Master’s Degree Studies in
International and Comparative Education

The Gender-Influence Perspective in Educational Management and Leadership
A Comparative Study of Women Upper Secondary Principals in Thessaloniki, Greece and Stockholm, Sweden

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May 2015
Abstract

Gender plays an important role in all facets of human life and although great strides have been made against the gender discrimination, still the progress is gradual and slow. More specifically, in the field of educational management and leadership women’s attempt to gain equal groundwork with men is quite evident but the former still face gender related barriers that hamper their progress. The current research focuses on investigating the role and perceptions of women principals in the field of educational management and leadership and on drawing comparisons between their role in upper secondary education in Greece and Sweden. Therefore, the investigation takes place in the municipality of Thessaloniki and Stockholm with female principals from upper secondary schools to take part in the study. Ten from each city respond to the questionnaire, which is specially designed in their native language. The present findings provide an insight about women’s motivation to become upper secondary school principals, the reasons for their under-representation, the variations in managerial qualities and styles as part of their feminine identity, the difficulties they face towards identifying a position and ways to augment their involvement in the field. Drawing on the evidence of the survey conducted in Thessaloniki, despite the great progress that has been achieved in Greece in the field of educational management and leadership in terms of gender, women are greatly under-represented in upper secondary school management positions and significantly face sociocultural constraints and discrimination in their career path. However, the results of the study in Stockholm disclose that women progressively possess the managerial field in education currently outnumbering their male superintendents.

Key words: educational management and leadership, women principals, upper secondary education
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Acknowledgements

The current thesis paper was inspired by my personal interest in the field of gender equality along with the optional course *Educational Management and Leadership* that was offered during my two-year long Master program in the Institute of International and Comparative Education at Stockholm University. Reaching the end of this fruitful journey, I hereby would like to express my sincere gratitude to several individuals whom without their persistent support and guidance this master thesis would not have been feasible.

First and foremost, I would like to express my warmest appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Mikiko Cars for the insightful feedback, valuable guidance and continuous support I received from her throughout this process.

I owe a deep sense of gratitude to all the female principals of the upper secondary schools in Thessaloniki and Stockholm who were eager to devote their priceless time and participate in my research expressing their personal thoughts and experiences.

A special thank is further dedicated to my beloved parents as well as to my brother, who have been spiritually supported me and unceasingly encouraged my efforts through my lifetime. I also owe my heartfelt appreciation to all my friends who motivated and my partner who assisted me in the completion of this thesis.

Last but not least, I am eternally grateful to the Almighty God who has endowed me with the inner strength and faith to successfully complete this thesis and in general to tackle with challenges in life.
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<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>EACEA</td>
<td>Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency</td>
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<td>EML</td>
<td>Educational Management and Leadership</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>MA</td>
<td>Master</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>PhD</td>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy (Doctorate)</td>
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<td>SKL</td>
<td>Sveriges Kommuner och Landstig</td>
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<td>TC</td>
<td>Training Course</td>
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“As the principal goes, so goes the school.”

-Blumberg & Greenfield, 1980

“Effective leaders do not come from one mold.”

-Rosener, 1990
Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Lumby and Coleman (2007) make a strong statement referring to gender as the most pervasive way in which individuals can be marginalized ‘both through time and across national borders’ when they have to access the field of leadership (p. 4). Historically, the normative view that men dominate in the domain of educational management and leadership or else as Bush (2011) claims ‘management is a male pursuit’ predominates; a fact that greatly impacts on women who aspire high managerial positions. Nowadays, it is quite evident that diversity in terms of gender becomes more noticeable with women to increasingly gain ground in these posts. However, as Grogan (2005) highlights that although lately the number of women in the superintendency has been doubled, it still remains woefully small with countries where the school leadership is still identified with masculinity (as cited in Sanchez & Thornton, 2010).

The study particularly centers on women’s role in the field of Educational Management and Leadership (EML) according to upper secondary female school principals’ views from Greece and Sweden. As Kogkidou (2007) notes women in Greece constitute the majority in educational teaching positions but when it comes to the educational management hierarchy their presence is dimly noticed (as cited in Daraki, 2007). In a similar note, although this was the case in Sweden in the past time, nowadays the proportion of women principals has been dramatically changed with the females to dominate the field (Nygren & Johansson, 2000 as cited in Davis & Johansson, 2005). More specifically, the present research topic is an attempt to investigate women’s motivation in identifying a school principal’s position, reasons for their under-
representation, differences in their leadership qualities and styles, the various difficulties they face and ways to boost their participation in the domain. Ultimately, the results of the findings contribute to draw comparisons and identify similarities and differences on the position that an upper secondary female school principal holds and the challenges she faces between the two European cities of Thessaloniki and Stockholm.

The selection of the two countries and extensively cities is not random but it serves certain purposes. In particular, Greece and Sweden are located in Europe, one in the Southern and the other in the Northern part of Europe while they both belong to European Union since 1981 and 1995 respectively. Their educational systems notably differ, with the Greek one to be highly centralized and the Swedish to be highly decentralized, a fact that offers an insightful dimension to the research paper. The city of Thessaloniki and Stockholm are also intentionally selected since the sample would be comparatively disproportionate if the capitals of the two countries, i.e. Athens and Stockholm, were chosen for the indented study due to the former’s higher population.

1.2 Aim and Objectives

The main aim of the research is to develop a framework in order to understand the role of women in the field of educational management and leadership and draw a comparison between women principals in upper secondary education in Thessaloniki, Greece and Stockholm, Sweden. The specific objectives are the following:
• to examine females’ motivation in their attempt to become school or executing the role of school principal
• to analyze their perspective regarding women’s representation in the field
• to identify any variations in the leadership qualities and styles between women and men
• to investigate the possible barriers and difficulties that influence their leadership process
• to recommend ways of enhancing women’s participation in the field

1.3 Limitations and Delimitations

It is important to mention that that the sample of the study is limited and the data are based in Thessaloniki and Stockholm. Therefore, they cannot yield generalizations to the whole population from which that sample was taken, i.e. about women and education management in Upper Secondary schools in Greece and Sweden. The study results are only aimed to represent an insightful interpretation and reflection. A more representative sample is needed in order to acquire a completely accurate and comprehensive picture of the current topic. Originally, the current research was targeted for a larger sample of approximately thirty principals from each city. Therefore, the researcher contacted thirty-five woman principals from Thessaloniki and thirty from Stockholm, but most of them refused to cooperate and be part of the survey research. The pivotal reason of their absence underlies on the restricted amount of time they afford. Indeed, female principals from Thessaloniki confessed that it was the registration period (January-March) of students’ upcoming national exams (May 2015) and they were appointed by the Ministry of Education to undertake this task within a given time frame. However, a sufficient number of them who reside in the municipality of Stockholm and Thessaloniki allow the
researcher to conduct a comparative study identifying differences and similarities between these two urban areas but no further conclusions on certain processes can be drawn.

More specifically, the findings of the study are based on official governmental statistics and sources from both Thessaloniki and Stockholm and data supplied by the female principals of both cities. Issues of validity and reliability might arise when using external information and people responses as a basis for the findings. The principals’ personal beliefs, values and bias can impact on the study and therefore harm the validity and objectivity of outcomes. Also, the nationality of the researcher is Greek with a good command of the Swedish language. This could be considered as a great advantage since she has as first language the same with the Greek participants and therefore no translation issues could have been created. However, with the Swedish ones there is a risk of lost or misinterpreted meaning during the translation process. Web-based dictionaries and Swedish native speakers are used to ensure the utmost validity of the translation.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study is a significant endeavor in focusing on women principals’ role in upper secondary education and investigating the reasons for their under-representation and the difficulties they face compared to their male counterparts. The significance of this paper is also based on drawing comparisons of the existing similarities and differences applied in the cities of Thessaloniki and Stockholm. The study also seeks to draw attention on the dissimilarities
underlined in the two notably different educational systems with the Greek one to be highly centralized and the Swedish one highly decentralized.

Furthermore, a limited amount of studies has been undertaken regarding women’s perceptions in the field of EML and according to Shakeshaft (2006)’s observation there is no figures that document the number of women involved in school management worldwide while the number of representative studies vary by country.
Chapter Two

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

2.1 The Social Construction of Gender and the Conception of Power

Major discussions about the definition of gender are held and an increasing complexity of its notion is noticed. Earlier in time, Simone de Beauvoir (1953) with her strong statement that “[o]ne is not born, but rather becomes, a woman…; it is civilization as a whole part that produces this creature…which is described as feminine”, propounds her view of the gender by insisting that men’s dominance and women’s subordination is not a biological phenomenon but a social creation (as cited in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2014). Similarly, later on, the Oxford dictionaries (2015) define gender as the state of being male or female with reference to social and cultural differences rather to biological ones. The American Psychological Association (2011) highlights that gender refers to the attitudes a given culture attributes to a person’s biological sex.

Furthermore, gendering goes beyond individual identities and is imposed on rather than developed from individuals dividing them into two complementary but unequal sets, i.e. “women” and “men”. It gives them identity and status shaping their everyday behavior and interaction and privileging some while disadvantaging others. Through this division, norms and roles are constructed into significant social institutions of society or in other words into the “gendered social order”. Its power makes men and women to be entrapped in their gender structure that is built by the society and act in a passively shaped way without being able to deviate because of danger of stigmatization (Lorber, 2010).
Focusing on the concept of power relations, Brunner (2005) presents theorists’ binary interpretations highly influenced by the strong indicator of gender. Weber (1924) conceptualizes power as dominance, authority and control over things or people while Harstock (1987) pinpoints that power in social-control or else “power-over” is a male preoccupation falling within the gender construction of man. Connell (2002) lately analyses power as being held by male “gatekeepers” who exert their power favoring other men and undermining women (as cited in Coleman, 2011). However, post-structuralist feminists view power in the discourse or as the modern philosopher Hannah Arendt (1972) mentions it as “power-with”, i.e. the capacity to communicate and interact with people. This type of power is gendered as feminine and is applied in a different way than the one from men. Miller (1993) argues that women implement their power not competitively but they focus on solving problems, benefiting others and empowering them through the role of mothers and teachers (as cited Brunner, 2005). In other words, the nature of the concept of power is gendered; power-over appears inseparably interrelated with male’s identity, whereas power-with a feminine characteristic.

2.2 Educational Management and Leadership

A lot of interest has been drawn in the 21st century around the concepts of educational management and leadership but what firmly defines each and distinguishes one from the other term remains ambivalent. Indeed, leading and managing effectively lead to smooth operation of the educational organizations and major differences are traced in student academic outcomes. However, the status of the concepts still lingers blurry with no theory to fully embrace all their different variables; therefore lots of scholars shape their own views and interpretations around
them. What should be stressed is that other disciplines of management and leadership are better acknowledged and well founded since in the field of education the terms appear to be relatively interrelated and thus semantically misinterpreted. Bush and Coleman (2000) justifiably identify the two concepts as synonyms since both tasks are executed in the educational institutions by the same individuals and at the same time. Tony Bush (2007), Professor of Educational Leadership at the University of Nottingham, after examining extensively several aspects in the field of educational management and leadership approves that it is “pluralist with many competing perspectives” (p. 391). Razik and Swanson (2010), professors at State University of New York at Buffalo also confirm that both concepts have been widely studied for about 20 years but neither scholarly consensus about their definition has been reached nor any plausible interpretations about their difference. New perspectives of the theories are unfolded once research is conducted and reveals their insufficiency (Razik & Swanson, 2010). What is commonly known, however, is that they both are fundamental aspects and their quality determines the educational institutions’ success.

Bush, in his recent published book (2011) “Theories of Educational Management and Leadership”, cites various scholars’ explanations about those two concepts over time. Cuban (1988) correlates leadership with change and management with maintenance. He identifies the former as an intended influence process that shapes certain educational goals without the superintendents to have positional authority. Educational leaders for him are the ones who are assigned to guide and influence the actions of others in order to accomplish specific purposes, whereas, managers are the ones who maintain efficiently and effectively the current organizational arrangements. Bolam (1999: 194) later describes that educational management is a function that caters for carrying out the policy already established by leadership; whereas the
latter is accountable for forming the policy and altering the organization, if needed. That means each leader has to set certain rules for an educational organization that need to be executed by the manager for the successful operation of that specific organization. Additionally, Yukl (2002) highlights the vague and subjective nature of educational leadership and he finally identifies it with influence, value and vision. He explains that leadership is a purposeful influence exerted by one person with clear vision, both personal and professional values and without being influenced by school governing bodies, in order to structure successfully the organization and achieve noticeable results. All in all, EML is a problematic discipline with no correct or grounded definition. Ongoing debates take place and attempts have been made to clarify their controversial meaning. What it could be implied is that leadership chiefly deals with policy formulation whereas management with utility of resources and practices for the benefit of the organization. However, it should be also taken into consideration the school context in which those two concepts are implemented. That is to say, leading and managing roles vary depending on the geographical location, financial status and the culture the schools belong to. Hugh (1990) claims that the uncritical transportation of theories and methodologies across the world, without regard to the qualities and circumstances of different communities, can no longer be regarded as acceptable (in Bush & Bell, 2002).

As for prioritizing the overlapping concepts within the educational organizations, again the question remains unanswered. The chief executive of the Teacher Training Agency in England and Wales, Anthea Millett (1996) identifies leadership as the most significant parameter that leads to schools’ success while its qualities need to be adapted; whereas management has been placed to a secondary position (as cited in Bush & Coleman, 2000). However, the Open University (1996) frames leadership within the field of educational management describing the
latter as the “overarching concept” within which the former is “subsumed” (Bush and Bell, 2002, p. 3). Glatter (1997) and Bell (1999) argue that creating this dichotomy between the values and purposes of leadership on the one hand, and the methods and skills of management on the other, would be catastrophic since both are inextricably correlated in all schools and colleges (as cited in Bell & Bush, 2002). Bush and Coleman (2000), later on, also balance their significance for educational effectiveness and school improvement. Under led educational institutions with dynamic managers lack of vision and purpose while the over led ones with weak managers are deficient in applying the practices and skills (Bush & Coleman, 2000). Indeed, distinctions and priorities between the two aspects should not be drawn because this will lead to inadequacy of schools’ basic functions and orders. Leadership and management should be seen as compatible and inseparable activities in education being in concordance and complementing each other since it is the leaders who articulate the aims and goals of each school’s context and managers who execute them in order for the organizations to run efficiently and effectively.

