, where they still feel pressures from society, and judgments about the time spent in their workplace. However, there was also a common belief about ‘times changing’, where participants argue that new generations are transforming those stereotyped roles. They also stress the responsibility of educational leaders, to model non-stereotypical roles for today’s generations of school managers.

Implications

Gender and educational leadership is an under-researched area in Chile. Therefore, this research constitutes a significant study, as there are no major published studies on this topic in Chile. While women still are under-represented in secondary school management in many countries, national statistics show that, in Chile, women are well represented in school management. However, the statistical data do not show differences in women’s representation across pre-school, primary and secondary schools. Therefore, the Ministry of Education is encouraged to provide a detailed picture of women’s representation in school management positions in Chile, in order to have accurate statistics, and to establish if there is balance of gender representation in secondary schools.

The headteachers’ selection process is hampered by the different modes of recruitment for each school type, as there is no parity in the process. There is a need to reform these processes to provide a consistent approach across the different types of schools. Similarly, there is a need to develop training programmes for headteachers, where gender issues in educational leadership and management are discussed, and therefore gender parity, barriers, and challenges for leadership enactment, can be addressed and researched.

While this research has produced some valuable insights, it needs to be extended to a larger population of headteachers, both female and male, in order to have a broader view of the experiences and views of school managers about gender and educational management. Moreover,
this study should also be followed by quantitative and qualitative research in other regions of Chile, in order to compare experiences between rural and urban areas.

Overview

The research shows some major differences amongst the six participants in the three school types, but many similarities were also found, notably in respect of gender role stereotypes fuelled by a patriarchal society, that continue to define the work life of women heads. The statistical data are limited, in terms of gendered leadership in secondary schools, in Chile, and the Ministry of Education is advised to address this matter in order to have accurate information, that can contribute to gender equity in educational management positions.
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide

1. Welcoming the participant and introduce myself.

   First ‘easing-in’ questions to start building the rapport.
   Hello, how are you? First, thank you for agreeing in take part in the interview. It will take about 45 minutes. Please confirm that you are willing to be audio recorded. You can stop the interview at any time, for a break or withdraw from it if you wish, as your participation is voluntary. Do you have any questions about it?

2. Talk briefly about the research project

   As you have read in the participant information sheet, this research project is for the Dissertation for my MA in Education. I am interested in the experiences of Chilean women school principals and their journey to achieve headship positions. That is why you have been invited to participate in this research.
   - Do you have any questions about the study?

3. Starting with ‘warm up’ questions; will help to start building the rapport with participants:

   - In what type of school are you currently working? *(public, private subsidised or private)*
   - How many years of experience do you have in a headship position?
   - Before achieving headship position what was your previous role?
   - Are you a parent?
4. ‘Official’ interview questions

1. Was it in your career plan becoming a headteacher? If so, when did you start to plan for this?

2. What was your career progression to achieve the headship position you hold today?

3. How many years did it take you to achieve this position?

4. What were the main barriers that you had to overcome to achieve your headship position?

5. How did you overcome such barriers?

(Prompt questions):
- Do you think that Chile enables women into headship position in Education? And Why?

6. Conversely, what were the facilitators on your way to your headship position?

7. What are the challenges when enacting your headship position?

(Prompt questions):
- Have you notice any difference between men and women reactions by your leadership?
- Have you notice any sexist attitudes from your peers or male teachers you work with?

8. What are the main advantages of enacting your headship position?

9. Do you think that there are any differences in leadership style between men and women?

10. Have you felt the need at some point to “lead like a man” in order to be accepted?

11. (In the case she is a parent) How do you manage the challenges of being a parent and a busy headteacher?

12. Do you feel that women and men are equally regarded in education management positions?

13. What do you think is needed to achieve gender equity in school leadership in Chile?

Finally, is there anything you would like to add or say? Any questions I did not ask, and you think maybe relevant for this investigation?
5. Closing the interview

Thank you for your time and participation, it has been quite helpful and valuable your experiences for the research.

Goodbye.
Appendix 2: Participation Information Sheet

You have been invited to take part in a research study. Before you agree to take part it is important to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

Please take time to carefully read the following information. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information. Please think about it carefully and then decide whether you would like to take part or not.

What is the project about?
The focus of this study is to investigate the experiences of women in school headship positions in Chile; analyse the facilitator and difficulties they experienced in order to be in a leadership position. The research seeks to develop a better understanding of how women access leadership in education and enact their leadership roles.

What are the aims of the research?
This project has three broad aims:

1. To know and analyse the main challenges of leading as a women in the Chilean educational context
2. To know to what extent Chilean women in school contexts may achieve headship positions.
3. To know and analyse barriers and facilitators experienced in accessing and enacting leadership positions.

