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## The impact of the expectations of significant others in the school setting on female leadership in physical education in Western Australian government secondary schools

Regina D. Gaujers  
*Edith Cowan University*

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**THE IMPACT OF THE EXPECTATIONS OF SIGNIFICANT  
OTHERS IN THE SCHOOL SETTING ON FEMALE  
LEADERSHIP IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN WESTERN  
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**by**

**Regina Diana Gaujers  
B.P.E., Dip Ed., M.Ed.**

**A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the  
Requirements for the Award of**

**Doctor of Philosophy  
at the  
Faculty of Education, Edith Cowan University**

**1996**

## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of the expectations of significant others in the school setting on the promotional aspirations of female physical education teachers in government secondary schools in Western Australia. It explored the ways in which meanings and expectations in the school environment are constructed in relation to wider societal values and ideologies, and how they are negotiated in social settings that are characterised by both constraints and opportunities for action. Despite the equitable proportion of females and males teaching the subject, and the absence of Education Department policy constraints on female promotion since 1972, females remain significantly underrepresented at Head of Department level. In 1995, women held only two (2.7%) of the 73 substantive appointments.

The critical paradigm adopted for the study and the research methodology was qualitative. The research design comprised five interrelated and sequential phases. During phase 1, preliminary data was gathered on the perceived essential skills and qualities required by Heads of Department in physical education. Phase 2 involved in-depth interviews in order to document government school female teachers' own accounts of their lives, career aspirations and the expectations of significant others in the context of the school and wider social world; and the accounts of female teachers' significant others with regard to their perceptions and expectations concerning female leadership. During Phase 3, interviews were conducted with female Heads of Department in nongovernment schools to ascertain system differences which may have led to the greater number of these women in the leadership role. Follow-up interviews with the government school female teachers were conducted during phase 4 of the study, and served to clarify and validate findings. Female physical education teachers considering applying for promotion also emerged as a sample group during the course of the study, and these women participated in a group discussion forum. The sample comprised government school

female and male physical education teachers and Heads of Department of physical education, and nongovernment school female Heads of Department of physical education.

The study aimed to build on the findings of my previous, exploratory research regarding factors contributing to the underrepresentation of females at Head of Department level in physical education (Bloot, 1992); to sensitise the participants to the nature, construction and impact of expectation regarding female leadership; and to develop recommendations to redress the imbalance of female Heads of Department in physical education in government schools.

The findings of the study confirmed that the expectations of significant others in the school setting have a powerful impact on the promotional aspirations of female physical educators. Expectations regarding the appropriateness of female leadership in physical education were constructed on the basis of individuals' interactions with the social system, characterised by a male paradigm, male dominance and male power. These expectations were communicated to female teachers by means of chauvinism; exclusion; the lower status accorded women in Physical Education Departments; the lack of both encouragement towards promotion, and female role models to demonstrate the opportunities for women; and the fact that the leadership role is more difficult for females. They impacted on the career development of female physical educators by constraining the women's promotional aspirations.

Finally, recommendations based on the findings are made primarily to the Education Department, but also to teacher education institutions and female physical educators. The suggested measures to address the problem focus on the need to move beyond mere policy change. The recognition and valuing of feminine leadership; the establishment of targets for increasing female representation; the identification and sponsorship of potential female candidates; and the introduction of a five year contract for Heads of Department are among the essential strategies needed to stimulate and nurture the promotional aspirations of female physical educators.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis could not have been completed without the support, encouragement and expertise of a number of people...

For her willingness to 'adopt' me as her student in somewhat more stressful and desperate times, and for her support and expertise over three long years, I acknowledge and thank Dr Glenda Campbell-Evans, my supervisor.

My special thanks are also extended to Dr Lynn Embrey and Dr Len King, my co-supervisors, who gave generously of their time as readers and advisers.

There is little doubt that this thesis could not have been so painlessly completed without the supreme editorial skills of Dr Jennifer Browne. She was my inspiration to undertake doctoral studies, and has been my constant support and motivator throughout the endeavour.

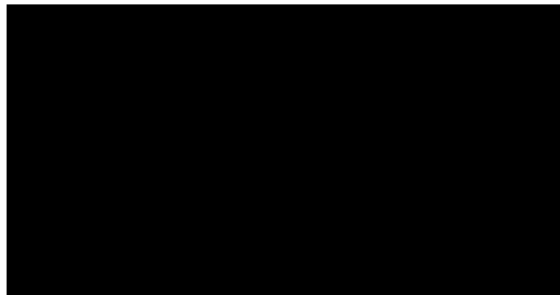
I also wish to acknowledge and thank my parents for their unrelenting faith in my ability; for my father's frequent reminders to keep the chapters short "for the reader's sake"; and for my mother's mentorship and indefatigable interest and encouragement.

*...Well Mum, you always wanted me to be a "doctor", perhaps now  
your wish has come true...*

Finally, special thanks and appreciation must be extended to the women and men who so willingly gave of their time to engage in invaluable conversation. Without them, this research would not have been possible.

I dedicate this thesis to my four-legged 'soul mate' Bebis, who died shortly after its completion. Her constant companionship, through what would have otherwise been unbearably lonely hours, was my comfort and solace.

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.





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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This introductory chapter firstly outlines the background to the problem of the underrepresentation of women at Head of Department level in physical education in government secondary schools in Western Australia. An overview of research in the area is then provided, together with a description of the problem under investigation and the purpose of the study. This is followed by a clarification of some aspects of terminology with regard to its usage in the context of the study, and the research questions. The chapter concludes with discussion regarding the significance of the study, and an overview of the chapters to follow.

#### **BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM**

Historically, teaching has been the most popular career choice for women, and has constituted the largest professional category occupied by them. Paradoxically however, while providing women with a route to both economic and social independence from the family, teaching has also been instrumental in fostering the notion of women with careers as stereotypically 'nurturer-supporters' (Kelsall, 1980; Moore, 1981). The actual scope of female teachers' vocations has been merely an extension of the familial caretaker role. They have been viewed as most suitable with the younger children, those considered to be most in need of nurturing, and less suitable either with older children, or in positions of authority. Since early this century in Australia, women have provided the bulk of the teaching labour force, yet their status in relation to male teachers, has remained subordinate.



In Western Australia, until the late 1960s, female teachers were severely restricted in their profession by lower pay; forced resignation from permanent positions upon marriage, with consequent denial of the associated benefits of long service leave, superannuation and promotion; lack of accouchement leave; and a favouring of the breadwinner policy. Female teachers were not admitted to permanent staff in Western Australia until 1972. MacKinnon (1984) suggested that lower wages for women was based on the premise that for them, home life was primary and work was intermittent and temporary. This perception not only provided the rationale for lower wages, but it also provided the justification to remove married women from the workforce.

Since the early 1970s, there has been growing pressure for a broader definition of female and male roles in relation to the workforce and to family life. The changing status of women in society raised concerns regarding the imbalance of promotion between female and male teachers. Women involved in the Western Australian education system worked through the State School Teachers' Union to bring about changes in the employment conditions and opportunities for female teachers. This pressure was increasingly felt by the Education Department and prompted the removal of a number of structural barriers to the advancement of women's careers in education. The promulgation of the Equal Opportunity Act (1984) and Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act (1986) further directed the propagation of new Education Department policies and initiatives to redress past injustices.

Over the past 25 years the policy changes relevant to women employed in government schools have included:

- The removal of the marriage bar in 1968, and the introduction of maternity leave (or Accouchement Leave). Until 1968 women were required to resign upon marriage although they could be re-employed the following day as temporary

teachers, in accordance with departmental needs. Even after this date, many women continued to resign on the birth of children.

- Equal pay for women came in stages from 1968 to 1971 following the introduction of the Equal Pay Act (1968). Until 1971, women in promotional positions received appropriate responsibility allowances, but remained on a lower base pay.
- The early 1980s saw the introduction of an optional two years Leave Without Pay. This leave could be taken in addition to one year of unpaid maternity leave which was provided for in the Regulations from 1968, thus enabling women to have up to three years leave following the birth of a child.
- The requirement of statewide availability for promotion was removed in 1985. This was introduced in conjunction with the phasing in of a merit promotion system (1985-1991). The system required written statements by three referees including a peer and a superordinate.
- In 1986, the merit selection process for new teachers was instituted. Until then, teachers applying for a position with the Education Department were recruited according to the criteria of single status; 'breadwinner' status; and married with spouse working. From 1986, teachers were selected on merit, based on a composite mark for academic record, teaching practice performance, and an interview by school-based selection panels.
- New merit promotion procedures for Level 3 appointments were implemented in 1991. This devalued seniority as the major criterion for advancement. The aim of this new promotion policy was to select the most suitable applicant for each position in an equitable manner.
- Full implementation of the new merit promotion procedures for all promotional positions occurred in 1992.

- In 1993, the service eligibility criterion for promotion was removed. Prior to this date, applications could only be made for the next higher promotional level. The removal of this criterion meant that Level 2 classroom teachers were eligible to apply for promotion to any level. This resulted in a significantly higher number of first stage applications from women in 1993.

Two structural barriers to promotion remain. A teacher holding temporary status is ineligible to apply for promotion under Regulation 62(4)(b); and as from 1993, a teacher must be four-year trained to be eligible to apply for promotion.