Examining EML as a study field itself, incongruence lies on whether education should be considered as another branch of the general principles of management or as a separate independent discipline. Henry (1984) asserts that there are “general principles of management which can be applied to all organizational settings” (as cited in Bush & Bell, 2002, p.6). That means one side favors for a standard approach in which common functions are applied in each type of organization irrespective of the field. The other side, where Glatter and Kydd (2003: 240) underlie, supports that education requires a distinctive approach of managing because of its special needs. These include the difficulty of defining the educational goals, the existence of students as the “product” of educational institutions, the necessity for teachers’ autonomy in the classroom and the limited time that managers invest for dealing with managerial aspects of their
work (in Bush, 2011, p.16). Indeed, educational management should be distinct from any other field exactly because its goal in order for the educational institution to be successful deviates from the other sectors of management. That is to say, educational managers’ ultimate focus lies on learning and teaching process as well as on high performance results and not on how to gain financial profit. Bush and Middlewood (2005) adopt a more conciliatory approach to that summarizing that there are certain management techniques from non-educational settings that could be borrowed to educational ones but special attention needs to be drawn in their application to the latter (Bush, 2011). What is meaningful after all, is that educational managers and leaders should not run school organizations as a big business but they should chiefly place emphasis on the educational character and how to promote effective lifelong learning.

2.3 Gender Issues in Educational Management and Leadership

2.3.1. The Maleness of Leadership and the Feminization of the Teaching Profession

Educational leadership has been socially and historically constructed as a characterization attributed to successful male leaders and this conventional masculinist perspective seems to be prevalent through years. Hearn and Parkin (1983) assert that leadership has been conventionally comprised of certain characteristics that are more frequently displayed by men rather than women, i.e. this of aggressiveness, competitiveness, forcefulness and independence (as cited in Blackmore, 1989). Additionally, Davies (1990) support that educational administration and decision-making hold the normative view of being masculine occupations in many countries worldwide while Hall (1999) and other analysts confirm that this
numerical male dominance in senior posts is taken for granted at all educational levels except for
leadership especially in Western democratic countries is based on ‘a white, middle class male’
pattern and this underrepresentation of female in senior posts has been expanded in the majority
of countries across the globe (p. 5). Coleman (2001) also identifies this hegemony of masculine
nature as a driving factor that marginalizes females and refrains them from seeking leadership
positions (as cited in Sanchez & Thornton, 2010). The field of EML, all in all, appears to be
stereotypically gendered and strongly labeled as a male oriented profession since it displays
certain traits that are defined as masculine rather than feminine.

On the other hand, women were historically considered to be more eligible in handling
teaching jobs more effectively than men. Shakeshaft (1987) explains that one of the reasons for
that is because teaching has been a profession comprised of strong, gifted women and is
considered a natural extension from home since it is highly connected with motherhood and
involvement with children. The European Journal of Education (vol 31, no. 4) in the middle of
1990s documented that in most European countries women prevail in teaching occupations while
the majority of school managers are men (as cited in Shakeshaft, 2006). Cushman (2005)
supports that this disproportion could be explained by the fact that teaching is conventionally
considered by the societies a low pay and status profession (as cited in Lumby & Coleman,
2007). Additionally, Eurydice study discloses that women in all European countries account for
the large majority of teachers in both primary and secondary education. More specifically, the
proportions for women at the primary level vary between 65% in Greece and 98% in Slovenia
when men to comprise approximately 5%, while at the secondary level the former vary between
52% in Lichtenstein and 86% in Latvia (European Commission, 2010).
2.3.2 The Under-Representation of Women in EML

Despite the remarkable equity gains that have been recently noticed in the field of EML, the women still appear to be under-represented and thus under-utilized in those positions. Findings from the surveys conducted by Coleman (2003) show that the number of women as leaders in education is gradually growing; however, males hold the most leadership positions in both developed and developing countries with the females to be seen as exceptions to the rules and subjects to stereotyping. Shakeshaft (2006) affirms that this devaluation exists even worldwide and women are treated differently than men across cultures receiving unequal expectations and rewards. He characterizes infeasible his attempt to document the total number of women in school administration universally since there is no actual study that provides a comprehensive global “snapshot” of it (p.1). The educational researcher interestingly explains that this non-availability of data could be attributed to the purposeful avoidance of comparisons among nation states, weakness to report the changes over time as well as governmental bodies’ resistance in modifying those proportions in leadership positions. Laufer (2009) lately confirms that while there has been some increase in the number of women occupying senior management positions in education, still this is not sufficient enough to “eliminate gender inequalities in terms of the women’s accessibility to the top ranks in business hierarchies” (p. 41).

An insightful analysis is provided by Estler (1975) and Schmuck (1980) about the three models that justify the under-representation of women in senior posts (as cited in Growe & Montgomery, n.d.). According to them, the first one is “meritocracy or individual perspective model” and is associated with women’s personal traits and attitudes (p.2). That means, women’s lack of self-confidence and power as well as unwillingness to abide to the system act as a cause for not making them capable of identifying a position (Tallerico & Burstyn, 1996 as cited in
The second model is the organizational or discrimination model, which is mostly related to the organizational structures of education. The variances in salary, recruiting process and promotion indicate the discrimination and shape the lack of equal opportunities between the two genders (Young, 2001, as cited in Sanchez & Thornton, 2010).

The feminist scholar interestingly mentions that women are hired as principals mostly at the elementary level of education while at the secondary they are placed to manage schools in excluded or difficulty accessible areas. The last of the three models that Estler (1975) and Schmuck (1980) make reference is identified as “woman’s place or social perspective model” (p. 3). This model places emphasis on ‘the cultural and social norms that encourage discriminatory practices’ (Tallerico & Burstyn, 1996 as cited in Growe & Montgomery, n.d., p. 3). Societal norms construct different socialization patterns for men and women differentiating them into two areas of work and status. Therefore, women do hold the possibility of obtaining higher positions in education but the fact that they are constantly confronted with social challenges and difficulties makes their representation in the superintendency disproportionate.

Eurydice study, however, proves that female participation in school management positions highly depends on the level of education in Europe. Available data show that females are over-represented at the primary level and particularly in Bulgaria, France, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden and the United Kingdom holding 70% of all school principals. Nevertheless, the percentage reduces at the secondary level with striking differences in France, Slovakia, Sweden and Iceland where women principals less than 55%. OECD’s TALIS survey in 2009 reports that from the participant countries only 45% were females at the secondary level with some countries, i.e. Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Austria and Portugal to reach even 30% creating
therefore a “glass ceiling” in the majority of the countries (as cited in EACEA P9 Eurydice, 2010, pp.90-91).

2.3.3 The Glass Ceiling Concept

Research on the status of women in the professional world by Kanter (1977) focuses on the ‘glass ceiling’ effect, which prevents them from ascending the top of organizations (as cited in Laufer, 2009). According to the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (1995), the term refers to artificial and unbreachable barriers that detach women from climbing up the career ladder regardless their qualifications or achievements (as cited in Cotter et al., 2001). Laufer (2009) points out that there are several root causes for the glass ceiling and the issue remains complex involving lots of layers of analysis for its interpretation. However, the concept mostly deals with the stereotypical representation and unequal division of social roles and more specifically with women’s limited access to power marked by male domination and their correlation with family and household work. The phenomenon particularly reflects upon labor market discrimination and unequal distribution of opportunities in the chances of promotion into higher level between the two genders.

As a solution in diminishing this glass-ceiling effect that causes direct and indirect discrimination against women, Laufer (2009) suggests that career development policies should be more ‘gender-neutral’ and foster equal opportunities for both genders by providing their decisions on compensations and promotions objectively. Managements’ consciousness and awareness of stereotypes’ existence is a prerequisite in order to change their attitudes and apply equal treatment in promoting, recruiting and training.
It is instructive to note that a lot of scholars find inappropriate the concept of glass ceiling since women have made great progress lately in leadership positions. Eagly and Carli in 2007, for example, are the first who reject the concept of glass ceiling replacing alternatively with the metaphor of “labyrinth”. The two researchers view that the obstacles towards women’s career progress are more penetrable and complicated like the ones of a labyrinth rather than the rigid and unbreakable barriers of a glass ceiling. Bendl and Schimdt (2010) also give another alternative metaphor that constructs this discrimination process; this of a ‘firewall’ as seen to afford the possibility of permeability (as cited in Coleman, 2010, p.27). Both sides support the idea of women being able to travel the career path slowly and gradually rather than running up the invisible impediment that denies their progress.

2.4 Gendered Leadership Qualities and Styles

Women managers who have broken the glass ceiling in nontraditional educational organizations have proved that “effective leaders don’t come from one mold” (Rosener, 1990, p. 119). Although the job responsibilities assigned to managers from different genders in education are equally the same, the qualities they display to undertake and handle those tasks seem to be distinctive. Gherardi (1994:607) does confirm the above statement by quoting “we do gender while we work” producing masculine and feminine archetypes (as cited in Priola, 2007, p. 5). That is to say, dual personality traits and values are implemented in the way of leading in the educational workplace depending on the superintendent’s gender. Gray (1993) distinguishes between feminine and masculine features in school management with female paradigms to be caring, intuitive, tolerant, creative, informal, non-competitive and subjective and male ones as
disciplined, competitive, objective, formal, highly regulated, conformist and normative (as cited in Coleman, 2003). Morris (1999) and Chisholm (2001) also describe women’s leadership qualities and values as maternal oriented, deriving from “family influences as well as their educational and life experiences” (as cited in Lumby & Coleman, 2007, p. 14). Recently, Krüger (2008) notes that unique stereotypical styles are attributed to each gender with women to be dependent, cooperative, passive, emotional, kind and helpful and men to be independent, active, rational, aggressive, dominant and strong (as cited in Sanchez and Thornton, 2010). Shakeshaft (1987) also comments on the noticeable dissimilarities in both the verbal and written language between women and men with women to use more correct speech forms, a wider range of pitch and variations in loudness, more questions and intensifiers and are more grammatically precise than the latter. She summarizes that their language is more expressive, polite and respectful with their audience through listening, echoing and giving non-antagonistic responses. Finally, Belasen and Frank (2012) summarize that gender is a reliable indicator of perceived differences in women and men’s values if it is taken into account that they are biologically and socially constructed in a differentiated way.

The aforementioned professors have found direct influences of personality traits on managerial styles, pinpointing in this way that gender variations in traits correspond to gender variations in managerial styles (p. 200). Namely, the gender differentiated qualities breed the adoption of different styles in leadership roles with women to embrace a more transformational, and nurturing approach while men a more transactional and authoritative one (Bass and Avolio, 1994, as cited in Coleman, 2011). That is, the former focus their job performance on maintaining relational goals and sustaining collaboration with the stakeholders involved in the educational process through sharing information with them -and transforming their ideas into organizational
goals (Fitzpatrick (1983) as cited in Razik & Swanson, 2009); whereas the latter view it as a
series of transactions with subordinates mainly on accomplishing task goals and using formal
authority (Rosener, 1990). Indeed, in their day-to-day interactions, the females seem to develop a
more interactive style among parents, teaching staff, administrators, members of parent-teachers’
association, female community leaders and students and in general encourage community
building and participation with them (Shakeshaft, 1987). They also focus on instructional and
facilitative leadership being concerned about students’ needs and their individual differences,
knowledge of the curriculum methods and objective goals; compared to men who place their
emphasis on organizational matters, i.e. the goal and the product itself utilizing of the traditional
top-down administrative style (Chliwniak, 1997; Conner, 1992; Porat, 1991; Getskow, 1996;
Eakle, 1995; Ryder, 1994; Tallerico & Burstyn, 1996, as cited in Growe and Montgomery, n.d.).
They also seem to be more conversational investing more time in scheduled meetings, phone
calls, unscheduled meetings and instilling to people feelings of group identity and inclusion
(Rosener, 1990).

One of the dominant factors and explanations of “performing” different leadership
between the genders is what Connell (1995) refers to “the body” (p. 56). He points out that “[t]he
physical sense of maleness and femaleness is central to the cultural interpretations of gender and
the social relations of gender are both realized and symbolized in the bodily performances” (as
cited in Blackmore, 1999, p. 170). Therefore, each performance of leadership is symbolic, social
and physical at the same time; symbolic because of women in a predominantly male domain;
social in terms of how they relate to others; and physical that the presence of women’s body in
authority challenges gender power relations. That means, it is not only a cognitive task but also
bodily since each person’s body discloses different practices that distinguish male and female
(Leach and Davies, 1990:319, as cited in Blackmore, 1999, p. 171). Indeed, authority and discipline style of leadership is embodied with masculinity while nurturance and collaboration fit with the feminine archetype.

Coleman (2011) interestingly argues that it is important not only to recognize the existing gendered differences in leadership styles but also to respect and place value on them. She refers to Barrett and Davidson (2006)’s idea that women’s different way of leading is often considered problematic, undermined and it should be subjected to change and adaptation to male patterns especially in non-Western societies with underlying patriarchal values and where no democratic frame is applied. Likewise, Keup et al. (2003:1) confirm that the national culture should be in congruence with the organizational culture because the former clearly influences the latter and determines the predominant and accepted leadership styles that should be adopted by the members of each organization (as cited in Qureshi, Zaman & Bhatti, 2011).

2.5 Barriers to Women in School Management and Leadership

It is instructive to identify the myriad of barriers that women face in the field of EML that un-solve the question why they are disempowered and still lag behind in climbing up the managerial ladder in schools in the 21st century. Lumby and Coleman (2007) attribute those barriers to both structural and cultural factors frequently linked to stereotypes, which ‘impede the progress of women to positions of power and influence’ (p. 6). The two professors pinpoint the issue of patriarchy as a strong cultural influence that cannot be neglected in the majority of nation states despite the legislations imposed by each government. “Legislation is insufficient to overcome deep-rooted stereotypes” and since the dominant image of the leader and manager is
this of a male, it is difficult “to remedy cultural norms that are so persistent” (Coleman, 2003). That means, the status of women and their eligibility to identify leadership positions are interchangeably based on each society’s structure and if this occurs to be a patriarchal one, then even despite the law, hegemonic masculinity marginalizes females’ entrance in the leadership sector and retains the nature of it male-dominated.