Who else is and can be involved?
I am inviting six Chilean school women principals from the three types of schools, (private, private subsidised and public), two principals from each type of school located in Santiago city.
What sorts of methods are being used?
Data will be collected through a semi-structured interview, which will have follow up questions, in order to understand completely the view of principals and have an accurate perspective from their experiences.

Why have you been chosen?
You have been invited to participate in this study because you are a woman principal from one of the three types of school listed above in the city of Santiago.

What are you being asked to do?
You are being asked to participate in an interview. It will last for approximately 45-60 minutes. The discussion will be recorded using a digital voice recorder, with your agreement.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?
The data I collect will be treated confidentially, and only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to the raw data. All information collected while carrying out the study will be stored on a database which is password protected and strictly confidential. The digital and textual data resulting from the interviews will be kept in a secure and confidential location. Your name will not appear on any database or any information which is then published. Instead, a letter will be used as an identifier on all data associated with you. The master copy of the names associated with each number will be kept in a secure and confidential location. I will report the results anonymously. When results are reported all individuals and institutions (individual schools) will be anonymised, so neither you nor your school will be identifiable. You will have the opportunity to review the data collected from you, and to ask me not to include the information you have given me if you so wish.


What will happen to the results of the research study?
The results of study will be used in my MA Dissertation at the University Of Nottingham, UK.

Do you have to take part?
Your participation is entirely voluntary. It is important you understand that you do not have to participate in the project at all, and even if you decide to take part you are still free to stop at any time and without giving a reason.

I will not ask you to participate without you formally providing your consent. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a form giving your permission to take part.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?
The interview may take up to one hour of your time. I realise that some people may find this tiring or difficult. I will ask you to reflect on your experiences of your attainment to a leadership position and I understand that for some this may cause feelings of discomfort or anxiety. Otherwise, I do not believe there are any risks or disadvantages to you in taking part.

**What are the possible benefits to me of taking part?**

I hope that your views and experiences, will be useful to know and understand the challenges of the process that women in Chile go through in order to become a school principal, particularly the barriers and facilitators of it.

This study, and your reported experiences, would contribute to gender and educational leadership studies in Chile, which is an under-researched area.

**Who is paying for this research and who is carrying it out?**

This is an unfunded research for my University of Nottingham qualification. The study is supervised by Professor Tony Bush – if you have any questions or concerns about the research you can contact him by email.

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*You can also raise issues with the School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator for Taught Courses, educationtaughtcourseethics@nottingham.ac.uk*
Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project title: Women Leadership in Education: A perspective from Chilean school leaders.

Researcher’s name: Dalku Arroyo

Supervisor’s name: Professor Tony Bush

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.

- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.

- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.

- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.

- I understand that I will be audio recorded during the interview.

- I understand that data will be stored securely in the Nottingham OneDrive until the study is finished, such as audio record and electronic copies of transcripts. Just the author and research tutor`s will have access to the information. At the end of the study the data will be securely destroyed.
• I understand that I will be provided with a privacy notice under the General Data Protection Regulation

• I understand that I may contact the researcher or tutor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed  ..............................................................................................................  (research participant)

Print name .............................................  Date ...............................................

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School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator for Taught Courses:
educationtaughtcourseethics@nottingham.ac.uk
Appendix 4: Ethical Approval

School of Education

Research Ethics Approval Form (Taught Courses)

HOW TO USE THIS FORM

This form should be used by students/participants on School of Education taught courses (undergraduate or postgraduate) who will be conducting research for an assignment or who are undertaking dissertations.

You should complete this form following discussion with your module tutor or dissertation supervisor, as applicable. Discussion with your module tutor/dissertation supervisor may be in person, via Skype or phone, or via email. (In some cases, this may be part of the process of tutor feedback on a proposal.)

Please read the whole form before starting to complete it.

You must complete Sections A and C. If your research involves participants, you must also complete Section B.

For some questions, you will need to write responses providing details of your research or how you have considered ethical issues. For others, you will need to give a YES or NO response. You may write N/A (not applicable) if appropriate, but you must explain why.

Section D is to be completed by your module tutor/dissertation supervisor and, if applicable, a second reviewer.

When you have completed Sections A, B (if applicable) and C, please email the form to your module tutor/dissertation supervisor, using your University email account, or submit via Moodle, as required.

