

**FACTORS RELATING TO WOMEN ATTAINING PRINCIPAL POSITIONS IN
VICTORIA'S GOVERNMENT SECONDARY COLLEGES:
A CASE STUDY**

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Declaration of Originality

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree in any tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by any other person except where reference is made.

Signature.....

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Abstract

Regardless of the promotion structures employed within the different educational systems of this country, men dominate the position of Principal of secondary schools. Despite legislation seeking to provide equality of opportunity and the apparent breaking down of deeply entrenched societal attitudes of women being the servers or followers, there still exist factors that give rise to the under-representation of women in Principal positions of secondary schools. This thesis was designed to investigate issues associated with the apparent gender imbalance in Principal positions in Victoria's government secondary schools. It will attempt to identify elements that have militated against women gaining such positions.

The research methodology employed to investigate the problem is a case study approach. The study centered on a girl's school, Gilmore College for Girls, which has had a succession of female Principals. The research involved inviting women who were Principals of Gilmore College for Girls to participate in an interview. Within that format structured interviews were used to seek the women Principals' perceptions as to factors leading to this under-representation of women as Principals. The findings from this study are then interpreted in the light of factors by which the literature explains the problem.

Various reasons emerged to explain the lower number of women Principals. It seemed to stem from perceptions about their roles, which limited the level of their involvement in schools: for instance once women teachers were married with children they were less likely to advance in their careers and to apply for Principal positions. The workload of

the Principal was also identified as one of the factors inhibiting women from applying for Principal positions. It was seen to make marriage and child rearing almost impossible. Therefore most women were content to be classroom teachers and only apply for positions that suited their interests and allowed them to meet family, home and social commitments. It is suggested that further related investigations be pursued of women in Principal positions of our secondary schools.

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