Another explanation about women’s absence from being school administrators, according to Shakeshaft (2006), is the deficiency of the support systems in order to motivate and secure them both career development and professional advancement. The term support systems embraces the women’s family environment and their surroundings, which as Cubilo and Brown (2003)’s analysis reports, parental support is the driving force towards women’s success especially in strongly patriarchal cultures where their role is undermined by law. Other factors that operate as barriers along the leadership pathways are the lack of social networks, mentoring and role models, which are also part of the support systems and particularly significant for potential female head teachers. Shakeshaft (2006) asserts that men have more possibilities than women to have formal or informal networks and mentors, a fact that results in their social recognition, career facilitation and advancement. Coleman’s survey in 2004 also backs up the afore-mentioned facts since current women principals considered the family being and workplace as valuable sources of support. Referring to workplace, they include the encouragement from their colleagues, the assistance from the previous head teacher and mentoring (Coleman, 2005).

Women still carry out a disproportionate amount of responsibility for family and domestic obligations (Lumby & Coleman, 2007). Indeed, childbirth, child-care as well as homemaking require time investment increasing their workload and deterring them from seeking
administrative positions. Coleman’s study in 2001 proves that females’ career aspirations related to EML are impacted by family obligations and finally women choose their family over their work (in Sanchez & Thornton, 2010). Furthermore, Lewis (1994) refers that stress at work can create conflicts within marriage due to negative moods and this is a strong impact for women to be reluctant to apply for managerial posts (Coleman, 2003).

Sexism, bias and discrimination include some additional constraints that potential and current females encounter in their progress in EML. Shakeshaft (1987) draws a distinction between two types of sex discrimination, i.e. overt and covert discrimination. The former refers to a direct way of discriminating a woman and it is well documented in the entry process of recruiting used by school boards, governors or administrators; while the latter refers to a more indirectly traceable way often displayed through sexist comments or behavior. In the 2004 survey, Lumby and Coleman (2007) found out that sexist attitudes are disclosed both within and out of the educational organizations through the lack of peer support particularly from male colleagues as well as through the hostility of boards of governors, parents and other visitors who frequently patronize and isolate women managers. Women head teachers in Coleman’s research in 2005 disclose that their male colleagues adopted a “bullying” approach towards them while the female ones appeared to be more judgmental in terms of their family responsibilities. Rusch and Marchall (2006) recognize that they also experience this gender bias in hiring and recruitment procedures with their employers to set the expectations for administrative roles higher than the men (as cited in Sanchez & Thornton, 2010). Apart from the discrimination in the workplace, in a research carried out for Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), Howard and Tibballs (2003) paradoxically concluded that women experienced discrimination even from their family environment and friends with lack of support and encouragement in combining both
family and work responsibilities (as cited in Lumby & Coleman, 2007).

Last but not least, women show reluctance in moving themselves geographically in order to identify a higher position. In fact, leadership positions that are located in another city or district from the one they reside discourage them to send their applications (Growe & Montgomery, n.d.). They also lack of interest and motivation to take on administrative tasks since they enter the education field with the purpose of focusing on its teaching and instructional aspect. Adams and Hambright (2004) polled female participants in their teacher leadership program and revealed that their eagerness for teaching overpowered their desire for leadership positions and for dealing with demanding parents (as cited in Sanchez and Thornton, 2010). Additionally, they lack confidence and self-efficacy in applying for headship since they have been stereotyped into holding pastoral roles and domestic commitments as well as their wages for being school leaders are lower than their male counterparts despite their qualifications (Lumby & Coleman, 2007). This experience led them to doubt their abilities, be unwilling to take risks and frightened to apply for jobs (Coleman, 2001, in Sanchez and Thornton, 2010).

All the aforementioned barriers could be framed into two domains; internal and external barriers. The former is related with women’s inner feelings and can be surpassed through their individual change, whereas the latter are highly dependent on exterior forces and require social and institutional change globally. However, it should be stressed here the fact that internal barriers are seen to be the outgrowth or the consequence of the external ones since it is the androcentric context of each society and culture that creates women low self-esteem, confidence and lack of motivation and keeps them away from advancement (Shakeshaft, 1987).
2.6 Demolishing Barriers to Gender Equity in EML

Boosting women participation in school management positions should be one of the priorities in order to keep a gender-balanced environment for the EML field. This could be achieved through identifying and confronting all those obstacles with strategy formulation processes. Shakeshaft’s (1987) initial suggestion is the change in the androcentric nature of the culture through legal and structural alterations in the society. Namely, the stereotypical conceptions about the male dominance in leadership positions and the female in teaching ones should be eradicated from each society through legislative procedures. The author wisely suggests that this substantial change can initiate through education with the teaching staff, the teaching materials and strategies to produce and promote a nonsexist educational environment for students. Another of his strategy is the provision of administrative training programs to women as well as the financial support and assistance of them through scholarships or stipends to fund them. In this way, women can upgrade their education and gain both administrative knowledge and credentials either via formal university administration courses or in the form of skill workshops.

Additionally, support systems are vital processes in reinforcing women’s administration career. The family and work environment need to provide women with a system of social contacts and networks so that they can be aware of job availability and how to handle administrative tasks. Linked to networking, a wide range of administrative organizations for women have been founded, such as the National Council for Administrative Women in Education, which supports them with developing job newsletters (Shakeshaft, 1987). Furthermore, Tharenou (2005) analyzes that factors regarding social and human capital could contribute to career success of women. That is to say, social capital is related with women’s
social contacts and can be increased through mentoring, networking and coaching while human capital is based on their qualifications and capacities and can be improved through educational development and professional experience (as cited in Coleman, 2011). Mentoring has been identified as prime and continuous importance in the psychological support and development of both aspirant women heads and their institutions (Growe and Montgomery, n.d.). The two authors pinpoint that the mentees, i.e. those women being mentored, can get assistance on how to deal with organizational issues, how to interpret inside information and how to be assimilated into the culture when women mentors are assigned to them because of their capability to encourage and share the same experience and knowledge with them. All in all, mentor relationships and other support structures can help women to overcome all the challenges and succeed in educational leadership positions.

The organizational culture, including governors, employers and other involving stakeholders, can also make its own contribution in dismantling those gender barriers in the educational management sector. Technical assistance in the evaluating process as well as awareness of the existing bias should be provided to the organizations and individuals who affect recruiting policies and practices through the form of workshops and regional and national meetings (Shakeshaft, 1987). Employers are also recommended to embrace the diversity of the workforce, achieve relationship building and ground a policy of equal opportunities in their recruiting process (Coleman, 2011). That is to say, development of strong relational bonds within the educational staff as well as clarification within the educational institution of the goals and visions are prerequisites for women to gain the confidence of the involving stakeholders.

Balancing job and family responsibilities should also be accommodated in order to dismantle the stereotypical beliefs about female archetype and for women to be treated equitably.
Coleman (2005), on the one hand, stresses the importance of nurturing a culture in schools that is fully tolerant and respectful towards women’s child-care and domestic responsibilities while on the other hand, Mahitivanichcha and Rorrer (2008) insist on women’s competency to be multitasking and to effectively implement various strategies that will enable them to strike a balance between job and family responsibilities (in Sanchez and Thornton, 2010).

Last but not least, Eurydice’s recent study interestingly provides the initiatives geared by certain Europeans countries in their attempt to remedy the situation and enhance women’s involvement into managerial positions in education. The Netherlands launched a program called ‘more women in management’, which has been part of the 2006’s agreement between the government and trade unions as well as employer organizations while the Department of Education and Science in Ireland funded an in-service course triggering women to progress to management positions. Liechtenstein and the surrounding regions participated in a sub-regional project with the purpose of increasing the proportion of women managers while at the same time Cyprus and Romania implement national strategies towards the gender balance in education management (as cited in EACEA P9 Eurydice, 2010, pp. 93-94).
Chapter Three
Methodological Framework

Crabtree and Miller (1999) and Denzin and Lincoln (2000) highlight that “the type of methodology adopted by any research depends upon the central research objective and questions” (as cited in Srivastava & Thomson, 2009, p. 73) Therefore, after presenting the aim and objectives of the study as well as the theories and concepts, it is instructed to provide in the following chapter the methodological framework that has been applied for the conduction of the research study. The chapter begins with the description of the approach and strategy of this research and then the design and sampling follow elaborating on the instruments used for the data collection, the context as well as the participants of the study. Afterwards, the methods of analyzing the data are presented along with the issue of ethics concerning the intended research.

3.1 Research Approach and Strategy

3.1.1 Qualitative Approach

Bryman (2012) defines the term research strategy as the orientation that is given to the conduction of the social research distinguishing it in two types; quantitative and qualitative research. The former is a strategy focusing on the collection and analysis of numerical data entailing a deductive approach between the theory and the research whereas the latter chiefly emphasizes words and entails an inductive approach in which theory generates from the research. Creswell (1998) clarifies qualitative research as ‘an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct and methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or a human problem’ and the researcher’s task is to analyze words and report detailed views of informants (as cited in
Srivastava & Thomson, 2009, p. 73). Focusing on the current study, qualitative approach is employed in order to gain a deeper understanding of women principal’s role and perception of school leadership between the two European cities. It also has as the main feature an inductive view between the theory and research as the former is the outcome based on credible findings through the formulation of self-completion questionnaires administered to upper secondary female heads in the form of email. In terms of establishing and assessing the qualitative research, trustworthiness is applied as the pivotal criterion (Guba, 1985 and Guba & Lincoln, 1994 as cited in Bryman, 2012). In other words, according to them, trustworthiness is made up of four other criteria, i.e. credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, of which credibility is the one applied in the conducted study. Its establishment discloses that there is a high level of congruence between the theoretical concepts and the researcher’s observations. Concerning emerging issues by interpreting the findings, many quantitative researchers criticize the qualitative approach as rather subjective and dependable on researchers’ personal views and personal relationships with the participants (Bryman, 2012). In the particular study, the researcher attempts to hold an impartial stance interpreting the findings based on objective criteria stemming from the previously reported theories and the respondents’ viewpoints. The issue of generalizing the interpreting qualitative data also emerges. As it has been stated in the limitation’s unit, the current study has been of a small scale with a limited population of representatives to take part. Therefore, there is no scope for generalizing the results of female principals into all Greek or Swedish upper secondary school settings.
3.2 Research Design and Sampling

Bryman (2012) cites that ‘a research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of the data’ and its choice depends on the ‘priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process (p 46). Therefore, the design employed for the indented social research is comparative design because it embodies the logic of comparison of two meaningfully distinguishing cases. Hantrais (1995) explains further that this form of comparative research is called cross-cultural or cross-national research because it examines a particular issue in two countries with the intention of comparing individuals’ manifestations in different socio-cultural settings intending to explain the similarities and differences or to gain an in-depth understanding of the social reality in two different national contexts. More concretely, the specific comparative research takes the form of cross-national comparative research because the municipality of Stockholm, Sweden and Thessaloniki, Greece are sampling cases examined, analyzed and identified in terms of the contrasting role of women principals in secondary schools.

3.2.1 Selection of Countries

The empirical material has been collected from two specific European settings, which is Sweden and Greece. More specifically, the intended research has been conducted in Upper Secondary State Schools located in central regions of Stockholm and Thessaloniki. In the municipality of Stockholm, specifically, there are 97 upper secondary municipal schools while in Thessaloniki approximately 106. The main reason behind the selection of Sweden’s capital, Stockholm, and Greece’s co-capital, Thessaloniki, is because the number of schools is relatively similar compared to a wider range of them found in Athens; a fact that would cause the units of
comparison, i.e. the two capitals, to be disproportionate. A further reason is that the researcher is acquainted with the native language of both countries, a fact that enhances the reliability and authenticity of the conducted study. A last but rather important reason is that the researcher is keen on examining and comparing the established gender policies developed by both institutions as well as the philosophy of female gender in EML influenced by the sociocultural aspects of both countries.

3.2.2 Selection of Participants

The questionnaires were constructed and distributed in January 2015 in upper secondary state schools in Thessaloniki, Greece and municipals ones in Stockholm, Sweden where female principals were appointed. The participants were asked to take part in the study and were selected to answer them in their native language. All of them have been working as principals in upper secondary schools in both cities, the so-called Gymnasium in Stockholm and Lukeio in Thessaloniki. Overall, the purposeful sample for the study was approximately 30 women in each city, however only 10 of them chose to participate (as Table 1 shows). The relatively small sample of 10 respondents in each city allows the researcher to elaborate more in some areas of concern that might be neglected if a bigger sample and quantitative analysis would be used; not any intention to generalize the research outcome exists.
Table 1: Presentation of the Indented Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>QUESTIONNAIRES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female Upper Secondary Principals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thessaloniki, Greece</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockholm, Sweden</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is worth stressing that all of them filled in both the first part of the questionnaire with the demographic closed ended questions as well as the second part with the open ended ones. Table 2 and 3 depict a holistic view of the current sample with the twenty females from both cities who hold managerial titles in their respective organization. Pseudonyms were used for each principal for anonymity and confidentiality purposes. The criteria that were applied for the sampling were the age of the participant, the marital status, the number of children, the education level, years of experience in leadership post and previous professional position. The majority of the Greek respondents represents an age range from late 40s to mid 50s, married with at least 2 children holds a 4-year bachelor degree, has working experience of up to 10 years with teaching as their previous occupation.
Table 2: Profile of the Participants in the Municipality of Thessaloniki

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Educational Background (Degree)</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Previous Professional Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katerina</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>BA &amp; TC</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>BA &amp; TC</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stella</td>
<td>&gt;56</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PhD &amp; TC</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irini</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>&gt;20</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>Vice Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olga</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elena</td>
<td>&gt;56</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>BA &amp; TC</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimitra</td>
<td>&gt;56</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BA &amp; MA</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for the Swedish participants, they are aged between 40s to mid 50s and half of them are married with an average number of 2 children and half either single or divorced. They all hold a 4-year bachelor degree while half of them have received a master’s degree or training course. Their working experience is approximately up to 10 years and most of them hold a higher position than teaching as their previous occupation.