For all research involving participants, please remember to attach the following:

1. draft information sheet to be provided to prospective participants
2. draft consent form to be used with prospective participants.
SECTION A – ALL RESEARCH

This section applies to all dissertations and all assignments for which ethical approval is required (whether data-generating, using existing data or literature-based).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dalku Arroyo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University ID Number</td>
<td>4340945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University email address</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ttxda30@nottingham.ac.uk">ttxda30@nottingham.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>MA Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module</td>
<td>Dissertation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of module assignment / dissertation</td>
<td>Women Leadership in Education: A perspective from Chilean school leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module tutor / dissertation supervisor</td>
<td>Professor Tony Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>29/04/2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Project details

Please provide a brief description of the research project and its aims.

This study focuses on the experiences of women in school headship positions in Chile; analyse both the difficulties and facilitators that they had to address in order to be in a leadership position.

It’s aims are:
- To know and analyse the main challenges of leading as a women in the Chilean educational context.
- To know to what extent Chilean women in educational school context may achieve headship positions.
- To know and analyse the facilitators that helped them to achieve leadership positions.
- To know and analyse the barriers experienced by these leaders.

What types of data will be generated/used and how will this be obtained (e.g. observation, interview, questionnaire, document analysis, systematic literature review, use of publicly available data, auto-ethnography)?

Data collection will be through semi-structured interviews with Chilean school women principals of three different type of school (private, private subsidised and public).
The research will be preceded by a literature review of global and Chilean sources. The empirical data will be compared with international research, to establish similarities and differences.

In which country/countries will the research take place?

If any of your research is to be conducted outside the UK you will need to follow local ethical requirements. If applicable, please confirm your understanding of these local requirements.

The research will be conducted with Chilean school principals via Skype.

Will the research take place in an educational institution (e.g. a school or university), counselling service or other organisation?

Data generating activities involving other organisations may only be carried out with the agreement of the head of the organisation, or an authorised representative, and after adequate notice has been given.

If applicable, please indicate how evidence of written permission (e.g. letter or email) will be provided to your module tutor/dissertation supervisor.

NO

Please confirm the following

Ethical guidelines
- I have read the relevant sections of the Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics (2019) of the University of Nottingham and discussed this with my module tutor/dissertation supervisor
- I have read the relevant professional association guidelines (delete as applicable) and discussed these with my module tutor/dissertation supervisor:
  o British Educational Research Association’s Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2018)

YES

Data protection
- I am aware of my responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2018)
- I will issue participants with an appropriate GDPR privacy notice

YES

If your research involves human participants (people with whom you will be generating data or whose data you will be using), please continue to Section B.

If you will not be conducting research with participants, please go straight to Section C.
SECTION B – RESEARCH INVOLVING PARTICIPANTS

You must complete this section if your research involves human participants or their data. If, after discussion with your tutor or dissertation supervisor, you are not able to respond YES to any set of statements, please comment on this in Section C.

Research participants

Please identify the type of research participants, indicating their ages if under 18.

| Participants: |
| Six Chilean school women principals (all adults) |

How will they be selected and approached?

They will be selected as Chilean women school principals from private, private subsidised and public schools within Santiago city only (two from each sector). Participants will be selected through a mixture of stratified, convenience and snowball sampling.

The first approach to potential participants will be via e-mail asking them if they are interested to partake in the study. A second approach to confirm participants will be via e-mail attached with the participation information sheet and consent form.

Please confirm the following

Information for research participants

- I will fully explain the purpose and procedures of the research, and the potential benefits and costs of participating (e.g. the amount of their time involved) to prospective research participants at the outset. With child participants, this will be explained in an age appropriate manner.
- I will reveal my full identity to potential participants.
- I will inform prospective participants that data generated will be treated in the strictest confidence and will only be reported in anonymised form, but that I will be forced to consider disclosure of certain information where there are strong grounds for believing that not doing so will result in harm to research participants or others, or (the continuation of) illegal activity.
- I have attached a draft of the information sheet for participants.