Despite the removal of policy-initiated barriers to female promotion during the period 1968 to 1972, and the implementation of affirmative action since 1986, women continue to occupy a disproportionately small percentage of substantive promotional positions in government schools in Western Australia. Females remain significantly underrepresented at the Head of Department level in secondary schools. It would appear that changing policy has not been sufficient to reshape the career patterns of females in terms of promotion (Hutchison, 1992; Wallis, 1991). It seems ironic that as a result of the rapid growth of the Western Australian school system in post-war years, many women in the secondary sector gained their initial promotions far more rapidly than do secondary women today.

## RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Since the 1960s, researchers have advanced a variety of reasons for the underrepresentation of females in promotional positions in education. Reviews from the 1960s and 1970s indicated that more women than men lacked self-confidence; fewer women than men aspired to promotional positions; there was a conflict of home and family responsibilities with women's career commitments; women were less likely than men to receive encouragement and have networks and mentors; there was a pervasive bias against female decision-makers in patriarchal

education systems; administration preparation programs were sex-biased; and few women had formal administrator preparation or certification. Such reasons represent barriers to the promotion of female teachers, additional to the constraints imposed by the regulations and policies of the past.

According to Sadker, Sadker and Klein (1991), the current lack of representation of women in key administrative positions cannot be attributed to their lack of academic degrees or certification. Recent research has identified more subtle structural issues relating to assumptions about male leadership and 'new visions of leadership based on female and humanist principles' (p. 284).

Research conducted in Western Australia by Wallis (1991) investigating female Deputy Principals' perceptions of career, found that women's career decision-making was a response to their career experiences, and that a set of meanings created from those experiences led to self-limiting behaviours. Her research showed that female teachers' career opportunities were externally limited. They could not, according to Wallis, pursue a career through the present Western Australian state education system without massive costs in enmity, in effects on self-esteem, in working constantly to counter political moves by the male network, and in making difficult changes to family patterns. As a result, even relatively ambitious women felt overwhelming pressure to self-limit their careers. Wallis concluded that her research supported recent literature on women's employment which suggested that the effects of formal equal employment opportunity procedures have been small.

Hutchison's research (1992) on the effect of equal opportunity policies on the promotion of women in the Western Australian government school system, led her to conclude that, while in the past the barriers to promotion for women were formal and direct, the application of equal employment opportunity has tended to mask the forces that operate against the advancement of women within the school system.

An exploratory study by Bloot (1992), focusing on why so few women held Head of Department positions in physical education in government secondary schools in Western Australia, found that constraining factors to the promotion of women were based primarily on stereotypic attitudes and expectations regarding gender-roles, and comprised systemic, attitudinal and internalised barriers.

In 1993, a research project was commenced by the Western Australian Education Department to identify the attitudes, values and opinions in the teaching workforce toward women and promotion. The research formed part of the strategy identified by the Department in its application to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal to seek a further exemption for its gender-linked Deputy Principal positions in schools. The report, which became known as the Saunders' Report, demonstrated that while most of the structural barriers to women accessing promotion have been removed, the remaining barriers to promotion included: the structural barriers of temporary status and three year trained status; the lack of a significant number of vacancies due to transfers taking precedence over promotion; family responsibilities and mobility in relation to availability for country service; the lack of incentives to apply for promotion; the lack of recognition, encouragement and mentoring networks for teachers in the workplace; and a range of organisational cultural factors, some subtle and others apparent, which act as inhibitors to the progression of women through the promotional career structure (Saunders, 1993).

## **THE PROBLEM**

The school environment shares the values and expectations of the general society, and in doing so, accords to its members a differential distribution of rewards, responsibilities and status. The structure of secondary schools and their subject departments are deeply shaped by patriarchy, and the male staff assume more of the positions of perceived status and power in both teaching and administration. They

predominate in subjects perceived to have high academic status such as physics, chemistry, mathematics and computing; in co-ordinators' roles; and in senior administrative positions (Collins, 1990). According to De Lyon and Migniuolo (1989), there is no shortage of data to show that women teachers do not occupy promotional positions as frequently as their male colleagues. Although the teaching profession may be female-dominated numerically, the majority of education administrators are male, and the formal decision-making is in the hands of men (Davies, 1990; Sadker, Sadker & Klein, 1991).

In 1995, the secondary physical education establishment in Western Australian state government schools, comprised 272 males and 233 females. Of the Heads of Department in secondary schools, women held only two (2.7%) of the 73 substantive appointments. Taking into account the percentage of physical education teachers by sex, underrepresentation of females in promotional positions is marked.

Table 1 provides, the number and proportion of female and male physical education teachers and Heads of Department in government secondary schools in Western Australia for the period 1991 to 1995. Chi-square values indicate the significance of the proportion of female and male Heads of Department, based on the number of females and males teaching physical education. These data highlight the overall lack of representation of females at Head of Department level with differences being statistically significant at the 0.001 level.

Despite the fact that all policy and regulation initiated barriers to female promotion were removed during the period 1968 to 1984, only a small number of females hold Heads of Department positions in physical education.

While numerous studies have investigated the underrepresentation of females in senior positions in education, research has almost exclusively focused on the higher administrative roles of principal and superintendent. The Head of Department position, which represents the initial step on the promotional ladder, has been

largely overlooked. Further, much of the literature is of British or North American origin. Little research has been undertaken on female leadership in education in Australia, and virtually none in the specific area of physical education.

**TABLE 1**

**HEADS OF DEPARTMENT IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION BY SEX AND YEAR IN  
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR THE  
PERIOD 1991 TO 1995**

YEAR	TOTAL TEACHERS		PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS		HEADS OF DEPARTMENT		PERCENTAGE OF HEADS OF DEPARTMENT		$\chi^2$
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1991	374	350	51.7	48.3	65	5	92.9	7.1	47.45*
1992	325	325	50.0	50.0	77	8	90.5	9.5	51.17*
1993	244	300	44.9	55.1	66	4	94.0	6.0	69.16*
1994	269	228	54.1	45.9	72	2	97.3	2.7	55.72*
1995	272	233	53.9	46.1	71	2	97.3	2.7	56.38*

(Information provided by the Education Department of Western Australia, 1995)

\* Indicates significance at the 0.001 level.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the expectations of significant others in the school setting on the promotional aspirations of female physical educators in government secondary schools in Western Australia. It explores the ways in which meanings and expectations in the school environment are constructed in relation to wider societal values and ideologies, and how they are negotiated in social settings that are characterised by both constraints and opportunities for action.

The aims of the research are to :

- build on the findings of previous exploratory, descriptive research regarding factors contributing to the underrepresentation of females at Head of Department level in physical education (Bloot, 1992), through an in-depth investigation of one of the most important variables identified, namely, the expectations of significant others.
- describe and interpret the findings in order to sensitise two groups of participants in the study. Firstly, it aims to sensitise female physical education teachers to the reality of the expectations of 'significant others', the nature of their construction, and the implications of the females' responses. Secondly, it aims to sensitise 'significant others' regarding the construction and validity of their expectations, and the impact these expectations can have on female physical educators.
- develop informed recommendations regarding appropriate action to redress the imbalance in female leadership in physical education. These will be directed at relevant professional and educational bodies for their information and hopefully subsequent action.

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

The following definitions clarify some aspects of terminology that will appear in the discussion to follow, with regard to its usage in the context of this study.

**Head of Department:** A subject-specific Level 3 promotional position. A brief overview of salary levels is provided in Appendix A. Until 1991, incumbents of the position were referred to as 'Senior Master' or 'Senior Mistress' depending on their sex. Collectively they were known as 'Senior Teachers', however this title was not an official one. The change of nomenclature from 'Senior Master/Mistress' to 'Head



of Department' was necessitated by the institution of 'Advanced Skills Teachers' (comprising 'Senior Teachers' and 'Key Teachers') by the Education Department in 1991, to reward teachers with 15 or more years of teaching experience who did not hold promotional positions.

A general description of the context, scope and duties of a Head of Department is provided in Appendix B. There is no job description specifically related to physical education available.

**Significant others:** Within the context of the research, the term 'significant others' is used with reference to the female physical educators, and refers to individuals who have been influential, either positively or negatively, in the career development of these women. The definition is limited to the school setting and comprises teachers and Heads of Department in physical education and school administrators. In all cases, significant others will be deemed as such through either past or current involvement. It is recognised that there may be individuals outside the bounds of this definition who have also played a crucial role in the career development of female physical educators, but these are considered beyond the scope of the study.

**Sex and Gender:** It is important that a distinction between the terms 'sex' and 'gender' be made, because many judgements and assumptions regarding what women and men 'should' or 'should not' be able to do are bound up with the concept of 'gender' rather than 'sex'. According to Scruton (1990, p.100), 'sex' is the "innate, biological foundation of male or female status", as distinct from 'gender' which refers to "the socially constructed, normative but not necessarily eternal or inevitable conception of male or female status". 'Femininity' and 'masculinity' refer to the "stereotyped set of expected attributes associated with society's conception of gender". Gender categories are overlaid and stereotyped by reference to notions of femininity and masculinity, and the suitability of certain behaviours is decided by reference to feminine and masculine stereotypes. It is in fact gender categorisation

based on socially constructed expectations which proves to be the limiting factor in the context of stereotyping and female career opportunities. The acknowledgment that it is the social construction of gender rather than biological differences that is important, allows for the development of a more critical and adequate understanding of gender inequities in sport and physical education, locating the debate within the wider power structures of society (Scruton, 1992).