Table 3: Profile of the Participants in the Municipality of Stockholm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Educational Background (Degree)</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Previous Professional Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ida</td>
<td>&gt;55</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>&gt;20</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>BA &amp; TC</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>Program Team Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petra</td>
<td>&gt;56</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>BA &amp; TC</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>Director of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annika</td>
<td>&gt;56</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PhD &amp; TC</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>School Leader in Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lena</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>MA &amp; TC</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecilia</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BA &amp; MA</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>BA &amp; MA</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>Vice Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felicia</td>
<td>&gt;56</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>MA &amp; TC</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>BA &amp; MA</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>First Teacher (Första Lärare)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva</td>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>MA &amp; TC</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.3 Self-Completion Questionnaires

The questionnaire is designed with clear-cut instructions and easy on the eye layout and it has been sent out through mails that have been delivered to the respondents’ personal school email address during the months January-March 2015. It is self-completed asking the upper secondary female principals to complete it themselves in an estimated time of approximately ten to fifteen minutes and return it to researcher’s email address. A personalized covering letter follows the email explaining the significance of the research, the reasons of selecting the recipient, confidentiality of records as well as supervisor’s details of the researcher. The questionnaire is constructed in English language but it has been accurately and carefully translated in both Greek and Swedish giving the opportunity to the participants from Thessaloniki and Stockholm to answer in their native language respectively. The translation between English-Greek has been accurately conducted by the researcher while the one between English-Swedish by a native Swedish speaker, who happens to be the partner of the researcher.

It is divided into two major sections; the first contains closed ended questions regarding participants’ demographic information including age, family situation, educational background, years of experience and previous professional position, and the second is based on five open-ended questions where the participants are kindly asked to justify and elaborate their answers. This combination of short closed and open-ended questions achieves better response rates taken for granted principals’ limited free time and simultaneously provides the researcher with the necessary input about female principals’ different perspectives and personal experiences regarding their motivation in becoming school principals, the difficulties they face and their qualities as school leaders, the possible reasons for their under-representations and their recommendations on enhancing women’s participation on that field.
3.3 Data Analysis

3.3.1 Qualitative Data

After the completion and collection of the self-completion questionnaires, an analysis and interpretation of the data needs to be constructed. The survey contains many open-ended questions and therefore produces a great deal of qualitative data that are collected by the researcher and analyzed with the use of one of the qualitative data analysis frameworks. Qualitative data are in depth descriptions of circumstances, interactions, thoughts and beliefs from people who have experienced or are experiencing the phenomenon (Patton, 2002 as cited in Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). In the particular study, the analysis was undertaken thematically identifying and classifying participants’ reflections in different themes from the two regions on the examined topic. Mayring (2000), Pope et al. (2006) and Gbrich (2007) define it as a systematic coding and categorizing approach mainly for exploring large amounts of textual information unobtrusively and for determining patterns of words used as well as their frequency, relationships, and the discourses of communication (as cited in Vaismoradi et al., 2013). However, according to Boyatzis (1998), it goes further than this interpreting and analyzing various aspects of the research topic (as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006).

As Bryman (2012) refers it is the most common approach to qualitative data analysis provided by Framework, “a matrix based method for ordering and synthesizing data” (Ritchie et al. 2003:219, in Bryman, 2012, p. 579). An index is going to be constructed with the identified themes and the quoted material is going to be inserted into cells allowing comparisons among the different views of the research participants. The “keyness” or else the significance of a theme is not dependent on quantifiable measures but on whether it captures something important in relation to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, Table 4 illustrates the
central themes categorized based on the research questions of the study and emerged from the thematic analysis of the qualitative research.

Table 4: Thematic Framework: Categorization of Central Themes for Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORE THEMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Motivation to be a school principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Under-representation of women principals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Qualities for women leaders in education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Perceived differences in the way women and men lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Encountered difficulties being a school principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Recommendations to enhance women’s participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the presentation of the findings of the study, the researcher takes up those themes and conducts the analysis based on the theories and concepts that were developed in an earlier chapter.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

It is worth mentioning that ethics remains a crucial issue nowadays and it appears to be more sensitive than before while there is a lot of debate among writers on research ethics of what is considered ethically acceptable and what is not (Bryman, 2012). As the British Sociological Association (2004) highlights, the relationship between the researcher and the participants should be characterized by trust, integrity and confidentiality adopting methods to store the research data in a secure manner. Therefore, the main priority of the indented social research is to respect
and protect the ethical rights of the participants. Their physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing is maintained and not any act that would cause harm to their confidence and self-esteem occurs since their participation is entirely voluntary. They are also fully aware about the nature, the process and the content of the research since an invitation paragraph is included in the very beginning of the questionnaire that outlines the goals and objectives of the study and secures their rights. Pseudonyms are assigned to the research participants in order to eliminate entirely the possibility of identification while all their personal details are kept anonymous with sole access by the researcher. However, the location of the research, i.e. the names of the two countries and cities, is the only information that is disclosed in order to serve the comparative purpose of the study. In general, the research is designed to ensure high quality and authenticity; therefore all the rights of the participants are safeguarded and protected to the utmost.
Chapter Four

Empirical Framework

In this chapter, it is necessary to explore the context of the two cities that the research has been conducted. This is achieved through presenting geographical information about the city of Thessaloniki in Greece and Stockholm in Sweden, the gender policy that exists in the socio-cultural context, as well as in education and the education workplace of both countries and the role that principals and in particular women principals hold in school context.

4.1 Greece and the Municipality of Thessaloniki

Greece, or else Hellenic Republic, is located in southern Europe sharing borders with Aegean, Ionian and Mediterranean Sea between Albania and Turkey. It has a population of 10,775,557 million inhabitants as estimated in July 2014 while the official language is Greek spoken by 99% of the total population (CIA, 2014). Greece is administratively divided into 13 regions (peripheries), nine of them belong to mainland Greece and four insular. The peripheries are further subdivided into 51 prefectures (nomoi) and 326 municipalities. The country’s two major metropolitan centers are Athens, the capital, and Thessaloniki, the co-capital with a population reaching 3,827,624 million and 1,110,312 million inhabitants respectively (Central Union of Municipalities and Communities of Greece, 2013).

Located on the northern side of the country, Thessaloniki is the second largest city in Greece, the capital of Northern Greece and the region of Central Macedonia as well as one of the most important ports, serving industrial and commercial trades between the Mediterranean and the Balkans. The old city is built along the slopes of Kedrinos hill and the new city is constructed
around the Gulf of Thermaikos surrounded by the forest of Seih-Sou (Hellenic Society for Systemic Studies, 2012).

4.1.1 Gender Policy in the Socio-Cultural Context

The Global Gender Gap Report reveals that Greece is ranked 91st out of 142 countries in 2014, while in 2010 and 2011, it used to be 58th and 56th country in equality out of 134 and 135 countries respectively (World Economic Forum, 2014). The Greek state, after joining the European Union in 1981, initiated taking policy and legislative steps towards the promotion of gender equality because of the EU’s legislative reforms by creating a legal framework that empowers equality between men and women (European Parliament, 2013). Therefore, in accordance with the Greek Constitution, Article 4 defines that all Greek men and women are equal before the law equal rights and obligations (Constitution of Greece, n.d.).

In 1985, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality was established (initially at the Ministry of the Presidency of Government and subsequently at the Ministry of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization) as the institution for the promotion of legal equality between men and women in all sectors in society. The specialized policies developed by the institution are automatically integrated in all public policies of governmental work. In 2000, a gender mainstreaming strategy, i.e. a term coined by the United Nations in 1997 that describes the incorporation of gender equality into the continual work of governmental agencies at all levels, started to be implemented in Greece, however, without achieving the desirable results. At the same time, regional organizations were also set up, i.e. Prefectural Committees for Gender
Equality were established by the representatives of national and local bodies and by women’s organizations, as well as prefectural Offices that promoted Gender Equality at a regional level (General Secretariat for Gender Equality, 2006-2008).

In the recent Constitution revision (2001) the new wording of Article 116 paragraph 2: “the adoption of positive measures for the promotion of equality between men and women does not constitute gender discrimination. The State is responsible for the elimination of existing inequalities, especially if they are against women” constitutes a major legal basis for promoting equality policies (European Community, 2007). In 2005, the Greek Ombudsman was also designated as the national body with the mission to monitor and promote equal opportunities and treatment of men and women in the labor market and access to goods both in the public and the private sector. It is an independent authority authorized by the Constitution and operated since October 1, 1998. In accordance with the Law 3094/2003, Greek Ombudsman mediates between public administration and citizens in order to help citizens in exercising their rights effectively and in cases where anti-discrimination laws do not apply (The Greek Ombudsman, 2013).

4.1.2 Gender in Education and the Education Workplace

The Greek educational system is highly centralized with all the decisions being made by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. Education is free and mandatory for all children ages 6 to 15 years and it comprises of two levels; Primary (Dimotiko) and Lower Secondary school (Gymnasio). All young people who have finished with the compulsory education are entitled to attend Post-Compulsory Upper Secondary Education, that is either Unified Lyceum (Eniaio Lykeio), which lasts three years or Technical Vocational Educational Institute (Techniko
Epaggelmatiko Ekpaideutirio) for two years. After Unified Lyceum, students participate in Pan-Hellenic examinations for being eligible to attend higher education while after the Vocational Institute they participate in exams to enter the Technological Educational Institutions (Partners in Education, 2015).

Concerning the role of gender in the whole education system, systematic and nation-wide efforts have not been made by the Greek state to prevent the reproduction of gender stereotyping, inequalities and hierarchies by awakening Greek students from an early stage to get adjusted to social norms and embrace gender equality in all aspects in life (Kambouri, 2013). However, studies show that females have made impressive progress in academia with the majority of girls to perform better than boys in schools and this is mirrored in female students’ higher admittance rate in higher education institutions (Tzilivakis, n.d.). The Global Gender Gap Report 2014 reveals that 116 per cent of females were enrolled in tertiary education compared to 112 males.

Workwise, Greece, indeed, has a progressive legal framework on gender equality in the labor market with the Law 3488/2006 that was approved in 2006 by the Greek parliament against gender discrimination in the labor market promoting equal pay for equal work and measures against sexual harassment in the work place. However, compared to other EU countries where female employment, labor market participation and wages have risen significantly, the Greek state comprises one of the largest gender gaps in the EU in recent decades (Kambouri, 2013). The European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, Anna Diamantopoulou, who has made mainstreaming gender equality in all community activities a top priority, stresses: “the so-called glass ceiling is preventing women from accessing jobs with higher levels of responsibilities and high pay”. Indeed, women earn less than men and entrap themselves in low-
income dead-end jobs. More than 50 percent of university graduates are female, yet only 37 percent comprise the country's workforce (Tzilivakis, n.d.).

In the field of education, women account for the majority of the teachers with their proportion varying across educational levels. Maragkoudaki (1997:258) highlights that historically, teaching was considered the first suitable profession since it provided women with social presence, financial freedom, prestige and eligibility to combine both family and work life (as cited in Malentsidou, 2011-12). Earlier, Kyriakoussis and Saiti (2006) pinpoint that teaching, especially in primary grades, is regarded as the continuation of family care, which is closely interwoven with the female gender (as cited in Markopoulos & Argyriou, 2014). Table 5 discloses the statistics taken the Global Gender Gap Report 2012 of the percentages of women occupying teaching positions in the three educational levels.

Table 5: Sex Distribution (%) in Education Workplace by Category in 2012-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category- Year 2012-13</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in Primary Education</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in Upper Secondary Education</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in Higher Education</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Global Gender Gap Report 2012

4.1.3 The Role of the Principal: The Greek Reality

The Greek educational system being highly centralized, does not give the freedom to each educational unit to be autonomous and take initiatives according to its function and needs. This bureaucratic and highly centralized character of the Greek managerial and functional system
has direct impact on principal’s roles and responsibilities. According to the Law 1566/85, “the principal of the school is particularly responsible for the observance of roles, circulars and service order”. In other words, as Mavroskoufis (1992:29) points out the principals maintain a standard form of organization in the system without being able to participate in decision-making processes and problem solving activities but rather to repeat the predetermined tasks set by the government. Saitis (1990:81) confirms that this results to the weakness of the educational system to perform satisfactorily its goals and under-represents the principal’s leading role since (s)he is more loaded with bureaucratic rather than with managerial and pedagogical work. That is to say, the principal holds an impartial role in education of executing commands and applying orders stemming from the central management, i.e. the Greek Ministry of Education. In terms of the required academic qualifications for being appointed in the position, a national survey discloses that 88% of all school principals lack basic knowledge and experience in managerial issues since a department specialized in educational management and leadership no longer exists in Greece (Pasiardis, 1994). Consequently, according to the recent legislation framework (Law 3467/2006), the recruiting criteria for the principal’s position are the 12-year-teaching experience in various educational units, the scientific and pedagogical proficiency as well as the oral interview from a counseling committee (as cited in Spyropoulou, 2010).

4.1.4 Women in School Leadership Positions

Although women appear to be the majority in teaching positions, their participation in school management positions seems to be undermined despite the legislations that have been set by the Government about the equal treatment of both genders (Kogkidou, 2007). Kelesidou and
Ziogou (1997: 189) elaborate that this underrepresentation of women in higher posts is due to the social conceptions of the 19th century for the inferiority of women because they are psychologically, biologically and physically differentiated from men (as cited in Madentsidou, 2011-12). Markopoulos and Argyriou (2014) attribute women’s reluctance to take on managerial positions both to the lack of substantial motivation from the Greek education system and to the childcare responsibilities. However, even if some of them aspire to climb up the career ladder, they get rejected by employers that favor for a male dominated model as leader (Deligianni-Kouimtzi & Athanasiadou, 1997:120, as cited in Daraki, 2007). Maragoudaki (1997) summarizes that the Greek education system is made for women to teach and for men to manage, therefore a distance is created towards female’s future goals to take on managerial roles. The Eurydice (2010) proves that in the Greek state during years 2007/8, 31 per cent of principals in primary education are women, 40 per cent in the lower secondary and 28 per cent in upper secondary education. Table 6 below contains the percentages in the proportion of women principals at primary, lower and upper secondary school level through school years 2001/02 and 2007/08.