Obtaining voluntary informed consent

YES
• I will ask all potential participants to give explicit, normally written, voluntary informed consent to participating in the research. Where written consent is given, the participant and I will retain separate copies.
• In addition to the consent of the individuals concerned, I will seek the signed consent of a parent, guardian or ‘responsible other’ to sanction the participation of children (i.e. persons under 16 years of age) or vulnerable adults (BERA, 2018, pp. 14-15). Children will also be facilitated to give fully informed consent, as appropriate for their age and maturity. (For counselling programmes only: Gillick competency testing guidelines may be applied with participants under 16 years old in some circumstances, if agreed by your module tutor/dissertation supervisor.)
• I will not place undue pressure on individuals or institutions to participate in research activities.
• My treatment of potential research participants will in no way be prejudiced if they choose not to participate in the project.
• I will provide participants with my contact details (including university email address), and those of my module tutor/dissertation supervisor, in order that they are able to make contact in relation to any aspect of the research, should they wish to do so.
• I will inform participants will that they may freely withdraw from the project at any time without risk or prejudice.
• I will inform participants that my research has received ethical approval from the University of Nottingham, and will provide contact details in case of any complaint.
• I have attached a draft of the consent form for participants (and/or for any others consenting on behalf of participants).
**Confidentiality**
- I will take all necessary steps to protect the privacy and ensure the anonymity and non-traceability of participants and/or other individuals for whom confidentiality would be expected, for example, by using pseudonyms, for both individual and institutional participants, in any written reports of the research and other forms of dissemination.

**Sensitive issues**
- I will be sensitive to differences relating to age, culture, disability, race, gender, religion and sexual orientation amongst research participants, when planning, conducting and reporting on the research.
- I will not collect personal data, for example relating to age, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, sexuality, unless this is directly relevant to the research aims.
- If the study involves collecting personal data or the discussion of sensitive issues such as mental health issues or sexual activity, I have discussed this in detail with my module tutor/dissertation supervisor and understand that this makes my project higher risk.

**Storage and access to research data**
- I will not store names or any other personal data (if collected) for longer than necessary.
- I will safeguard participants' identity in stored research data through encryption, pseudonymisation and full anonymisation, as applicable to the particular research study.
- I will keep data generated by the research (e.g. transcripts of research interviews) securely until the completion of my studies or, if publication is intended, for a period of seven years.
- I will use data purely for the purposes of the research project (including dissemination of findings).
- No-one other than myself, my module tutor/dissertation supervisor or examiners will have access to any of the data generated.
- I will inform research participants that they have the right of access to their data, but not to that of others.
- Where possible, I will provide research participants with a summary of research findings and an opportunity for debriefing after taking part in the research.
- I will reflect ethical principles and discuss considerations, as appropriate, in my assignment (whether in written or presentation format) or dissertation.

**Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) – for UK-based research only**
A DBS check is only required if your research takes place in the UK and will involve you being left alone with children and/or vulnerable adults. You do not need an additional DBS check if you already hold one for the setting in which you will be undertaking your research.
- Do you need a new DBS check for this research?
- If you already hold a check for the research setting, please provide your DBS number here:


Please continue to Section C.
SECTION C – SUMMARY OF ETHICAL ISSUES AND DECLARATION

You must complete this section.

Summary of ethical issues and risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please identify the ethical issues and potential risks associated with this research, in terms of data generation, the research setting and any work with participants, including any risks to yourself (e.g. from lone working or identification of sensitive issues).</th>
<th>The possible risks or issues that I expect are:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remember that all research carries some risk of physical or emotional harm to those involved, even if this is minimal. Consider your responses in Sections A and B, and the discussion with your module tutor/dissertation supervisor. If you were unable to respond YES to any set of statements in Section B, please explain why as part of your response.</td>
<td>- <strong>Interview time:</strong> Not to burden busy school principals with too much interview time. Respect their time and availability to answer the interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>- Questions:</strong> Be careful and respectful with the questions, in order to not imply (unwillingly) negative views of their practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explain how you will take steps to mitigate these risks.</th>
<th><strong>- Interview time:</strong> Give them several options about the time of the interview and how it will be conducted.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>- Questions:</strong> Previously review the questions with the dissertation tutor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please confirm the following

**Declaration**

- I understand that I may not start my research, including the recruitment of any participants or data generation, until I have received ethical approval.
- I agree to work within the protocol that I have outlined and to abide by the School of Education policy on research ethics and the University of Nottingham *Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics* (2019) throughout the research and in any reporting of this.
- If I make any changes to my research that change my answers to any of the questions above, I will submit a new ethical approval form to my module tutor/dissertation supervisor.

| YES |
SECTION D – REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Reviewers should send the form from University email accounts in lieu of signatures

Dissertation supervisor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Professor Tony Bush</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>2 May 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have discussed the proposed research outlined on this form with the student and I am satisfied that the work will be carried out with due regard to ethical protocol and any research participants’ interests. | YES |

All dissertations and any research considered to be outside the School of Education criteria for expedited review must be approved by a second reviewer. Is second review required? | YES |

For research requiring second review

Course Leader/ second reviewer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>[Signature]</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>3rd May 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have reviewed the proposed research outlined on this form and I am satisfied that the work will be carried out with due regard to ethical protocol and any research participants' interests. | YES |

Revised 10/04/2019p