In the present study, the term 'sex' will be used to differentiate between women and men on a biological basis and for data analysis. The term 'gender' will be used in relation to the discussion of issues pertaining to women and men more broadly, and to female and male teachers in terms of their perceptions, expectations, and orientations.

#### **The Education Department and The Ministry of Education**

The government authority responsible for education in Western Australia was known as the Education Department of Western Australia until 1988, when its name was changed to the Ministry of Education. A second name change occurred in 1994, when the authority reverted back to the title of Education Department. In order to avoid confusion on the part of the reader, the Authority has been referred to as the Education Department throughout the study.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

The central question which initiated and directed the research is as follows:

How do the perceived expectations of significant others (peers and superordinates) in the school setting affect the promotional aspirations and actions of female physical education teachers in Western Australian government secondary schools?

While it is not desirable to impose limitations on the scope of the study, in terms of possible emergent concepts, the following subsidiary questions served to guide data collection.

1. What are the expectations of the following categories of significant others with regard to female leadership in physical education?
  - female physical educators
  - male physical educators
  - female Heads of Department of physical education
  - male Heads of Department of physical education
  - school administrators
2. What factors underlie the construction of expectations of significant others regarding female leadership in physical education at secondary school level?
3. How are female physical education teachers' perceptions of the expectations of peers and superordinates in the school setting regarding female leadership similar to and different from the stated expectations of the designated groups of significant others?

4. What actions do female physical educators take with regard to their future career as a result of their perception of the expectations of significant others?
5. Under what circumstances and in what contexts have female Heads of Department in physical education gained their appointments?

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Decisions concerning appointments and promotions may superficially appear to be isolated incidents in the careers of particular teachers or departments. However, such decisions have an important bearing on the power structures, patterns of innovation and change, the modelling of particular subject areas and the way in which all of these are portrayed to school students (Burgess, 1988). The consequences of the underrepresentation of females in promotional positions may be serious and far reaching, impinging upon three major aspects of educational significance. Firstly, the lack of opportunity to gain a female perspective on the structure of education and schools, or influence policy and curriculum development; secondly, the image of the subject taught as affected by its teachers and departmental heads; and thirdly, the nature of role models presented to students and teachers in terms of women in decision-making capacities.

The management style in a school can affect the nature of the school curriculum and can limit the learning experiences of the students. McKinnon (1975), in the first report to the Schools Commission on girls in education, expressed concern over the effect on young people of a situation where men are almost universally in positions of authority over women. "Teachers' attitudes can play an important role in actively encouraging or discouraging girls' achievements in so far as teachers influence school policies and programs involving both the content and method of schooling" (p.96). This is particularly the case in physical education, where the lack of participation by girls has been identified as a major concern of educators and

educational systems. According to De Lyon and Mignuolo (1989), the sex differentiation evident at senior management levels reduces women's "... influence and power over policy development in schools, the formal and informal curriculum, the allocation of resources and the appointment of staff" (p. 49).

The domination of males in promotional positions in physical education represents a situation likely to affect the gender image of the subject, just as it has been shown to be a factor affecting the image of subjects such as physics, chemistry, mathematics and manual arts. According to Browne (1991), the imbalance of sexes in senior positions is of particular concern, because females are not seen to hold status positions and consequently, girls and other female teachers are not provided with positive role models. The absence of females at Head of Department level also ensures the perpetuation of the male perspective in department policy, the syllabus, and learning experiences provided for students.

Further, the sexual imbalance of responsibility and power in schools is not simply a problem for girls and female teachers. It is likely to have a detrimental influence on the perceptions of both male students and male teachers with regard to female abilities and aspirations,

In 1992, the underrepresentation of females in decision-making roles was highlighted by the Western Australian Education Department as a major area of concern. Helen Saunders was commissioned to investigate the imbalance in female leadership in education across all levels. The fact that such research was deemed necessary, in itself signals the crucial nature of this issue.

To date, research in the physical education area regarding careers and promotion has been of either North American or British origin, and has focused on: the marginal status of the subject in schools (Ball, 1987; Connell, 1985; Evans & Davies, 1988; Stroot & Williamson, 1993); 'critical incidents' in teachers' careers (Measor, 1985; Sikes, Measor & Woods, 1985); age and a career in physical education

(Sikes, 1988); the workplace conditions of physical educators (Lawson, 1989; O'Sullivan, Siedentop & Tannehill, 1994; Sparkes & Templin, 1992; Stroot, Collier, O'Sullivan & England, 1994; Templin, 1989); and career opportunities for physical education teachers (Evans, 1990; Evans & Williams, 1989; Williams, 1988). Although gender has emerged as a salient factor in limiting career opportunities in this literature, the specific focus of investigations has neither been on female leadership, nor on the Head of Department position as the first promotional step. Consequently, in-depth insights into the structuring of promotional opportunities for female physical educators and female teachers' interactive responses are lacking.

The theoretical perspectives guiding research and commentary have been predominantly functionalist and interactionist. The former can be criticised for its emphasis on structural explanations and the lack of consideration given to the potency of human agency in interactions with the social system. The latter is inadequate because it pays too little attention to the contexts and social structures within which individuals negotiate. As proposed by Evans and Davies (1988), research capable of making the connections between consciousness, human agency, cultures and social structure is required. There is a need for "research sensitive not only to the patterned activities within school life, but also to the intentions, interpretations and actions of teachers and to features of the social and organisational contexts in which they are located" (p. 12).

Since teachers' careers are located within school structures, it is the relationship between teachers' selves and the circumstances in which they are situated that is of concern. Evans and Davies (1988) suggested that more research is needed to investigate how the perspectives and actions of others can structure the opportunities of teachers; how they experience conditions of control over their lifestyles and careers within the institutional workplace; and the extent to which these processes determine and reinforce gender inequalities and opportunities.

According to Giroux (1991), we need to gain an understanding of how social and cultural differences are constructed through various practices and representations that name, marginalise and exclude the voices and actions of subordinate groups.

This study offers such an investigation of the neglected area of women in decision-making roles in physical education, through the eyes of female physical educators and their 'significant others' in the school setting. It will provide an understanding of the ways in which role expectations are constructed, communicated and perceived, and how these expectations can function to limit the promotional aspirations of female physical education teachers. By so doing, it is intended to sensitise the participants to the issue and findings of the study, so that as more informed teachers, they are empowered to instigate change, redressing the sex imbalance in leadership from within. Further, the findings of the study will form the basis for recommendations to the Education Department, teacher education institutions, and female physical educators in order that these groups may act as facilitators and catalysts for change.

A more equitable balance of female leadership in physical education holds prospects of breaking down the subject's masculine image; introducing a female perspective on departmental policy, the syllabus and learning experiences provided for students; providing role models; and thereby improving the participation rate of girls in physical activity as physical education is perceived to be less 'masculine', and more appropriate to their needs.

## THESIS OUTLINE

The following chapters present the background, methodology and findings of my research into the impact of the perceived expectations of significant others in the school setting on the promotional aspirations and actions of female physical education teachers in Western Australian government secondary schools.

Chapter 2 is a review of literature which investigates reasons for the underrepresentation of women in promotional positions. The chapter initially addresses the dominance of males in decision-making roles and positions of authority in society, education, and more specifically within the discipline of physical education. The implications of such sex imbalance are addressed in terms of the importance of role modelling, subject image and the female perspective as it may influence curriculum and policy development, and the allocation of resources. Reasons for the lack of women in leadership positions in physical education are then examined in the light of changes in Education Department policy and societal perceptions regarding equality of opportunity. An investigation of models of leadership follows, focusing on the perceived differing leadership styles of women and men. The chapter concludes with a more specific examination of physical education; its ideological links with sport, the socialisation of the physical educator, and teacher careers and promotion in the physical education area.

The theoretical framework for the study is outlined in Chapter 3. A critical perspective was adopted for the study and this framework served to guide the nature of the investigation and the data analysis. The chapter presents an overview of critical research, its implications, and the theoretical and philosophical assumptions of the researcher. It concludes with a conceptual framework, derived from the theoretical background and a review of the relevant literature, which indicates the interrelationship between the concepts and constructs under consideration in the research.



The methodology chapter provides a brief description of the study's qualitative approach, outlines the procedures undertaken, and describes the methods and instrumentation utilised for data collection and analysis. Issues of reliability and validity, ethical considerations, and the perceived limitations of the study are also addressed.

Chapter 5 describes the demographic and background profiles of the respondents in terms of age; marital status and dependents; qualifications; number of schools at which teachers have taught; length of service at present school; breaks in service; reasons for career choice; future career plans; responsibilities assumed in addition to teaching duties; and membership of professional and sporting organisations. Each aspect of the profiles is considered with regard to its influence on the promotional aspirations of the respondents.

The findings of the study are presented in Chapters 6 to 10. Chapter 6 outlines the findings of Phase 1 of the study, regarding female and male physical educators' perceptions of the essential skills and qualities required by a Head of Department in physical education. A categorisation of responses by sex revealed few differences in the way in which female and males viewed the leadership role and its requirements.