Table 6: Women Principals in Primary, Lower and Upper Secondary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001/02</th>
<th>2007/08</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td>31 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Secondary School</td>
<td>28 %</td>
<td>40 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Secondary School</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL. STAT.), 2001 & Eurydice, 2010
4.2 Sweden and the Municipality of Stockholm

Sweden is located in northern Europe sharing borders with Finland, Norway and the Baltic Sea and having population of 9,723,809 million inhabitants as estimated in July 2014. The official language is Swedish while there are small Sami- and Finnish-speaking minorities (CIA, 2014). Sweden is administratively divided into 290 municipalities and 20 county councils/regions. There is no hierarchy between them but they all have their own local self-governing authorities, which are autonomous, responsible for providing a significant proportion of all public services and have right to levy taxes stipulated in the Instrument of Government, one of the four pillars of the Swedish Constitution (SKL, 2014).

Stockholm is the largest city and the capital of Sweden located in the heart of Scandinavia. With a history going back to the 13th century, Stockholm has long been the cultural, economic, and politic center of the region. The city has been built upon 14 islands in Lake Mälaren leading in the Baltic Sea. The major metropolitan urban area is estimated to have 1,4 million people while the municipality of Stockholm about 897,000 inhabitants as estimated in 2014 (World Population Review, 2014).

4.2.1 Gender Policy in the Socio-Cultural Context

It is worth stressing that Sweden is ranked as one of the world’s gender-egalitarian countries, based on the belief that men and women should equally share their power and influence for a fairer and more democratic society. Indeed, gender equality is one of the cornerstones of modern Swedish society and with an extensive and generous welfare system, it makes it easier for both sexes to balance career and family life enjoying equal distribution of
opportunities, rights and obligations in all domains of life. (Swedish Institute, 2013). Indeed, Global Gender Gap Report 2014 reveals that Sweden is ranked 4th out of 142 countries, while in 2006 and 2007, it was the world leader in equality out of 115 and 128 countries respectively (World Economic Forum, 2014).

The Ministry for Gender Equality in the Swedish Government is exclusively responsible for establishing gender equality policies ensuring that power and resources are distributed fairly between the genders and having the gender equality mainstreaming as its main strategy, In 2011, the Government decided to strengthen efforts by creating a national platform to extend gender mainstreaming at the municipal, regional and national levels (Swedish Institute, 2013).

On 1 January 2009, the new Discrimination Act (Swedish Code of Statutes 2008:567) enters into force, in accordance with a decision by the Riksdag (Swedish Government). The purpose of this Act is to combat discrimination and in other ways to promote equal rights regardless of sex, transgender identity, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or age. Two main sections of the Discrimination of Act deal with gender equality in the workplace; the first one refers to the requirement that all employers should have concrete goals and measures that promote equality between men and women; while the second one, obliges the employers to take measure against any harassment or differentiated treatment between genders in terms of parental leave and wage differentials (Government, 2008).

At the same time period with the Discrimination Act, a new government agency, The Equality Ombudsman (Diskriminerings Ombudsmannen, or DO) was established to supervise compliance with the Act. The Equality Ombudsman reviews situations concerning gender equality in the workplace, the school system and other domains and is primarily concerned with ensuring compliance with the Discrimination Act. The head of the agency is referred to as the
Equality Ombudsman, is appointed by the Government and has the right to order financial penalties against employers, education providers, etc. who refuse to provide information about their employees (The Equality Ombudsman, 2013).

4.2.2 Gender in Education and the Education Workplace

The education system in Sweden has been an integral component of the welfare state. It is the most highly decentralized education system in the world since the early 1990s with the vast majority of the schools to be headed by the municipalities, which are the responsible authority for organizing and operating the school services. The school program lasts nine years and it is compulsory for all children between the ages of 7 and 16 years irrespective of their gender, place of residence and residential and financial circumstances, while all young people who have finished the compulsory education, i.e. Primary (Grundskola) and Lower Secondary School (Grundsärskola), are entitled to attend the three-year upper secondary level (Gymnasieskola). Upper secondary schools offer 18 national programs, 12 of which are vocational (yrkesprogram) and 6 are preparatory (högskoleförberedande) programs for higher education. The latter ones provide basic eligibility to students for further studies in higher education at undergraduate level whereas the former ones can obtain this eligibility by taking some additional courses (OECD, 2011).

Hallmark of the Swedish education system is equity with the issue of gender to be continuously addressed throughout all education levels and with its principles to be increasingly integrated to prepare students further in their life. The overarching objective is to equip students
with the same opportunities in life, irrespective of their gender, by using teaching methods that allow each child to grow into a unique individual. Nowadays, it is surprising that a greater proportion of women than men complete upper secondary education with the former to comprise almost 60 per cent of all students in undergraduate university studies while both genders equally take part in post graduate studies (Swedish Institute, 2013) (as shown in Table 7).

Table 7: Sex Distribution (%) in Higher Education Enrolments and Graduates in 2012-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Entrants</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolments</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate Degree</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Swedish National Agency of Education (as shown in Statistical Central Bureau, 2014)

Men and women also share the same opportunities and have equal terms and working conditions with regard to workplace providing them with the means to achieve lifelong economic independence. The Institute of Evaluation of Labor Market and Education Policy (IFAU) (2010) acknowledges that Sweden has a long tradition of high female labor force participation and an ambitious family policy. Indeed, the parents’ insurance and a well-built childcare system facilitate parents to combine both work and family life. Nevertheless, much needs to be done in order to achieve equality in all domains in society. Even if the family policy has increased female labor force participation, there are noticeable gender differences on the labor market. Women note high rate of part-time employment in the public sector, earn less on average than men and are less represented in higher managerial positions.
More particular, in the field of education, women gain ground in academia with teaching to be considered a female-dominated profession. Female’s proportion among research and teaching staff in higher education is also increasing, women doctorates reach close to half, while 35 per cent of newly appointed professors are female gender. The Government sets gender distribution requirements on new professorships at each higher education institution targeting to raise the ambition among all professors of achieving a more even equally gender distribution environment, while the institution has to report and analyze its performance annually (Government, 2014). Table 8 depicts the statistics taken from the Swedish National Agency of Education of the percentages of women occupying various educational positions during the years 2012-2013.

Table 8: Sex Distribution (%) in Education Workplace by Category in 2012-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category- Year 2012-13</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in Compulsory Education</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in Upper Secondary Education</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in Higher Education without a Doctorate Degree</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in Higher Education with a Doctorate Degree</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Lecturers</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifying Appointment</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Lecturers</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Swedish National Agency of Education (as shown in Statistical Central Bureau, 2014)
4.2.3 The Role of the Principal: The Swedish Reality

The Swedish educational system is highly decentralized creating flexibility and allowing each educational unit to make decisions individually according to the goals set by the Swedish Government and the municipality, which maintains middle position between the school and the state. There is no special law formulated to regulate the responsibility of the principal. Their appointed role is to translate the national and local objectives into the teaching ones being responsible for the development of their school and their teaching content as well as the students’ results and success. They are entitled to lead and manage their organization and not simply to administer work. They are appointed by the director of education or by the school board of their municipalities, which are on the top of the school’s organization supervising the principals. According to the Education Act, the recruiting criteria for the principal’s position are good knowledge of rules and regulations of the Swedish educational system as well as pedagogical knowledge by training and experience. The State in coordination with the Municipalities organize educational training programs for those who aspire to be principals equipping them with knowledge and skills required to manage and fulfill tasks and goals (Swedish National Agency for School Improvement, 2007).

4.2.4 Women in School Leadership Positions

Around the 1980s, an influential study entitled *More Women as School Administrators* was conducted in Sweden with the main purpose to investigate whether women are under-represented among principals in Sweden. What it was found out was that 93 per cent of
principals were men and only 7 per cent of them were women, with the main reason of low self-esteem to take on managerial tasks as well as favoritism towards male candidates during the recruiting process. The school boards noticing this disproportion started striving for a more equal distribution of roles. Therefore, after a new awareness policy about the lack of women in the field, after attributing the pedagogical eligibility to all people to become principals and after the increase in the number of leading positions, a dramatic change is noticed in 2002 in the proportion with women to hold 73 per cent of the all principal positions (Davis & Johansson, 2005). More recently, The Swedish National Agency of Education (Skolverket) estimates that in whole Sweden 66 per cent of principals and vice principals in the compulsory nine-year education are women in 2012/13 and almost 45% of principals and vice principals in the upper secondary school (gymnasium) (as cited in Statistika Centralbyrån, 2014). Table 9 below contains the percentages in the proportion of women principals at both compulsory and upper secondary school level through years.

Table 9: Women Principals in Compulsory and Upper Secondary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women Principals</th>
<th>1985/86</th>
<th>2000/01</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory School</td>
<td>19 ‰</td>
<td>62 ‰</td>
<td>66 ‰</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary School</td>
<td>29 ‰</td>
<td>34 ‰</td>
<td>45 ‰</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Swedish National Agency of Education (as shown in Statistical Central Bureau, 2014)
Chapter Five

Research Findings

In the current chapter, analysis of the research findings will take place attempting to provide answers to the indented research questions of the study. The following findings are resulted from open ended questionnaires, are presented in a descriptive manner with participants’ viewpoints to be in quotation marks and have been formed in themes according to the research questions (as shown in Table 1).

It is instructive to note before the analysis of the research findings that during the current school year 2014-2015, in the municipality of Thessaloniki, statistics retrieved from the Directorate of Secondary Education of East and West Thessaloniki, show that from a total number of 107 state upper secondary schools, 25 of them have women principals whereas 82 have men. However, in Stockholm region, female principals outnumber the male ones at the same educational level. Results taken from the official website of Stockholms Stad (Stockholm City), indicate that from the 97 upper secondary schools, 51 have women while 46 have men principals (as shown in Table 10).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Number of Upper Secondary Schools</th>
<th>Female Principals</th>
<th>Male Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thessaloniki</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Directorate of Secondary Education of East and West Thessaloniki & Stockholm City (2014-2015)
5.1 Women Principals’ Motivation

Research question 1: *What was your motivation to be a school principal?*

The female principals from Thessaloniki who participate in the study cite multiple reasons for being motivated to take on the role of the principal. A substantial majority of the respondents agree that their primary incentive was their love and devotion towards the students and the educational field in general. They mention that they were determined to contribute effectively and transfer their further knowledge and skills not only from the teaching post but also from the managerial one. Stella, in particular, clarifies that this educational contribution was not exclusively focused on students’ progress and learning results but it also extends in the community and broadly in the whole society. Another very well educated principal (Olga) clearly explains:

“*What triggered me to be a school principal was mainly, my dedication to education and my firm belief that I can achieve substantial reforms improving the educational system.*”

Additionally, four of the principals indicate as a driving force their personal fulfillment and capability of climbing up the career ladder after many years of teaching experience. They started feeling confident and suitable of executing an educational errand in a higher position and develop themselves professionally. Dimitra, interestingly, comments that this was her ultimate and unique goal when she entered the field of education and without achieving it, she would not be able to feel this personal satisfaction at a professional level. Katerina, on the other hand, links her personal fulfillment with the managerial prestige and the high social status that this job position offered her. Another significant incentive that has been cited by two of the ten principals is the financial one. The fact that a higher monthly salary is offered in a higher position, and
especially through this tough period that Greece experiences, acts as a strong motivator to convince them to be school principals. Christina sincerely asserts:

“I had no doubts to accept the position since the salary for a managerial post is more attractive than a regular teaching salary.”

Last but not least, the educational environment and more concretely the teaching staff was a determining factor to drive female participants into this position. Anna (Thessaloniki) refers that due to her coworkers’ encouragement and support she became capable of applying for the position. On the contrary, Elena’s motivation laid on the sexist comments that she received in some of her colleagues:

“The spreading rumors within my teaching environment proving my inability as a woman to lead, were my inner strength and belief that I can do it.”

On the other hand, analyzing the findings from the female principals in the region of Stockholm, it is interesting the fact that a wider variety of motivations are attributed. Similarly with the principals from Thessaloniki, the crucial motivation from almost all the participants in their choice to be school principals was the focus on developing alternatives for enabling students’ progress. Indeed, they stress out their urge to create the best learning conditions for them and support them fulfilling their goals in order to succeed in their lives. More specifically, Ida (Stockholm) rightly confirms:

“Being a principal is the tool to help students cope with their studies, influence them, boost their self-esteem and make a difference in their lives.”

Another indicator for identifying a principal position was their willingness to be involved into
the managerial world. They considered it as a great chance to express their opinion more directly and provoke educational and pedagogical changes in the educational system. Cecilia (Stockholm) comments that accepting this position, she knew that she would be capable of reforming school policies and establishing new and more effective ones, while Petra asserts that her standpoint to bring changes and improving the educational and pedagogical process would be more valid being a principal than holding a teaching post. Furthermore, three of the participants interestingly claim that they view the offer of being a school principal as an asset that would deepen their educational knowledge and enrich them with new skills. More precisely Cecilia argues:

“When I was asked to be an upper secondary principal I said yes because I saw it as a challenge to learn new things.”

Ida (Stockholm) similarly reports:

“When working as a principal in an upper secondary school, I knew that it would be a long-term learning experience for me.”

Indeed, the transition from a teaching job to a principal position automatically increases the workload and responsibilities requiring additional management skills. This, in turn, enhances principal’s knowledge and experience and equips him/her with more tools to tackle the everyday challenges. An additional interesting motivator made by three participants, although not being stated by the principals from Thessaloniki, is their opportunity to interact and cooperate with the teachers directing and supervising at the same time their work. A very interesting remark made by one of the respondents, Jenny, noted:
“I wanted to work not only with students but also with teachers, support them and be the leader of their pedagogical work.”

A further motivation for only one of the study participants is the job of a principal seen as an “attractive choice” (Lena), in terms of providing professional security, high social status; however, it is surprising the fact that none of the principals from the region of Stockholm mentioned the increased monthly income as a fundamental criterion that will motivate her choice. Last but not least, it is worth stressing that one of the participants revealed her unwillingness and reluctance to be a principal since it was not part of her plans:

“I have never had as a goal to become headmaster. I started my career in the school as a substitute when I was unemployed and unqualified teacher and then I started involved in the school because of work. Then, I realized the need towards development and quickly became school leader and when my predecessor retired, I became principal; therefore I took over the position naturally.” (Annika, Stockholm)

5.2 Reasons for Under-Representation

Research question 2: Do you think that women principals are under-represented in Sweden or in Greece and, if so, are there psychological, cultural or societal reasons behind this underrepresentation? ?

The twenty women superintendents from Stockholm and Thessaloniki City form a wide range of responses when they were asked their view about women’s under-representation in EML and the reasons that lurk behind it nowadays in the two cities. Taking account the
Thessaloniki principals, it is worth pointing out that all of them confess women’s under-representation in the field attributing different reasons to justify their responses. More elaborately, Katerina mentions that their under-representation is partly due to the family obligations and professional development. The principal explains that the females are assigned by the Greek society to take on the weight of overall domestic and childcare arrangements as well as to develop themselves professionally but up to a certain extent. Moreover, Anna refers to the under-representation of women as a cause of the normative view bred by the society:

“The society itself produces the stereotypical norm that women are inferior to men and consequently not acceptable in major positions.”

While Anna alleges that they do not feel self-confident because the support and encouragement they receive from their intimate environment and surroundings is insufficient since they regard this position inappropriate for women’s standards. Additionally, there are respondents who mention that women’s personal attributes and attitudes instigate their under-representation in the management field. Sophia agrees that they own a small percentage in the field compared to men because they feel discouraged to undertake the supplementary duties and therefore they avoid by themselves to take part in hierarchical positions. Dimitra also highlights that:

“Women are reluctant to take on higher positions in education because this will burden their workload.”

Similarly, Maria (Thessaloniki) argues the psychological reasons behind their choice:

“I feel a lot of women do not feel secure to undertake a decision-making role and dare to challenge to become leaders. This is because of family situations because they feel more confident in their sphere and safer to take part in their housework.”
Furthermore, two of the Thessaloniki participants refer to discriminatory attitudes in the organizational structure of education as essential reason for women’s representation. Irini asserts that the gender discrimination is obvious in the high educational positions with unequal opportunities to be distributed between genders. She considers the fact that the majority of women in teaching posts discloses that they are conventionally predetermined for that. Stella confirms that:

“Yes, they are under-represented. Men are viewed as more eligible by nature to exert managerial role in education, and they are the ones mostly preferred in the recruiting process.”

On the other hand, analyzing the responses that are given by the Stockholm principals, it is surprising the fact that the overwhelming majority of them assertively express that women are not under-represented in the field of management and leadership in education. Jenny notes that in Sweden it is rather opposite with women’s presence to dominate the field of EML while Petra refers to equal representation of both genders with their wage to be evenly developed. A series of replies are given by certain principals who support more extensively the same view:

“I don’t think females are underrepresented. Today, I believe, that female heads constitute the majority, or at least this is the case in primary schools. In my field (Gymnasium in Stockholm City), I feel that the opportunities are equally divided between genders.” (Lena)

Eva, a former teacher who received a training course on management in Stockholm, also shares:

“It could be the case years ago during my headmaster’s training but now I think the trend is moving towards the right direction of distributing equivalent opportunities to both genders.”
Ida (Stockholm) adds:

“*I think nowadays the female principals are not under-represented. I have noticed that mostly women go for training courses to become principals and they are more talented with the potential to develop.*”

Moreover, Cecilia makes a strong remark favoring women’s representation in superintendent positions stating the school itself is a female dominated world with both the teaching and managerial staff to be comprised by women. However, Annika prefers not to answer this question and she holds an impartial stance by quoting “*I have no opinion on this issue*”.

### 5.3 Qualities for Women Principals in Education

Research question 3: *In your eyes, what are some of the characteristics and strong qualities for women leaders in education?*

Almost half of the female principals from Thessaloniki answered the above question drawing a list with bulleted points where all the major features that characterize their attitude were cited. More particularly, Christina writes that she is more pedantic, giving importance even to trivial details, patient and organized. Sophia characterizes herself as more consistent, responsible and well-structured in her tasks while Dimitra attributes the virtue of being effective, hardworking as well as problem-oriented. Olga also describes her ability to execute challenging tasks and to be receptive to new ideas and thoughts while Katerina elaborates more on the acquired knowledge and technique she uses:

“*Taking on a principal position, I exhibit a more scientific and pedagogical approach and try to create a suitably organized and pedagogical environment.*”
Additionally, three of the participants make also interesting remarks about their communicative skills. Irini from Thessaloniki highlights that she tries to be interactive and supportive towards the teaching staff, the students and the parents and reflect their needs. Stella assures:

“I care for my students and employees and I am always there to listen to their problems trying also to encourage them to share their concerns with me.”

Similarly, in Stockholm most of the participants’ responses reveal that they use qualities in their way of leading that are closer to the female archetype according to the aforementioned literature. Felicia states that her priority in headship is to ensure that her decisions are beneficial towards students and conform to the state’s regulations at the same time. She also discloses her constant efforts to stand close to them and show empathy for their concerns and care for their prospective career. Eva accepts that two of her strong personal qualities are sensitivity and emotionality towards students’ needs and problematic situations. Annika reports the nurturing role she shows towards students having as her policy to listen carefully to their feelings, while she views teamwork and interaction with parents and teaching staff as two essential qualities for the accomplishment of her goals. Sara additionally contributes that she devotes more time to listen to her employees’ requests instead of giving them orders for achieving a peaceful and cohesive working environment. Additionally, the feature of being visionary and ambitious is evident in some of the participants’ responses. Ida denotes that she holds a positive and optimistic attitude towards headship. She firmly believes that most of the problematic tasks in her field are possible and achievable long-term. Petra is rather conscious about the upcoming challenges but she shows that she dares and is determined to face them. On the contrary, she reports that she feels inspired and motivated by them and is willing to interact with the relevant stakeholders, i.e. parents, teachers, etc. in order to have a collective vision.
It is interesting to note that in the municipality of Stockholm, three of the study participants believe that they do not exhibit qualities different from the male principals but they support that everyone holding this position should afford experience and willpower. Cecilia, in particular, firmly clarifies:

“Regardless our gender, we need to be experienced and stand firm in our decisions, especially in a school where there are many different ‘wills’ that sometimes collide (pupils, staff, parents, legislators). We also need to have knowledge about the school laws, working environment and rights and economic status.”

Jenny additionally describes:

“We all need to be leaders with clear vision and set up goals.”

While, Lena continues:

“The different qualities of leading do not depend on the gender but on individual’s personality.”

5.4 Perceived Differences in the Way Women and Men Lead

Research question 4: **Have you perceived any differences in the way women and men lead?**

In this specific research, it is noteworthy that the vast majority of the respondents from both cities report that no substantial differences in the leadership style between men and women principals are indicated. To be more concrete, more than half of the participants from
Thessaloniki, although they previously mentioned that they display certain qualities that are identified as feminine, they support that the style of leading between the two genders cannot be differentiated since all leaders lean towards the same goals and aspirations. Sophia elaborates:

“Differences do exist in the way of leading but my opinion is that they depend mostly on the personality traits and not on being male or female.”

Anna (a former Vice Principal) reflects on her own personal experience:

“I cannot trace any difference on the way I lead with the way that the previous male principal used to before me taking on the position.”

Nevertheless, very few cases of the participants describe the differences in the way women and men work with the former to exhibit more flexibility, lenience and sensitivity (Irini) towards problematic circumstances occurred among students, teaching staff or administration whereas the latter adopt a more authoritative and powerful attitude towards them. Stella, similarly, mentions that women are more conversational and decisive attempting to solve encountered problems through dialogue and daily interaction with the stakeholders; on the contrary men are more aggressive and occasionally neglect the spirit of teamwork.

As far as the participants from Stockholm are concerned, also most of the participants agree that distinct leadership styles depend on the personal attributes and not on the gender. Sara finds it typically stereotypical to categorize the principal’s style according to the masculine and feminine image that the norms breed. She insists that both genders are equipped with the same virtues in order to perform their role and their differences lie on their personality. Also Cecilia refers:
“These are stereotypes on how women and men lead which support the belief that women are more sufficient leaders because men are viewed as authoritative and determined whereas women as caring sensitive and vulnerable.”

Two cases are also detected in Stockholm where female principals allege the difference in leadership styles. Petra refers that women act more professionally in this role, being more knowledgeable, well informed and prepared before taking on things; while students’ needs are their top priority developing therefore a nurturing style in their way of managing the school. However,

“Men are more rough and quick with their decisions, not so much interactive with the students and they think they are always right.”

Jenny also openly claims:

“My main goal is to adopt a caring and participatory style on the way I am leading that encourages inclusiveness and teamwork.”

The principal discloses that she fully conscious and aware of the value of her role and therefore her interaction with the students and teachers takes place on a daily basis. As a former Program Team Leader, she recognizes that her leading style substantially differs from the one that the previous male principal sustained as he used to be more powerful and business-oriented viewing the students and teachers as a series of transactions.
5.5 Encountered Difficulties Being a School Principal

Research question 5: *Have you encountered any difficulties (e.g. family life, society, colleagues, employers etc.) as a women being a school principal?*

As it has also been revealed throughout the literature, female school principals do face difficulties and barriers in their process of achieving a managerial position in education and of conducting their job. Coleman (2003) states that even legislation is not sufficient enough to dissolve the patriarchal stereotypes that society produces, which identify management as a typical masculine archetype. Indeed, two of the women principals from Thessaloniki recognize the sociopolitical perceptions and cultural stereotypes as a great difficulty facing in their career. Christina believes that:

“In Greece, the society itself produces a model in education where men should be on the top positions and women at the lower levels.”

While Sophia maintains:

“The social culture is biased attributing specific roles for men and women and legislations established by the governmental system are insufficient to demolish them.”

Another significant barrier that the study participants from Thessaloniki encounter concerns domestic tasks and childcare responsibilities. Almost the majority of the principals report that is a great challenge for them to combine both career and family obligations. Maria and Anna express that the increased workload at school leaves them limited time to devote to their children and household resulting to family conflicts. In particular, Anna supports that:
“I usually spend extra time at the school which is out of my regular schedule, and my husband complains that I neglect my kids.”

Stella also reports the lack of support she receives from her family environment with both her parents and her husband trying to convince her to quit her job and retrieve back to teaching. Kaparou and Bush (2007) rightly justify that the aforementioned issue is a significant factor inhibiting the career development for women teachers in Greece because motherhood is prioritized and they are unable to strike a balance between family and work duties. Furthermore, there have been instances indicated of school principals who are overwhelmed with administrative problems. They state that the whole bureaucratic system and its structure are extremely chaotic and the process they have to follow is time-consuming and demanding disturbing the smooth conduction of their task (Olga and Elena). Another major difficulty is the different forms of discrimination that women principals face on that position from the teaching staff or other principals. Katerina experiences discriminatory attitude from one of her male colleagues doubting her managerial skills because of her gender:

“I have received indirect comments about how I will be able to handle challenging and tough tasks regarding bureaucratic issues.”

Dimitra reveals their female colleagues’ astonishment when she announced them that she was assigned as principal while Elena is still faced with arrogance and hostile treatment by male principals from the neighboring schools during the meetings:

“They overtly show their untrustworthiness towards me when I express my opinion about school projects and activities and they reject it.”
Last but not least, almost half of the respondents underlined the lack of mentoring as a huge barrier in the beginning of their career. More precisely, Irini (Thessaloniki) makes an interesting remark:

“When I firstly started working as principal in the school, I received no guidance from previous principals. Even the administration of the school was not very helpful and supportive with me. I had to find the courage by myself and cope with the struggles.”

Examining the difficulties that women principals in the municipality of Stockholm face, both similarities and differences are noticed compared with the Thessaloniki principals. The majority of the Stockholm participants also complain about their hectic schedule and the limited time they afford for their family. Ida writes that her working hours are not regulated properly and she ends up working on average 60-65 hours a week, a fact that affects her privacy and health. Cecilia cites that the work level is very intense and she cannot let it go even when she returns home in the evening. Petra mentions the difficulty to manage and combine multiple responsibilities at the same time and therefore her family and social life suffer. Annika also reveals:

“I have not been able to adapt my working hours with my kids. I work also at nights when it’s quite and calm. As for the household duties, I receive valuable help from my parents.”

On a similar note, with the Thessaloniki respondents, two of the principals in Stockholm realize that their job has brought conflicts within their marriage. Jenny highlights that her working schedule is more than 40 hours per week as she is always faced with unexpected workload that drains her energy. She attributes her divorce to her overwork since the troubles with her husband...
started two years ago when she accepted the job. Felicia is also a divorced principal who
discloses her weakness to be multitasking and her preference to managerial work and her kids
instead of her husband. Lena, on the other hand, clearly recognizes that time is not an exclusive
obstacle for her since she purposefully chose to be single and without kids in order to be focused
on her work and management career. Regarding any form of discrimination, it is evident that
some of the Stockholm principals are also faced with discriminatory attitudes. Jenny discloses
that when she firstly started working as a principal she had difficulties in distributing
responsibilities to her personnel since they seem to be indifferent of her mission. Petra, a former
Director of Education, also feels that both the teaching staff was involved in a variety of job roles
apart from the ones are assigned by her. Emma, a former Vice Principal in the same upper
secondary school, also expresses her frustration that her efforts are not appreciated and she
realizes that the involvement of the municipality and her male employer into her work is greater
than it used before with the previous male principal. Lena adds her own experience with the
recruiting process and later the hostile attitude from one of her colleagues:

“I was in a very difficult situation 3 years ago when I got rejected the first time and then
when another manager took over the service, I applied and got my current job. First
years, I was also opposed by one colleague who could not accept that their boss is a
woman 10 years younger than him; but I was supported by the rest and that person
transferred to another post.”