The composite findings of interviews conducted with female physical education teachers and Heads of Department during Phases 2, 4 and 5 of the study are discussed in Chapter 7. The chapter begins with an examination of the Head of Department role. This is followed by a consideration of barriers to promotion as perceived by the female physical educators. The women's perceptions regarding the expectations of significant others are then addressed. Discussion proceeds to an investigation of the nature in which these expectations are expressed; possible ways in which female teachers may interpret the expectations; and their resultant career aspirations, or lack of interest in promotion. The chapter concludes with two case studies which serve to illustrate the reality of many of the perceptions and expectations expressed by the female respondents.

Chapter 8 outlines the findings of interviews conducted with male physical education teachers and Heads of Department from government schools during Phase 2 of the study. Discussion begins with an examination of male perceptions regarding the Head of Department role. This is followed by a consideration of the barriers to promotion that continue to exist for female physical educators. The reasons given by men for the apparent reluctance of women to apply for the Head of Department position are then addressed. The chapter concludes with an investigation of men's expectations regarding female leadership in physical education, and reasons underlying men's ultimate attribution of women's lack of promotional aspirations to deficiencies within the women.

The perceptions and expectations of female physical educators outlined in Chapter 7, and those of the male physical educators presented in Chapter 8, are compared in Chapter 9. Women's perceptions regarding the expectations of their significant others were confirmed as accurate by both the female and male physical educators comprising the 'significant others' category.

Chapter 10 presents findings based on data gathered from interviews with nongovernment school female Heads of Department in physical education, during Phase 3 of the study. Specifically, it investigates reasons for the greater number of female Heads of Department in physical education in nongovernment secondary schools, through an examination of contextual differences in the nongovernment education system which facilitate the career advancement of women.

The process by which expectations regarding the appropriateness of female leadership in physical education are constructed; the impact of these expectations on the career saliency of female physical educators; and an investigation of possible ways in which the cyclical, self-perpetuating phenomenon of expectations regarding women in physical education, and the consequent reactions of these women may be interrupted, is discussed in Chapter 11.

Having presented and discussed the major findings of the research in the preceding chapters, the final chapter provides a summary of the expectations of significant others regarding female leadership in physical education, and the impact of these expectations on constraining the promotional aspirations of female teachers in the subject area. Recommendations which attempt to address the problem are then proposed. The thesis concludes with an expression of hope, that the research process itself, and its findings and recommendations will function as a catalyst for change.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This review firstly investigates the underrepresentation of women in decision-making roles and positions of authority in society, education, and more specifically within the discipline of physical education. The implications of such sex imbalance are addressed in terms of the importance of role modelling, subject image and the female perspective as it may influence curriculum and policy development, and the allocation of resources. Factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in physical education are then examined in the light of changes in Education Department policy and societal perceptions regarding equality of opportunity. An investigation of models of leadership follows, focusing on the perceived differing leadership styles of women and men. The nature of physical education; its ideological links with sport; and the socialisation of the physical educator are then addressed. The review concludes with an examination of teacher careers and promotion in the physical education area.

In some instances the comments made and conclusions drawn in the literature are not based on formal research, but rather provide a synthesis of the work of others, or are an expression of opinions based on experience. Nevertheless, all sources mentioned were considered pertinent since the authors were either acknowledged writers, experienced practitioners, or researchers in their respective fields.

#### **UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING ROLES**

The school environment shares the values and expectations of the society in which it resides, and in doing so, accords its members a differential distribution of rewards, responsibilities and status. According to Figueroa (1993), stereotypical categories

and conventional labels are socially constructed and define a 'reality' for individuals and groups. Though all teachers experience pressures and changes, individuals experience them in different ways, and have differing degrees of power and resources to confront, challenge or improve their educational opportunities and career prospects (Evans & Williams, 1989). Opportunities for advancement are constrained by sex, social class and the occupational status of the subject area, and extend across schools to provide structural advantages for certain groups and disadvantages for others (Ball, 1987). The structure of schools and their subject departments are deeply shaped by patriarchy, and women are often profoundly disadvantaged in career terms by male dominance in schools. Even in the primary sector where women outnumber men, the latter are disproportionately represented in senior positions (Burgess, 1988).

There is no shortage of data to demonstrate that female teachers do not occupy promotional positions as frequently as their male colleagues. In 1986, although females comprised 42.5 per cent of teachers in Western Australian government schools, only 8.2 per cent were Principals, 46.6 per cent were Deputy Principals and 15.5 per cent were Heads of Department (New South Wales Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs, 1988). Further, the notion of the underrepresentation of females was clearly reinforced in the summary statement : "The representation of women in promotional positions in government secondary schools increases as the level of promotion decreases" (p.55). This phenomenon was recognised by Davies (1990), who said that the available figures suggested "...a consistent decline in the proportions of women post-holders as seniority increases" (p.36). Although the teaching profession may be female-dominated numerically, the majority of education administrators are male and formal decision-making is in the control of men (Davies, 1990; Sadker, Sadker & Klein, 1991).

In 1993, Education Department schools in Western Australia employed 11,791 (66.6%) females and 5,903 (33.4%) males. However, women occupied only 25

per cent of the promotional positions. Within the secondary sector, the ratio of female to male teachers was one to one, yet females comprised only 29 per cent of Level 3 positions (Head of Department); 27 per cent of Level 4 positions (Deputy Principal); 6 per cent of Level 5 positions (Principal District High School); and 17 per cent of Level 6 positions (Principal Secondary High School). A description of the promotional levels of government schools in Western Australia is provided in Appendix A.

In the more specific context of physical education, Burgess (1988) provided research evidence concerning the inequity of career prospects for females and males. Similar evidence was provided by Evans and Williams (1989), confirming that there is gender differentiation in terms of access to, and maintenance of, key power positions in physical education. It is predominantly the male physical education teacher who successfully moves into decision-making roles.

Browne (1991) presented staffing statistics on the numbers of Senior Teachers in physical education by sex in Western Australian government secondary schools. Of the Senior Teacher positions (57 substantive and 12 acting) 91.3 per cent were filled by males and only 8.7 per cent by females, despite the more equitable breakdown of physical education teachers in the total establishment of 55.3 per cent male and 44.7 per cent female. Browne concluded that in the promotional position of Senior Teacher (now termed Head of Department), women were grossly underrepresented, and suggested that this situation required immediate attention and investigation.

Staffing statistics on the number of Heads of Department in physical education in Western Australian government secondary schools as presented in Table 1, confirm the marked underrepresentation of women in promotional positions for the period 1991 to 1995. Further, these figures demonstrate that women's representation at Head of Department level in physical education has not increased, despite equal

opportunity policies since 1986, and the implementation of merit promotion procedures in 1991.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE SEX IMBALANCE IN PROMOTIONAL POSITIONS**

The consequences of the underrepresentation of females in promotional positions are serious and far reaching. The occupation of promotional positions has an important bearing on : power structures both within subject areas and within the school (Burgess, 1988; De Lyon & Migniuolo, 1989; Spender, 1982); subject image and the nature of the curriculum taught (Browne, 1991; Kahle, 1987; Kelly, 1987; Schibeci, 1986; Sikes, 1988); and the perspectives and role models presented to students (Ball, 1987; Hutchinson, 1981; Knoppers, 1989; Sampson, 1981; Shannon, 1993; Vertinsky, 1983). The question of equitable career rights for teachers is also an issue.

In the subject area of physical education, men dominate the senior positions and their interpretation of what constitutes an appropriate physical education curriculum tends to prevail. Despite the fact that women have assisted in curriculum development, their lack of seniority has rendered their influence somewhat limited (Sikes, 1988). Vertinsky (1983) expressed similar views regarding male dominance in discussing physical education in England:

The Head of Department is often male, he confers with the Head Teacher, also usually male and plays a major role in developing physical education policy, timetabling, assigning facilities and buying equipment. It is hardly surprising then that secondary physical education programmes tend to be dominated by male attitudes towards the teaching of games and the distribution of professional rewards, and that students seldom see female physical educators in positions of power or authority. (p.241)

Vertinsky's views were supported by Diller and Houston (1983) and Dahlgren (1988).

Knoppers (1989) believed that women should occupy leadership roles because

...there is more than one approach to ethics and knowing and relating to others...for many people one style tends to dominate. Women tend to use a nurtural, relational style while men are trained in a justice-orientated, individualistic and autonomous style... the presence of females may tend to counterpoint this rigidity. (p.38)

Literature suggests that the sex of a teacher has an effect on the pedagogical process, and that this is an important underlying factor in the development of a subject's image. "The predominance of male teachers in physical education and domination by males of the special and promotional positions, present a situation likely to affect the gender image of the subject, just as they have been shown to be factors affecting the image of subjects such as physics, chemistry, mathematics and manual arts" (Browne, 1991, p.127).

Studies in mathematics (Fennema, 1984) and the physical sciences (Kahle, 1987; Kelly, 1987; Schibeci, 1986) have all indicated that the predominant sex of the teacher, in this case male, is a factor in the subjects having a masculine image. Females on the other hand tend to cluster in subjects such as business education and home economics. In these areas, the majority of Heads of Department are female, and as a consequence, the image of the subject is a feminine one, attracting predominantly female students. The image of the subject is a major influence in student choice regarding courses of study and possible career decisions, and is therefore an important consideration in terms of the balance of representation of females as its teachers and Departmental Heads.