Ida interestingly refers to the discriminatory comments she receives not from natives but mostly
from students and parents with “invadrarbakgrund”, i.e. immigrant background. Ultimately, it is
remarkable that in both urban cities women principals face to a certain extent gender
discrimination since their capacities in dealing with administrative tasks seem to be doubtful by
either their teaching staff or by their employers.

However, regarding any cultural or sociopolitical barriers, it is instructive to note that compared to principals in Thessaloniki, in case of Stockholm, none of the researched participants shows to face those issue, a fact that could be attributed to the role of gender which is seen to be more embraced and balanced in the Swedish society. As for the mentoring process, women principals in the region of Stockholm made no reference of lack of support as an encountered constraint. On the contrary, Ida clearly underlines the great support and welcoming she received from the staff at the school when she was firstly appointed to the position.

5.6 Recommendations to Enhance Women’s Participation in EML

In the final research question women principals were asked to contribute their suggestions regarding incentives that will trigger women’s participation in the sphere or EML. Analyzing first the participants from Thessaloniki city, it has been found out that most of them insist on the equal distribution of opportunities and rights to both genders in that field. They continue saying that the society is the driving force that breeds stereotypes and identify role archetypes to genders. Therefore, the change in the patriarchal Greek society should be prioritized. More specifically, Anna writes:

“The society should finally accept and embrace the equality of both genders in headship.”
Katerina suggests:

“More awareness and sensitization in terms of equality issues is needed within the society in order everyone to keep a critical stance towards managerial hierarchy in schools.”

Moreover, Olga stresses:

“The Greek society should ultimately realize that what it matters after all is the execution of a proper educational deed regardless the gender interference.”

An additional recommendation referred by two of the principals is the provision of support systems. The family environment is proposed as a determining factor that will reinforce women’s involvement in the field. Katerina expresses:

“The integration of the female gender into headship and the provision of equal chances can be achieved through the supportive structure of the family.”

Elena also claims that women principals should receive encouragement and assistance from their close family circle, parents and husband, in order to extend their social network and be easily acceptable and embraced in the managerial position. Certain principals suggest the change within the working environment and its involving stakeholders towards women’s participation.

Christina requires alternations in the way that governors appoint school principals. The principal from Thessaloniki interestingly argues:

“Women would be more motivated to become principals, if we change the process of recruiting principals, and more specifically, if we change the face-to-face interviews and the announcement of the final grading in a public evaluation board.”

Sophia additionally affirms that both male teaching and administrative staff’s mentality needs to be changed so as to realize the equal gender division of job opportunities. She remains that they
are the ones who are required to boost their confidence and self-esteem and enhance their participation instead of doubting about their capability to handle tasks in the appointed position. Furthermore, a wide range of other recommendations is provided by other principals that could also generate women’s involvement in the field. Irini makes reference to the wage differential between female and male principals. She suggests that more financial motivation needs to be given in order for the women to feel that they are equally treated and to encourage their struggle towards identifying a position. Dimitra proposes the hiring of supplementary administrative staff in schools that will facilitate women principals’ role exempting them from the overwhelming workload. While Maria mentions that their participation is partly dependent on their psychological being:

“Women themselves should be interested in undertaking the position, empowered to succeed and confident that they can change the norm.”

Concerning the female principals from Stockholm city, it is noteworthy that none of them recommended the change in the society as a motivator for women’s equal treatment and enhanced participation in the field of EML. On the contrary, more than half of the participants allege that the Swedish society treats equally both genders and attributes good career opportunities to women who aspire to be school principals. Petra asserts that women are acceptable to become principals by writing:

“There is not so much to be done since it is women who increasingly become principals.”

While Lena mentions:

“As long as the government provides an extensive welfare system with parental leave and other benefits, the number of women in the field will be increasing.”
Similarly with Thessaloniki, principals from Stockholm area make reference to the importance of support systems towards women’s empowerment in educational management. Cecilia highlights:

“Support through coaching to the newly assigned principals is an asset because they support the right priorities among all tasks.”

Indeed, coaching is a crucial motivator that will equip them in the beginning of their career with the necessary tools to execute challenging tasks. Apart from the coaching that Cecilia recommends, Jenny also adds the support from the family surroundings in order to help women to create a strong network of social contacts and motivate them to proceed further in their career. Additionally, making referencing to the heavy workload that principals are faced with the result to neglect their family obligations, some of the principals give as a solution the division of household tasks in the family (Felicia) while others propose the accommodation of work and family balance. Emma explains:

“I understand the fact that is difficult to set the boundaries, but workload never leaves someone free. Women should try to set the right priorities if they decide to combine career and family.”

Another suggestion provided by Ida, concerns the provision of training opportunities eligible for school leaders that will make them acquire extra qualifications and broaden their knowledge in the field. Last but not least, Annika refers to women’s personal attributes and qualifications as a great incentive towards their successful participation in the sphere of educational management. The principal pinpoints:

“Know yourself; your strengths and weaknesses. Be honest, dynamic and encourage the environment to make suggestions. Create an environment that is open to all. This is the key to women’s individual success as principals and further to school’s success.”
Chapter Six

Discussion of the Findings, Recommendations and

Concluding Remarks

6.1 Discussion

The following chapter involves a deeper interpretation of the main findings of the study combined with the key concepts and theories as well as with the research questions, outlined in the beginning of the study. After the analysis of the findings, a more detailed discussion follows which involves the interpretations of similarities and differences identified in the data with the support of the theoretical framework.

6.1.1 Motivation to be a School Principal

The focus of this section is to answer the first question about the drive that the research participants had to undertake the position of the principals. Participants from both cities came along with a wide range of common motivators that triggered their choice. In particular, they provide as their primary stimulus their dedication towards the students and their commitment to the educational system. They show that their willingness to create the best learning environment for students’ thrive led them to the position. They also refer to it as a great opportunity for them to transfer and enhance their knowledge into the managerial world and to be capable of conducting pedagogical and educational reforms contributing significantly in the society. Another motivator stated by the participants of both cities is the managerial prestige and high status that the profession offers them as part of their personal fulfillment and professional
achievement. On the other hand, the findings present some further stimulators that differ between the principals of the two cities. In particular, the Thessaloniki principals add their colleagues’ supportive attitude or sexist comments they receive as a strong drive to reinforce their choice. This particular attitude is consistent with Maragoudaki (1997) who mentions that the Greek educational system shapes women’s role to be eligible only for teaching positions, therefore the teaching staff holds a sexist stance when the norms are violated. Also, the Greek participants make reference to the financial aspect of choosing the job, which could be considered a strong motive taking into account the tough economic period that Greece is exposed to nowadays. The female principals in Stockholm attribute the cooperation and supervision of the teaching staff as an incentive to take on the position; while, interestingly, one of them reveals her intrinsic motivation to promote herself, which emerged after her involvement in the field of education. All in all, Table 11 summarizes the women respondents’ incentives from both cities when they were asked to be upper secondary school principals.

Table 11: Motivation to be a School Principal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>THESSALONIKI</th>
<th>STOCKHOLM</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Love &amp; Devotion for Education &amp; Students</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Fulfillment/ Ultimate Goal</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Incentive/Higher Salary</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Environment / Teaching Staff</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform School Policies &amp; Changes in the</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational System</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifelong Learning Experience</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction &amp; Supervision with Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1.2 Reasons for Under-Representation

The insightful analysis by Estler (1975) and Schmuck (1980) regarding the three models, which explain the women’s under-representation in senior educational posts (Section 2.3.2), is consistent with the findings from Thessaloniki participants. More precisely, the two authors present the ‘meritocracy or individual model’ as one of the main reasons for women’s under-representation in EML field. Indeed, as shown in the analysis, some of the Thessaloniki principals justify that what makes women to remain absent is their discouragement to undertake high burden of responsibilities and decision-making roles as well as their low confidence because of the general dim percentage of female in the field. A couple of them also note to behaviors and comments that labeled discriminatory and they face within the working environment, both from their employers and employees, as a reason for their under-representation, and this is consistent with the second model, named as “organizational or discrimination model”. Lastly, Estler and Schmuck identify the third model as “woman’s place or social perspective model” with focus on the sociocultural norms that generate discriminatory practices and this is also validated by the answers of women principals from Thessaloniki, as they mention that the Greek society itself produces the under-representation of women because it confines them to stereotyped deputy roles. Nevertheless, the analysis of the responses from the female principals from Stockholm in the same question prove the inconsistency of Estler and Schmuck’s theory since the overwhelming majority of the participants claim that the number of women gradually increases in the field and no signs of their under-representation are indicated. It is important, therefore, to stress out that women’s answers confirm Swedish socio-cultural historical contexts supported by the Swedish Government’s established policies and regulations that favor gender equality and equal distribution of power between the two genders as it has been
mentioned earlier in the literature (Section 4.2.1). Table 12 sums up the above reasons stated by the upper secondary women principals from Thessaloniki and Stockholm.

Table 12: Reasons for Women Principals’ Under-Representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Under-Representation</th>
<th>Thessaloniki</th>
<th>Stockholm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Obligations</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative View of Society</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Support</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance to Undertake Heavy Workload</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination from Working Environment</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1.3 Qualities for Women Principals in Education

The analysis of the participants from both cities reveals that females do exhibit certain qualities in their way of managing the school differentiating them from their male counterparts. Those qualities are considered their dominant ones and have been identified as more feminine according to the above literature while confirming Gherardi (1994:607)’s statement that ‘we do gender while we work’, i.e. generating personal attributes that correspond to our gender. More specifically, participants from Thessaloniki enlist the main feature they exhibit as more organized, interactive and communicative, hard-working and effective, receptive to new ideas, caring and supportive while the participants from Stockholm as empathetic towards students’ concerns, good listeners, team workers, visionary and ambitious leaders. That is to say, the findings confirm Gray (1993), Morry (1999) and earlier Chisholm (2001)’s division (Section 2.4) between masculine and feminine archetypes in school management with the female paradigm to display more maternal oriented characteristics. It is also worth mentioning that the findings of
both cities allow the generation of stereotypical roles because of the genders’ distinctive attributes in the field of educational management.

6.1.4 Perceived Differences in the Way Women and Men Lead

Taking into account the third objective of the study and the data findings, it is important to state that most of the respondents do not fully embrace the view of observed differences in the leadership styles of men and women. On the contrary, they claim that dissimilarities do not rely on the gender identity but on each individual’s personality and what it highly matters for leaders of both genders is to perform their role suitably and have a clear vision and well-established goals. In other words, the findings do not seem to overlap the reviewed theory, which suggests that the female’s unique traits correspond to variations in style with their male’s counterparts. Nevertheless, a few cases are noticed in the findings where participants from Thessaloniki do consider that differences exist with women to handle with a conversational style problematic attitudes arisen among students whereas men act more authoritatively and aggressively. Participants from Stockholm also allege that women principals implement a more nurturing approach towards students embracing at the same time teamwork and collaboration among the stakeholders. Consequently, the above findings confirm the generating theory developed by Fitzpatrick (1983) and Shakeshaft (1987) that the women tend to employ a more collaborative, transformative leadership approach in comparison with the men who favor for a more authoritative and transactional style.
6.1.5 Encountered Difficulties Being a School Principal

The next objective of the study was to investigate the possible barriers and difficulties females have to face in identifying or conducting the principal’s position. Respondents from Thessaloniki reveal that the sociopolitical and cultural structure of the Greek legislation system promotes gender-stereotyped roles that hinder them to move up the hierarchical ladder of success in education. Indeed, the androcentric view of men undertaking the leading roles and women are eligible for lower levels seems to be deeply rooted nowadays in the Greek societal context. This is also confirmed by Polydorides and Zambeta (1997), who argue that the conservative Greek culture influences to a high extent the education field because it underestimates the value of women in school management and bears discrimination in terms of unequal distribution of labor between the two sexes (as cited in Kaparou & Bush, 2007). On the contrary, taking account the female principals’ responses from Stockholm, it is important to stress out that none of them refers to the Swedish socio-cultural context as a constraint towards their career, a fact that proves the validity of the Swedish Government’s established policies about gender equality and equal division of opportunities and power.

Greek participants also reveal the lack of mentoring and support they received in the first steps of their career. As it is previously stated in the literature by both Coleman (2005) and Shakeshaft (2006), the lack of support systems discourages women to surpass difficulties during the first steps in their higher post. Considering the fact that the study participants still comment on the hindrance they faced when they were primarily allocated for the position, it is inferred that they are psychologically stigmatized by disappointment and frustration because of the deficiency of support systems in their new beginning. However, inconsistency is reported between the literature and the findings of the Stockholm female participants who express to a high extent the
support and guidance they experienced when they were firstly appointed to the position.

Furthermore, the study participants from both cities made reference to the difficulty to combine parenthood with a demanding work having to handle multiple roles and to be faced with serious family issues. This is supported by the previous theory stated by Lumby and Coleman (2007) and Lewis (1994) that women are disproportionately responsible for family and domestic maintenance which deters them from higher positions and their acute workload they have to handle produces negative moods and conflicts within their marriage. The statistics also bear the fact that women are challenged with all forms of discrimination being in that position receiving either direct or indirect comments from their employees, governors, or principals from other schools. This issue is of crucial importance and commonly appears within principals’ career from both cities, therefore, it is consistent with Shakeshaft (1987)’s distinction of two types of discrimination within EML, i.e. covert and overt, as well as with Lumby and Coleman (2007)’s survey about sexist attitudes disclosed by all different stakeholders within the educational field. The table below provides a synopsis of the constraints that women face in their attempt to become principals.