The position of women and men in the educational hierarchy, and the gender specific nature of certain responsibilities, are means of reinforcing gender-stereotyped expectations which tend to place women in subordinate roles. Because teachers are important role models, there is particular cause for concern regarding the underrepresentation of females in positions of authority in the education system and in the identification of female and male teachers with specific age groups of children, or in particular subject areas (Ball, 1987; Browne, 1991). It has been recognised over a number of years that the sexual imbalance of responsibility and power in



schools is likely to have a detrimental influence on students' perceptions of female teachers and perhaps women in general. The majority of students are accustomed to men occupying the senior positions, and it is likely that the staffing patterns contribute to students' perceptions about suitable roles for males and females, and encourage assumptions about sex-based capabilities which reinforce stereotyped images for girls and boys (Hutchinson, 1981). Females are seen to be incapable of decision-making, efficient control and top level administration as both girls and boys become accustomed to the idea that females occupy subordinate positions. A report to the Commonwealth Schools Commission's Working Party, entitled *Girls and tomorrow: The challenge for schools*, reinforced this proposition.

...the invisibility of women staff is a constant feature of the reality presented to children over the ten years or so they spend at school, and has enormous potential as an influence on their perceptions of what is appropriate and possible for females and males... Women have shown that they have the ability to perform tasks requiring leadership, dominance and assertion and it is crucial for schools to present a picture of women as widely competent human beings...this would enhance the acceptance by boys of females in non-traditional roles and it would also have a positive effect on girls' self concepts and levels of self esteem. (Miland, 1984, p.26)

Within the school environment, role models are not only significant for the student population, but also for the teaching staff, influencing their professional aspirations and perceptions of career opportunities.

Women in the lower positions in the hierarchy perceiving few women at the top, may consciously conclude that the positions are for men only or that women are not suitable for such positions and therefore do not consider themselves capable of fulfilling the necessary requirements or feel that, even if formally qualified, they would not be appointed to such positions... The predominance of men in positions of seniority may at the same time encourage male teachers to perceive opportunities for upward mobility and work towards the qualifications and experience necessary for advancement. (Stewart, 1976, p.34)

Although Stewart made his statement almost 20 years ago, it would seem that the situation has altered little, and that his comments are just as relevant today. This in itself is cause for concern.

Hutchinson (1981) confirmed that we must recognise the far reaching implications of female students' perceptions regarding the status of women teachers and the ways in which these may contribute to the perpetuation of a cycle of depressed expectations and aspirations among female teachers.

Women in promotional positions serve as role models in terms of leadership skills and competence, and serve to advertise the fact that similar people can function in that environment. Role modelling is a most powerful teacher. For a female graduate at the entry point to a profession, there is so much to learn about the demeanour, the unwritten standards and codes, and the power of collegiality. She will not learn these things in a text book, nor in exactly the same way from a male colleague. Through female role models she will learn the 'women's way of knowing', the ability of women to be absolutely professional and emotional at the same time, and that others join her in the struggle to comprehend "contradictory practices in order to secure their own survival" ( Lewis, 1992, p.188). "Much of the success or failure of women and minorities who enter male-dominated areas had been attributed to the presence or absence of role models" (Knoppers, 1989, p. 39). According to Shannon (1993), the most valuable contribution women in promotional positions can make is to inculcate the next generation of women with an assurance of their capabilities.

Further, women holding promotional positions can ease the passage for beginning teachers by setting standards for gender affirmative and gender inclusive behaviour in the workplace, and agitate for structural changes to their profession to remove obstacles to the full participation of women.

In the light of findings from the literature regarding the significant effect that the sex of the teacher and the sex balance in administrative power can have on the pedagogical process in terms of determining curriculum, allocating resources, teaching strategies, subject image and role modelling, the underrepresentation of females in promotional positions in physical education warrants urgent investigation and positive action.

## **FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT LEVEL IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The literature consistently indicates that female teachers in general do not occupy promotional positions as frequently as their male colleagues (Bloot, 1992; Browne, 1991; Burgess, 1988; Davies, 1990; De Lyon and Mignuolo, 1989; Hutchison, 1992; Saunders, 1993; Sadker, Sadker & Klein, 1991; Sampson, 1986). "The relevant data on equality of opportunity in education administration reveals that sex, more than age, experience, background, or competence, determines the role an individual will hold in education" (Whitaker & Lane, 1990). The sex imbalance in leadership is exemplified in the subject area of physical education, in which the proportion of female Heads of Department in Western Australia has at no time exceeded 10 per cent.

In a study investigating promotion in the Australian government schools' system, Sampson (1986) found that females and males had similar motivation for seeking promotion. The challenge of increased responsibility and the opportunity to influence the system and the organisation of schools, or the curriculum, were rated amongst the most important. A slightly greater proportion of females than males were interested in promotion as a result of dissatisfaction with their present position or because they wanted a change of responsibility. Salary was a marginally more important reason for males than for females applying for promotion and conversely, lack of financial reward a reason for not applying. Considering the similarities in motivation for seeking promotion for males and females, what account can be given for the marked disparities existing in the representation of females and males in promotional positions?

Research and commentary on teachers' careers have suggested a range of factors which contribute to the difference in promotional status between female and male teachers. Spender (1982) stated that:

...there are probably one hundred good reasons for males being better candidates (for promotion) than females, however this says little about males and females and a great deal about male control...there is no biological base for women being without authority, excluded from the curriculum, required to take the full responsibility for childcare, of servicing children and another adult and expected to follow men rather than establish their own financial base...these are all social arrangements. (p.41)

According to Shakeshaft (1986), female teachers view the teaching profession differently from male teachers and research on women in administration finds similar differences. They are surrounded by an unwelcoming environment which encourages women to remain teachers and discourages them from seeking to become administrators. There is overwhelming evidence in the research literature that women experience direct discrimination, whether from negative attitudes towards them or from behaviour that is harmful to them.

The negative effects of stereotyping and sex discrimination on promotional procedures and on women's opportunities for development comprise a major portion of the possible deterrents discussed in the literature, in conjunction with a number of more specific factors which impinge on women's career patterns. In the past, educational opportunities closely reflected cultural images of 'maleness' and 'femaleness', and despite the popularity of teaching as a career for women, very few women reached positions of seniority in the administrative structure in schools. In a survey of special schools in Glamorgan, Wales, conducted by Morgan (1988), the most frequent explanations given by women for men being successful at gaining senior posts were that appointing bodies discriminated in favour of men rather than women; that women were given fewer opportunities to gain the experience necessary to obtain senior posts; and that women regarded themselves as less suitable for senior posts and were therefore less likely to apply.

These responses according to Morgan, clearly indicated that the women did not believe they had the same promotional prospects as the men. De Lyon and Migniuolo (1989) agreed, stating that much of the uncertainty women may feel about

management posts is undoubtedly based on concrete features within women's experiences.

Within the section to follow, reasons for the underrepresentation of females in promotional positions, will be addressed under the headings:

- Policies and Regulations
- Patriarchy Within the Education System
- Gender-Role Stereotyping
- The Perceived Male Model of Leadership
- Family Responsibilities
- Mobility
- The Low Promotional Orientation of Women
- Women's Perceptions Regarding Promotion and Leadership
- Women's Lack of Skills and Experience
- Lack of Encouragement and Support
- The Image of Physical Education
- Age Concerns

### **Policies and Regulations**

Aspects of promotional practices in education systems have had a significant bearing on female promotional opportunities. In Western Australia, prior to changes in regulations regarding accouchement leave (1968), equal pay (1971) and permanency for married women (1972), there was little incentive for women to upgrade their qualifications or aspire to a promotional career (Hutchinson, 1981; Miland, 1984; Scraton, 1990). It was not until 1972 that Western Australia had its first female Principal of a coeducational senior high school.

The 1974 annual survey of teacher qualifications revealed considerable differences in qualifications held by females and males. "More women have the minimum

necessary qualifications for teaching and more men have above the minimum necessary qualifications required...more males than females undertake either long initial training or part-time study programmes after initial training" (Stewart, 1976, p.16). Consequently, on the basis of formal qualifications, more males were eligible for appointment to promotional positions and this undoubtedly reflects the previous limitations on promotional opportunity. Research further indicated that since the full range of Principal positions in primary and secondary schools was opened to women, the female enrolment in the Higher Certificate course had increased to almost 50 percent of the total enrolment for the first time since the institution of the courses (Stewart, 1976).

In addition to specifications regarding formal qualifications in order to gain promotion, was the requirement for seniority of service. In a report to the Minister for Education in 1976 entitled *Males and females in the state education system of Western Australia*, the committee concluded that as a legacy of past policy and the requirement for resignation upon marriage, many female teachers with considerable experience were denied access to promotional positions because of a break in service, and therefore "it will obviously take time for changes in the regulations to have their full effect in terms of correcting the imbalances of opportunities for males and females" (Stewart, p.21). "The opening up of Principals' positions to women may encourage more women to plan for a promotional career...the guarantee of employment following periods of leave may assist women in continuing teaching careers which involve promotion" (Stewart, 1976, p.33). The minimal degree of change that has occurred over the past 20 years since these statements were made, must certainly constitute cause for concern.

Social changes in more recent times have also influenced attitudes to the employment of female teachers. In June 1980, the Australian Teaching Federation documented a report concerned with the fact that female teachers did not hold positions of leadership and administrative responsibility in the same proportion as male

teachers. They urged all affiliates to support measures to encourage greater participation by female teachers in the decision-making process at school level. The recommendations were:

- The abolition of current regulations and procedures which discouraged women's progress through the system to the administrative level.
- The abolition of penalties for broken service
- The introduction of family/parental leave and permanent/part-time work which would maintain teachers' security and career prospects.
- Affirmative action programmes (most affiliates have no defined policy; task for the future).
- Inservice courses for teachers and administrators to raise awareness of the disadvantages women face in these areas and develop strategies for overcoming these disadvantages.
- Union education courses for women.

(Australian Teaching Federation, 1980).

In the United States of America, the Sex Discrimination Act was legislated in 1975, requiring that "a person be treated by reference to his or her attributes, and not by reference to those associated with an 'average person' of his or her own sex". It was directed towards "raising individuality above sex or gender category membership" (Scruton, 1990, p.100). This was a recognition that the stereotyping associated with gender actually limits human potential for women and men. Scruton (1990) highlighted the significance of the fact that this Act was couched throughout in terms which refer to the 'complainant' as female. "This is a recognition of the very real inequalities in our society, and of the likelihood of the majority of complainants actually being female" (p.100). In Australia, the Sex Discrimination Act was not promulgated until 1984, and encompassed a broader range of foci. The Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (Division 3, Section 145) and subsequent amendments required that:

Each government department prepare and implement an Equal Opportunity Management Plan in order to eliminate and ensure the absence of discrimination in employment on the grounds of race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, religion or political conviction, and impairment; and to promote equal opportunity for all. (cited in *Education Circular*, May 1990, p.261)

In the Education Department's Policy Statement on Equal Opportunity (1989),

Margaret Nadebaum, the Chief Executive Officer, made the assurance that:

The Ministry of Education is fully committed to the achievement of equality of opportunity in employment. The Ministry's commitment extends to ensuring that all employees are treated with justice, respect, equality and dignity in relation to access to employment entitlements. These include training and advancement and access to information required for the optimal performance of their duties. (1989, p.261)

Responses to the 'equal employment opportunity' concept were far from unanimously positive, particularly when addressed from the male perspective. They included statements reflecting strong stereotypical attitudes, such as:

"I should have been born black and female."

"I believe that the equal opportunity thing has gone overboard in their ideas about giving women equal opportunity. Under this new system, women are being given more of an opportunity to get to the top positions without having to go through the same procedures as the men."

"All promotion should be on merit, not on a 50/50 basis or whatever. To make up for past discrimination is discrimination itself."

"Women who are career minded, and especially those in top jobs, are more likely to be unmarried than married. This appears to indicate it is relatively difficult for women to combine promotion in their occupation with the responsibilities associated with marriage and motherhood."

(Ministry of Education, 1990)

In 1992, the new merit promotion system was implemented for all school-based appointments to be made in 1993, with the aim of selecting the most suitable applicant for each position in a fair and equitable manner. Within this system, applications are based on selection criteria which relate to specific job descriptions, and the responsibility to prove the case for promotion rests with the applicant. Prior to 1985, all promotions were based on seniority or years of continuous service. The merit promotion system involves a two-stage application process. All applicants must submit a first-stage application which is an expression of interest in promotion to one or more specific levels and job categories. Later in the year, all first-stage applicants are advised of actual vacancies and invited to submit a detailed second-stage application, listing location preferences in rank order. Based upon



their written application, these applicants are then shortlisted for interview by a selection panel of three, including a superordinate and a peer expert, with a minimum of one representative of each sex. The most suitable candidate for the position is then appointed.

In 1995, the remaining structural barriers which may differentially impact on women's promotional prospects to Head of Department can be categorised into three groups, namely status; subject-specific limitations with regard to teaching experience; and aspects of the merit promotion system. Status constitutes the major remaining barrier to promotion. Temporary teachers, 81 per cent of whom are women, together with three-year trained teachers, are ineligible to apply for promotion. Further, although permanent part-time teachers, the majority of whom are women, are eligible to apply for promotion, they may be deterred through the lack of part-time promotional positions in schools. The second remaining structural barrier relates to the fact that men tend to be allocated more upper school classes than women. In a job analysis of secondary classroom teachers in 1992, 45 per cent of male interviewees taught Year 12 compared with 21 per cent of females (Saunders, 1993). Taking account of the fact that the female to male sex ratio for Level 2 secondary teachers is one to one, it appears that male teachers are clustered in areas with more upper school classes, or that men are allocated more upper school teaching duties than women. Since teaching experience at the Year 12 level has been recently reintroduced as a selection criterion for Head of Department positions, this may create a barrier for some women in their applications for promotion.

Aspects of the merit promotion process comprise the third category of barriers. According to the report entitled *Gender and promotion: An examination of the issues* (Saunders, 1993), although the current merit promotion procedures were not identified as a major barrier to promotion for women, several participants in the research raised concerns regarding the need for more women on the selection panels, since the teaching force comprises almost 70% females; consideration to be given to

the weighting of specific criteria such as interpersonal skills; the inclusion of a strong equal employment opportunity component in selection panel training; and a review of job descriptions to incorporate a full range of skills and abilities. Existing descriptions have been developed by the present incumbents of these positions who are predominantly male.

Participants in a previous study (Bloot 1992) expressed mixed reactions towards merit promotion with regard to its potential to increase the number of female Heads of Department in physical education. The main advantages of the merit promotion system were thought to be the de-emphasis on seniority, and therefore less penalty for married women with dependents; that females are given the opportunity to promote their capabilities; and that the promotional positions, once viewed as out of reach by most females, may be perceived as attainable. However, not all teachers interviewed were supportive. A number of participants' comments reflected a sense of disillusion regarding the fairness with which merit promotion is administered. They suggested that the true attributes and capabilities of applicants can still be overlooked due to the need to 'espouse one's virtues', be they true or false; and the likelihood of a biased selection panel. While overcoming the discriminatory criterion of seniority, it introduces alternative criteria which may prove to be equally discriminatory. The need to promote oneself, an essential element of merit promotion, may also be disadvantageous to females who have traditionally been portrayed as less adept at this skill.

In addition to these structural barriers, the compartmentalisation of equal employment opportunity and the assignment of its monitoring and implementation predominantly to women has been problematic. While the formation of equal employment opportunity units and the appointment of equal employment opportunity officers has been essential to progress, there is a danger that equity and social justice issues can become isolated from the mainstream policy formulation process. According to Randell (1990), "It can become relatively easy for people uncommitted

to EEO principles to ignore the need for fundamental change because someone else in the organisation is tackling specific problems' discrimination, disadvantage and inequality" (p.16). Her views were supported by Cockburn (1990), Weiner (1993) and Yeatman (1993). Findings from Weiner's study (1993), with minority group managers, indicated that some of the 'high flying' white female managers deliberately steered their careers away from 'women's issues' which they perceived as lowering their status in the competitive academic institutional ethos. Randell argued that equal employment opportunity must be mainstreamed so that all managers have responsibility for policy implementation. These policies must achieve the status of 'morally legitimate policy' rather than become a means of providing compensatory benefit to interest groups. A further danger facing systems and institutions is that the time taken to collect statistics and prepare well-meaning reports deflects attention from the real injustices occurring to women. The documents themselves, while saving the conscience of some institutions, are worthless if they do not result in agenda setting and action.

Equal employment opportunity efforts, with regard to improving the representation of women in decision-making roles in education, have also been hampered through a lack of ongoing research and the collection of data by sex. Consequently, in the past, little has been known about the extent of the problem and the impact of equal employment opportunity policies. In recent years, data collection and monitoring systems have been instituted by the Education Department of Western Australia, together with a research project to investigate the issue of gender in promotion, in order to guide future agendas on women's advancement.

Given the removal of directly discriminatory practices such as the 'marriage bar', the application of equal employment policies, and the introduction of promotion based on merit, there is a perception that all is now well, and that equal employment opportunity initiatives are no longer necessary. Women, it is argued, have equal access to, and opportunities for, promotion that will result in a more equitable

representation of women in senior management positions. However experts in the field believe otherwise (Thomson 1993). Talbot (1993) cautioned that it would be a mistake to equate opportunity with access. The distinction between the two is based on two aspects of freedom: "Freedom from constraint confers access, while freedom to do as one wishes confers opportunity. This active and positive definition of opportunity is crucial, because it relates to individual interpretations of what is possible, salient and relevant..." (Talbot, 1993, p.85).

The 'equal opportunities' approach has received considerable criticism from feminist writers such as Weiner (1985) and Burton (1987). They claim that equal opportunity initiatives stem from a liberal feminist perspective on gender and schooling, which fails to consider that "expanding equal opportunity is not just a question of juggling resources or rearranging option choices...To liberalise access to an inadequate system may be acceptable in the short term but for more permanent change a major restructuring of all social institutions, including schools is needed" (Weiner, 1985 p. 10). According to Burton (1987), "The attempt to dismantle discriminatory rules as if they are a relic from the past, as if their elimination will effectively eliminate the problem of discrimination, is to deny that their presence has continued to structure the interests and perceptions of current organisational participants... The mobilisation of masculine bias does not disappear with the elimination of discriminatory rules" (p.432). However, Scraton (1992) pointed out that it is important to acknowledge that some 'equal opportunities' initiatives, introduced by teachers committed to reform, represent an important political response to generations of limitation on young women in all aspects of school and related activities. Unlike Weiner (1985), who draws clear-cut boundaries between the inadequate equal opportunities approach and the more long term radical anti-sexist strategies, Scraton recommends strategic gains that can be made in both areas. "The important issue is that policy does not remain locked into an equal opportunity approach but must work towards a more radical restructuring...in order to attempt to transform the power bases of gender..." (p.126). This is not a straightforward

task. The powerless can attempt to appropriate their rightful situation, but for the powerful to relinquish their position demands considerable material change (Connell, 1987; Scruton, 1992).