Table 13: Encountered Difficulties of Being a School Principal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>THESSALONIKI</th>
<th>STOCKHOLM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Society / Culture</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic &amp; Childcare Responsibilities</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Family Support/ Conflicts</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Problems</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination from Involving Stakeholders</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Mentoring</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
6.1.6 Recommendations to Enhance Women’s Participation in EML

The data presented in the previous chapter also reveal some of the female respondents’ recommendations towards encouraging women to achieve senior posts in educational management. It is suggested by the respondents from Thessaloniki radical change in the androcentric system of the society in order to give motives to women to apply for the position; a recommendation that is absent from all the Stockholm participants’ findings who insist instead that the school is a female driven world with the increasing participation of women in the management sector. This implies that the study gives support to Shakeshaft (1987)’s suggestion about structural alterations in the society in terms of the gender roles is only consistent with the principals’ suggestion from Thessaloniki and not from Stockholm since the phenomenon is evident in the Greek society.

Participants from both cities recommend the provision of support systems from all the stakeholders involved in the process, an idea that coincides with Tharenou (2005)’s contribution about the social capital and its importance to women’s career success. The Executive Director also makes reference about the significance of human capital, a suggestion that is reported by the participants from Stockholm with women to enhance and deepen their knowledge in the field through training courses. Supplementary administrative staff to contribute in the workload is proposed by the Thessaloniki participants while the ones from Stockholm advise for division of the household tasks. Both recommendations are coherent with Coleman (2005) and Mahitivanichcha and Rorrer (2008) who propose balance in the job and family responsibilities and nurturing a culture in school that embraces and tolerates women’s family tasks. What is noteworthy is the financial incentive that is recommended by the Thessaloniki respondents in order for the women to feel equally and fairly treated since the pay differential is a determining
factor to discourage them to apply. Surprisingly, no theory is documented to support and identify the above fact implying that the current financial situation has a direct impact on principals’ salary and mostly influences the women’s one which used to be low even before. The following table offers an overview of the aforementioned recommendations suggested by all the upper secondary female principals who took part in the research.

Table 14: Recommendations to Enhance Women’s Participation in EML

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>THESSALONIKI</th>
<th>STOCKHOLM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal Gender Distribution of Opportunities</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of Support Systems</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Stakeholders’ Attitude &amp; Mentality</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Motivation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hiring of Supplementary Staff</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of Household Tasks</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of Training Opportunities</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 Recommendations for Further Investigation and Research

Further analysis and research on this subject is warranted with a more extensive study sample of women principals. This will allow to the research study more solid foundations so it can be generalized to other educational settings or geographical units. It could be also recommendable to extend the research in other geographical regions in Greece and Sweden, both rural and urban ones, in order to draw more valid and representative comparisons than the current research attempt, since a lot of research has not been conducted in that field.

It could also be advisable to investigate and identify more about the impact of gender and the different qualities men and women exhibit on school leadership styles and if indeed a dominant style exists. Finally, the combination of quantitative and qualitative approach together
to be used in future research would be desirable in order to add depth to the survey data and unfold more themes in women managerial roles. This could be escorted with a larger scale sample in order to acquire a comprehensive picture of trends and patterns.

6.3 Concluding Remarks

Overall, the literature offers a wide variety of key concepts and theories concerning the issue of gender and more specifically women’s role in the field of educational management and leadership. The conducted research and its findings provide new insights into the way female school principals perceive their role, the reasons for their under-representation, factors that inhibit them from pursuing a leadership position in education, differences in their qualities and leadership styles compared to their male counterparts as well as ways for enhancing their participation in the field.

The responses from the female participants from upper secondary schools in the municipality of Thessaloniki conclude that despite the great strides of progress that the modern society has made around the issue of gender equality in the field of EML, gender discrimination tends to be evident and closely interwoven with the sociopolitical structures and relations in Greece. Women principals seem to be under-represented and faced with a lot of gender-related challenges during their career path as school principals. However, further research is a prerequisite to confirm or contradict any hypothesis of the extent that women’s discrimination takes place within the field of upper secondary educational leadership. As for the female principals from the municipality of Stockholm, their responses give an indication that under-representation is not an evident phenomenon supported by the equal opportunities legislation and
by the fact that women increasingly hold upper secondary headship positions. What has been commonly found out is that the majority of participants from both cities have the belief that women principals compared to their male counterparts trace differences in their qualities, in the way they lead, but not in their leadership styles, since they are indicated to be mostly based on personal attributes and not on gender. Ultimately, mentors and in general support systems are a great incentive for potential female principals mostly in Thessaloniki since the Stockholm participants reveal that no motivation is needed to enhance their already increasing participation in the field.

Reference List:


Central Union of Municipalities and Communities of Greece. (2013). Δήμοι – Περιφερειακές


Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency P9 Eurydice, 2010. *Gender Differences*


education.com/pages/greece/The_Greek_Educational_System.html


**Appendices**

**Appendix A: Questionnaire in English Language**
QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear participant,

This questionnaire is part of a master thesis study, which intends to investigate women principals’ perception and experiences in secondary schools. The information gathered, will be analyzed and compared by the research for the purpose of writing a Master’s thesis at the Institute of international Education (IIE) at Stockholm University.

In accordance to the ethical considerations of the research, all the information data obtained will be handled in confidence. The questionnaire will be anonymous and all the rules of privacy and anonymity will be maintained.

Participation is optional, but your contribution is very valuable. I would very much appreciate if you would spare a few minutes of your time and answer some questions.

PART A: Please tick ✓ the most appropriate response.

1. AGE:
   □ 25-35 □ 36-45 □ 46-55 □ Over 56

2. FAMILY SITUATION:
   □ Single □ Married □ Divorced □ Other:

3. NUMBER OF CHILDREN: _____ (if any)

4. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:
   □ Bachelor’s Degree □ Master’s Degree □ PhD Degree
   □ Training Course □ Other (please specify)........

5. YEARS OF EXPERIENCE:
   □ Up to 10 □ 10-15 □ 15-20 □ Over 20

6. PREVIOUS PROFESSIONAL POSITION:
   □ Teacher □ Vice Principal □ Administrator □ Other (please specify):

PART B: Please complete the following questions to reflect your opinions as accurately as possible. The information will be kept strictly confidential.

1. What was your motivation to be a school principal?
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2. What are the challenges you face in your current role?
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2. Do you think that women principals are under-represented in Sweden/Greece and, if so, are there psychological, cultural or societal reasons behind this underrepresentation? Please explain your response.

3. In your eyes what are some of the characteristics and strong qualities for women leaders in education? Have you perceived any differences in the way women and men lead? Please explain your response.

4. Have you encountered any difficulties (e.g. family life, society, colleagues, employers etc.) being a school principal? Please explain your response.

5. What are your recommendations to enhance women’s participation in that field?

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Elpida Avgeri (Master Student)
Institute of International Education (IIE)
Stockholm University
Email address: XXXXX
Phone number: XXXXX

Appendix B: Questionnaire in Greek Language

ΕΡΩΤΗΜΑΤΟΛΟΓΙΟ

Αγαπητή συμμετέχουσα,
Το ερωτηματολόγιο αυτό αποτελεί μέρος μιας μελέτης της διπλωματικής εργασίας, η οποία προτίθεται να διερευνήσει την αντίληψη και τις εμπειρίες των γυναικών διευθυντριών στα σχολεία της Δευτεροβάθμιας Εκπαίδευσης. Οι πληροφορίες που θα συγκεντρωθούν, θα αναλυθούν και θα συγκριθούν για το σκοπό της γραφής διπλωματικής εργασίας Μεταπτυχιακού (Master) στο Ινστιτούτο Διεθνούς Εκπαίδευσης (ΙΕΕ) στο Πανεπιστήμιο της Στοκχόλμης.

Σύμφωνα με τα δεοντολογικά ζητήματα της έρευνας, όλες οι πληροφορίες θα διατηρηθούν απόρρητες. Το ερωτηματολόγιο είναι ανώνυμο και προορίζεται αποκλειστικά και μόνο για ερευνητική χρήση.

Η συμμετοχή είναι προαιρετική, αλλά η συμβολή σας είναι πολύτιμη. Θα εκτιμούσα πάρα πολύ να διαθέσετε λίγα λεπτά από το χρόνο σας και να απαντήσετε σε μερικές ερωτήσεις.

**ΜΕΡΟΣ Α: Παρακαλούμε σημειώστε με ✓ την πιο κατάλληλη απάντηση.**

1. **ΗΛΙΚΙΑ:**
   - ☐ 25-35
   - ☐ 36-45
   - ☐ 46-55
   - ☐ Πάνω από 56

2. **ΟΙΚΟΓΕΝΕΙΑΚΗ ΚΑΤΑΣΤΑΣΗ:**
   - ☐ Άγαμη
   - ☐ Έγαμη
   - ☐ Διαζευγμένη
   - ☐ Άλλο:

3. **ΑΡΙΘΜΟΣ ΠΑΙΔΙΩΝ:** ______ (αν υπάρχουν)

4. **ΜΟΡΦΩΤΙΚΟ ΕΠΙΠΕΔΟ:**
   - ☐ Πτυχίο Α.Ε.Ι.
   - ☐ Μεταπτυχιακό Δίπλωμα (Master)
   - ☐ Διδακτορικό Δίπλωμα (PhD)
   - ☐ Εκπαιδευτικό Σεμινάριο
   - ☐ Άλλο (διευκρινίστε)......

5. **ΧΡΟΝΙΑ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑΣ ΩΣ ΔΙΕΥΘΥΝΤΡΙΑ:**
   - ☐ Έως 10
   - ☐ 10-15
   - ☐ 15-20
   - ☐ Πάνω από 20

6. **ΠΡΟΗΓΟΥΜΕΝΗ ΕΠΑΓΓΕΛΜΑΤΙΚΗ ΘΕΣΗ:**
   - ☐ Εκπαιδευτικός
   - ☐ Υποδιευθύντρια
   - ☐ Προϊσταμένη Γραφείου ή Διεύθυνσης
   - ☐ Άλλο (διευκρινίστε):

**ΜΕΡΟΣ Β:** Παρακαλούμε να συμπληρώσετε τις παρακάτω ερωτήσεις όσο το δυνατόν ακριβέστερα.

1. Ποιο ήταν το κίνητρό σας ως προς την επιλογή άσκησης της διευθυντικής θέσης στη Δευτεροβάθμια Εκπαίδευση?
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2. Πιστεύετε ότι οι γυναίκες διευθύντριες υποαντιπροσωπεύονται στην Ελλάδα και αν ναι, υπάρχουν ψυχολογικά, πολιτισμικά ή κοινωνικά αίτια πίσω από αυτήν την υποαντιπροσώπευση; Παρακαλώ αιτιολογείστε την απάντησή σας.

3. Σύμφωνα με την άποψη σας, ποια είναι κάποια από τα χαρακτηριστικά/ιδιότητες γυναικών ηγετόν στην εκπαίδευση; Έχετε αντιληφθεί διαφορές στη διοίκηση μεταξύ γυναικών και ανδρών διευθυντών; Παρακαλώ αιτιολογείστε την απάντησή σας.

4. Έχετε συναντήσει δυσκολίες ως προς την επιλογή σας να αναλάβετε διευθυντικά καθήκοντα(π.χ. από την οικογενεία, κοινωνία, συναδέλφους, εργοδότες κ.λπ.); Παρακαλώ αιτιολογείστε την απάντησή σας.

5. Ποιες είναι οι προτάσεις σας για την ενίσχυση της συμμετοχής των γυναικών στη διοικητική ιεραρχία της εκπαίδευσης:

Σας ευχαριστώ θερμά για τη συμμετοχή σας σε αυτή τη μελέτη. Για οποιαδήποτε ερώτηση παρακαλώ επικοινωνήστε μαζί μου.
Ελπίδα Αυγέρη (Μεταπτυχιακή φοιτήτρια)
Ινστιτούτο Διεθνούς Εκπαίδευσης
Πανεπιστήμιο Στοκχόλμης
Email: XXXXX
Τηλέφωνο: XXXXX

Appendix C: Questionnaire in Swedish Language

FRÅGEFORMULÄR

Kära deltagare,

Detta frågeformulär är en del av en studie i ett examensarbete som har för avsikt att undersöka kvinnliga gymnasirektorers uppfattning och upplevelser i deras arbete. Den insamlade informationen kommer att
analyseras och jämföras med forskning i syfte att skriva ett examensarbete vid Institute for International Education (IIE) vid Stockholms Universitet.

I enlighet med de etiska överväganden av forskningen kommer all informationsdata, som erhållits, hållas konfidentiell. Enkäten kommer att vara anonym och alla regler för sekretess och anonymitet kommer att bibehållas.


**DEL A: Kryssa ☐ för det lämpligaste svaret.**

1. **ÅLDER:**
   
   ☐ 25-35  ☐ 36-45  ☐ 46-55  ☐ Över 56

2. **FAMILJESITUATION:**
   
   ☐ Singel  ☐ Gift  ☐ Skild  ☐ Övrigt:

3. **ANTAL BARN:** _____ (om några)

4. **UTBILDNING:**
   
   ☐ Kandidatexamen  ☐ Magisterexamen  ☐ Doktorsexamen  ☐ Fristående kurs  ☐ Annat (specificera) ........

5. **ÅR AV ERFARENHET:**
   
   ☐ Upp till 10  ☐ 10-15  ☐ 15-20  ☐ Över 20

6. **TIDIGARE BEFATTNING:**
   
   ☐ Lärare  ☐ Biträdande Rektor  ☐ Administratör  ☐ Annat (specificera):

**DEL B: Svara på följande frågor genom att reflektera över dina åsikter. Informationen kommer att hållas strikt konfidentiell.**

1. Vad var din motivation för att bli gymnasirektor?
   .......................................................... ..........................................................
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4. Har du stött på några svårigheter (t.ex. familjeliv, samhälle, kollegor, arbetsgivare etc.) med att arbeta som rektor? Utveckla gärna ditt svar.

5. Vilka är dina rekommendationer för att förbättra kvinnors deltagande i det här området?

Tack så mycket för att du gick med på att delta i denna studie.
Tveka inte att kontakta mig om du har några frågor.
Elpida Avgeri (Master Student)
Institute of International Education (IIE)
Stockholms Universitet
E-post: XXXXX
Telefonnummer: XXXXX