There remain many social and cultural factors which continue to impede the advancement of women in promotional positions.

### **Patriarchy Within the Education System**

The critical perspective frames power not simply as one aspect of a society, but as the basis of society. Patriarchy implies that men, by virtue of power, rule and dominate. Therefore, patriarchy is viewed not simply as one isolated force among many with which women must contend, rather, patriarchy informs all aspects of the social world and effectively shapes women's lives (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994).

Research into teachers' careers has suggested a range of factors which are perceived as barriers to the advancement of females, and which account for the differences in promotional status between female and male teachers. According to Hoferek (1986), a number of these barriers are structural, built in to the system, and have an impact on the advancement decisions and the institutional climate for women. Masculinity is embedded in the procedures, assumptions, processes and formal rules of contemporary organisations, mainly because it has always been considered to be men's destiny to integrate themselves into this organisational reality (Tancred-Sheriff, 1988). Organisations have been shaped and fashioned by men and remain a masculine domain. Social codes and beliefs about management have been constructed from stereotypical male traits and experiences. For women pursuing a management career this masculine management and culture has a number of consequences, including misconceptions about their commitment and stereotypical assumptions about their competence. This bias and indirect discrimination faced by career women in organisations contributes to what is referred to as the 'glass ceiling'. The glass

ceiling is defined by the United States Department of Labor (1992) as "those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organisational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organisation into management level positions".

Women are profoundly disadvantaged in terms of career rewards by male dominance in administrative positions across various aspects of schooling and within and between specific subject areas because the structures of schooling and subject departments are deeply shaped by patriarchy. Despite policy changes, the male dominance of administrative positions in secondary schools together with the predominance of male 'gatekeepers', ensures the perpetuation of the male perspective (Apple, 1986). The decision-makers, being in most cases male, make personal evaluations based on a range of stereotyped assumptions that favour the male and disadvantage the female (Ball, 1987; Connell, 1985; Davies, 1990; Evans & Davies, 1988; Hoferek, 1986; Knoppers, 1989; Sampson, 1986; Smith, 1988). Even the merit promotion system is not immune to patriarchal influence. According to Randell (1990), there tends to be a view that merit is somehow a neutral form to which the contextual circumstances of a worker's life are irrelevant. Unfortunately, the concept has not as yet been conclusively defined, and in the absence of such a definition, it is too easy for merit to be based on the 'values, style and priorities of the dominant group in the organisation. Definitions of what is meritorious can undergo change depending on the power of particular groups to define it. "...Ideas about masculinity and femininity are embedded in organisational arrangement, and the opportunity to accumulate 'merit' and the attribution of 'merit' are structured along gender lines" (Burton, 1987, p. 430). Chapman (1986) writing about the appointment of Principals, discussed the influence of 'intuition' in the selection process, and how selectors are less likely to choose women without the experience of seeing them in top management positions.

Connell (1985) and Kessler, Ashenden, Connell and Dowsett (1987), suggested that the school as an institution is characterised at any given time by a 'gender regime'.

The way it embodies patterns of authority is an important part of the political order of the school. The association that our society makes between authority and masculinity...is a significant underpinning of the power structure of the school system where most of its administrators, principals and subject heads are male (Connell, 1985, p. 138).

The influence of the 'old boys network' can not be underestimated. Thornton (1989, p.17) argued that homogeneity is a central value of organisational culture in Australia which "manifests itself most dramatically through the phenomenon of homosocial reproduction or cloning". Senior men are more comfortable with each other, rather than having women as peers or superiors, and so give patronage to youthful images of themselves. Consequently, they make informal recommendations on recruitment, promotional opportunities, providing referee reports, and even allocating courses and teaching loads. Cahoon (1991) shared the concern that gender differences are deeply embedded in the beliefs and practices of our organisations, often occurring in the day to day decisions regarding recruitment and selection, assignment of tasks, performance appraisal, promotion and pay. The findings of a report entitled *Gender in promotion: An examination of the issues* (Saunders, 1993), supported this perspective .

Possible explanation for the patriarchal nature of the system was offered by Davies (1990), who suggested that coeducational schools tend to be a replication of the 'natural family structures' which in turn often means the replication of conventional gender divisions. This leads to a 'spiral devaluation' whereby women are not given the opportunity to demonstrate administrative competence and men's natural leadership ability is given prominence. Davies (1990) highlighted a number of areas of concern in the management context. These included the vertical division of labour in terms of who occupies which rank; the horizontal division of labour, particularly the academic-pastoral and science-art dichotomies; the allocation of mentoring, inservicing and encouragement; the provision of flexibility to take

account of family commitments; and the dynamics of meeting and discussion procedures which determine informal power processes.

In interviews with 40 university academics, Martin and Smith (1993) found that the women were resentful and frustrated at being frequently cast in a marginal support role. However, a number of them prefaced their concerns with declarations of loyalty to their male colleagues. The women felt as though, in complaining, they were betraying people whom they saw as having helped them initially, but whom they now felt, at times worked against them. They talked of sharing ideas, developing initiatives, and writing up papers which were subsequently taken over by male colleagues. At one level, they felt they should not object, because without the support of powerful men they would not be there at all. On the other hand, they saw that the treatment they received was not the way that men typically worked with other men. They did not know how to change their own behaviour or how to confront their male colleagues with their dissatisfaction. They did not even know if it was reasonable to do this.

In a previous study focusing on the subject area of physical education (Bloom, 1992), the majority of women interviewed had either encountered obstacles as female Heads of Department in physical education, or believed that the position would be deliberately made more difficult for a female by the administration as a result of their traditional, stereotypical attitudes. Male dominance of the school hierarchy was perceived to pose problems for females. The Head of Department position, by its nature, entails a certain amount of negotiating with other Heads of Department and school administrators. Almost half of the participants said they felt threatened by the politics associated with the Head of Department position; the power struggles that inevitably eventuated; and the need to continually 'manipulate' the administration. The feelings of inadequacy and concerns of threat and intimidation expressed by the teachers was the direct result of their personal experiences with traditional male dominated hierarchies. This was considered by many as a deterrent to their own



promotional aspirations, and may have resulted in their influencing others against advancement by relating negative experiences and perceptions.

These findings were supported by Saunders (1993), who noted that although female and male participants shared similar perceptions of both social and organisational barriers to promotion, gender bias as a negative dimension of school life was raised only by the women. A deep level of concern and frustration at perceived gender patterns in the workplace was the most frequently recurring subject of discussion for the women. They often cited 'masculine school culture' as the most powerful barrier to women's career development. Many commented that the barriers were often subtle and that it was exhausting fighting against a different value system. Women frequently used conflict terms to describe the workplace: they "battle", have to "fight" against accepted norms, always feeling "on guard"; and claim they feel "exhausted" thinking of ways to work around managers they consider to be diametrically opposed to themselves (Saunders, 1993, p.45). She concluded that it was of concern that female participants perceived themselves to be a submerged culture within the organisation.

In the workplace, the full complexities of gender relations are often masked by rules of politeness, expressed values of equal opportunity and minimisation of difference, guidelines and penalties for sexual harassment and the general rules of organisational life that structure relations in terms of power, authority, accountability, expertise and organisational experience. Beneath this are the gender subcultures of behavioural and linguistic rules that entwine with other submerged cultural assumptions about power, dominance and sexuality (Long, 1992; Tannen, 1991). The submerged female culture exists in relative isolation, hidden and somewhat illegitimate.

## **Gender-role Stereotyping**

Josephson and Colwill (1982) provided a useful clarification of the three concepts: attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes. According to these writers, attitudes are not necessarily based upon facts. Rather, they are formed of two components: beliefs, the thinking component, comprising statements of what one considers to be true; and feelings, the emotional component, or 'gut reactions'. Although any specific attitude is seldom a perfect predictor of behaviour, it is a good predictor of behavioural intention. In relation to the inequitable situation faced by many women in organisations, the predominant attitude may be prejudice; the common belief may be that of stereotypes; and the resultant behaviour may be discrimination.

Dyer (1986) described gender-role stereotyping as "...a social process whereby particular behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and values...are perceived to be more appropriate to one sex than the other... They more accurately might be thought of as 'gender attributes' as they are qualities which are reinforced through experiences with major social institutions" (p.24). Deeply entrenched societal attitudes about the roles of men and women as leaders and followers discourage competent women from assuming leadership roles (Randell, 1990). Stereotypes portraying the female as subordinate, subtly shape the perceptions and attitudes of both women and men in our culture, and their resultant expectations are a major barrier inhibiting women from developing their full range of career opportunities (Al-Khalifa, 1989; Ball, 1987; Davies, 1990; Dyer, 1986; Griffin, 1989; Hoferek, 1986; Knoppers, 1989; Miland, 1984; Sampson, 1981). The fact that women are ascribed low status in our society, which conflicts with any high status they achieve through career success, leads to 'status incongruity' (Colwill, 1982). Status incongruity tends to make others uncomfortable in dealing with successful women, and women themselves may tend to avoid the discomfort-producing situation by not alluding to their career outside their professional circles and by secreting their successes.

Cultural expectations of women's and men's participation in the workforce have traditionally viewed the man as breadwinner for himself, and his dependent wife and children. A woman's career was contingent upon family commitments and her income was seen as supplemental to that of her husband. "Definitions of full-time work, the hierarchy of career structures and the determination of salary and other benefits in the wider society as in the State Education Department have reflected such a concept of the nuclear family" (Stewart, 1976, p.15).

Expectations about individuals are not based solely on their capabilities and personality traits as people. Over and above such considerations is an overlay of expectations based on their sex, and these are backed by sanctions expressing approval or disapproval of particular behaviours and attitudes. Girls and boys have these expectations confirmed and reinforced through social realities. Many significant choices can be unnecessarily restricted by stereotyped expectations about individuals. These constraints tend to bear more heavily on women due to their inferior social power and resultant lower confidence to make significant decisions. There is also resistance to their exercise of choice in ways which would threaten the more powerful positions held by males (Griffin, 1989). According to McKinnon (1975), in the past people have tended to adopt their prescribed sex roles without analysing or questioning the stereotype in terms of its appropriateness or relevance.

Perhaps the greatest barrier inhibiting women developing their full potential and choosing from the full range of occupational and life alternatives is this prevalence of social and occupational stereotypes that reflect underlying sexist myths and attitudes. Many features of the organisation of schooling reinforce the conventional stereotypes, in particular that of female as subordinate. The male-dominated hierarchies in education and the allocation of duties in schools characteristically confirm women's subordinate, dependent status. The male role on the other hand continues to be confirmed as involving leadership, administration, control of large groups and skills in teaching the physical sciences and mathematics (Ball, 1987).

Knoppers (1989) suggested that one means of keeping women out of leadership positions is to cite gender differences, assume they apply for everyone, and use them to justify sex segregation. Female teachers constantly receive strong messages from managers and colleagues which are likely deterrents to the pursuit of promotion opportunities, and function to foster doubts regarding the appropriateness of management work as a career option for women (Al-Khalifa, 1989). People in Western society have internalised a host of attitudes about the relative capabilities of women and men. Much of our thinking has rested on the assumption that masculinity and femininity represent extremes of a unidimensional bipolar trait. Achievement, independence and competence belong to the masculine end while passivity, dependence and nurturance fall at the feminine end of the continuum. This dualistic way of thinking makes it difficult for women to see themselves as both competent and feminine (Hoferek, 1986). According to Colwill (1982), although males and females differ, as groups, in a few basic skills such as physical strength, and verbal, quantitative, spatial and social skills, and men appear to be more aggressive and have greater self-confidence than women, while women are more accurate than men in predicting their own success, these conclusions are based on group averages which do not necessarily apply to individual cases or to job performance. She concluded that sex differences can usually be attributed to situational factors rather than to biology or childhood socialisation.

Research by Kanter (1977), has shown that the bureaucratic syndrome often attributed to female managers, that of rule-keeping, pettiness and defensiveness, is actually characteristic of people of either sex who find themselves in token positions, in dead-end jobs, and in powerless managerial roles. She rejects the stereotype of the female 'boss' by showing that sex is merely an artefact: tokenism, dead ends, and powerlessness are better predictors of the bureaucratic syndrome than is femaleness. Unfortunately, it is the women who often find themselves in token, powerless, or dead end positions. Because it is primarily men who occupy the

promotional positions, their behaviour may be interpreted as 'masculine' rather than 'managerial like'.

Questions are being asked in the literature about whether there are still sound justifications for accepting that females and males, merely because of their sex, function as different sorts of people following different life patterns in conditions of unequal social power.

Josephson and Colwill (1982) concluded that sexism and discrimination were detrimental to all involved. The most obvious costs are paid by the victims in terms of economic loss and reduced opportunities to develop their potential. Emotional costs are also levied against those who come to believe unfavourable stereotypes about themselves. The anticipation of failure has implications for eventual success: those who expect to fail are less likely to try and more likely to fail if they do try. In addition, they are more likely to attribute their failure to their own inadequacies, which is likely to have emotional consequences of personal shame. Further, an unexpected success would not necessarily occasion much personal pride, for unexpected events tend to be attributed to causes outside the individual. There are also costs to the perpetrator. The screening and overcategorisation process that maintains stereotypes requires distortion and information loss, and interferes with clear decision-making. Stereotypes can serve as self-fulfilling prophecies, because individuals who hold sex-role stereotypes actually elicit stereotypical behaviour from people with whom they interact. Ironically, self-fulfilling prophecies may seem to validate stereotypes, but they do so at the expense of a true assessment of the stereotyped individual's typical and potential behaviour. The sex-discriminating organisation also incurs costs by reducing the likelihood of appointing the best person possible for the position.

Upon comparing the traditional stereotypes attributed to female teachers with more recent social developments, McKinnon, as early as 1975 and Sampson (1981), concluded that changes in women's roles in terms of life expectancy, size of family,

place in the workforce and so on have come so rapidly, that the old stereotypes of female teachers are in error, yet the framework of beliefs and attitudes which cause most people to judge females and males according to different criteria still lingers, continuing to restrict expectations regarding female career aspirations. According to Martin and Smith (1993), women are becoming in the workplace what they have traditionally been in the home: the workers, organisers, carers and managers, without prestige and without power. Their efforts to make the working environment a better place are welcomed, but regarded as ancillary to the main business of the organisation. Today, this incongruity is further magnified as awareness of the concept of equality of opportunity increases, and yet females remain largely underrepresented in promotional positions.

One message is clear from the literature and from everyday experiences in schools: men do not all fall within the stereotype of high need for achievement, low need for affiliation, and low fear of success, any more than women all cluster at the opposite end of the continuum. In order to make sound hiring, promotion and career choices, it is imperative that each person examines her/his own individuality and that of others.

Writers adopting a critical stance have cautioned against the focus on socialisation and sex-role learning as explanations for gender stereotyping. Critiques of this perspective emphasise the lack of an adequate theorising of the power of relations; the neglect of an historical analysis; and the tendency to reduce gender to the biological dichotomy of male and female (Davies, 1990; Kessler, Ashenden, Connell & Dowsett, 1987; Scraton, 1992; Vertinsky, 1992). Davies (1990) commented that too much attention to internalised 'sex-roles' is dangerous for three reasons. Firstly, "it draws attention away from the parties involved in the reproduction of discrimination", attributing expected roles to a notion of the society's need; secondly, it blames females for not succeeding due to "learned aspirations, conduct patterns and domesticated traits"; and thirdly, because it accentuates the concept of 'sex

difference' rather than 'gender inequity' (p.51). The concept of sex roles exaggerates the importance of individual attitudes and minimises the importance of the economic and social forces to which those attitudes are a response. Further, schools are not simply sites for the reproduction of sex stereotypes, although they serve this function much of the time. They are also a vehicle for women who reject conventional expectations and wish to construct their own intellectual lives and careers (Kessler, Ashenden, Connell & Dowsett, 1987; Scraton, 1992; Vertinsky, 1992). Therefore, there is a need for a more sophisticated understanding of gender in its relations with education.

### **The Perceived Male Model of Leadership**

The perception of the male model of leadership is closely linked to both gender-role stereotyping and the patriarchal nature of the education system. The traditional male dominance of decision-making positions together with the emergent model of leadership have resulted in a tendency to measure aspiring females against such male-oriented criteria, and find them deficient. Davies (1990) confirmed that there is an implicit tendency to present the male-as-norm in management terms and to see how women differ from this.

They are perhaps 'less' ambitious, 'lacking' in confidence, 'over' emotional, 'too' family centred or 'under' achieving. The net result is to confirm that ambition, overconfidence and maximum achievement are all universal goals and that emotions and orientations to family are somehow barriers and handicaps. (p.31)

Research has demonstrated that perceptions of women as lacking job competence may be a social artefact attributed to female leaders by people who have had little experience with women in leadership roles, and are therefore ignorant of how they may perform. Spender (1982) proposed that "If males perceive their standards, based on their experience, as the only standard, then it is reasonable for them to argue that women simply do not 'measure up' in their terms" (p.42).

Because school leadership is often linked to stereotypically defined masculine traits and behaviours, it is not just a lack of knowledge or training which serves to create barriers for women, but their rejection of those elements of the role which they perceive as masculine: the aggressive competitive behaviours, emphasis on control rather than collaboration and negotiation, and the pursuit of competition rather than shared problem-solving (Al-Khalifa, 1989). According to Bryson (1987), the style of management currently being promoted tends to be one that women generally do not find attractive, and many of the informal requirements for senior positions are difficult for women to meet. The 'management ethos' acts as a form of protectionism and resistance for men, not necessarily consciously, to the entry of women into jobs that until now have been their uncontested domain. Bryson believed that one of the major problems was that "equality is being 'promoted' through policies which treat everyone as if they were physically able, intellectually unimpaired, white Anglo-Saxon heterosexual males" (p.265). This means that individuals can only achieve equality if they have similar life circumstances to the male dominant group. Women are therefore usually disadvantaged by their different family responsibilities and different experiences.

The question of numbers has its impact in a variety of ways on the personal experiences and likely successes of the few. Women are often highly visible as a result of their minority, which can have disadvantages in terms of the additional pressure it brings to bear on those who have status or who 'become tokens', symbols of how women can perform, stand-ins for all women (Acker, 1983). In this way, "all their mistakes are attributed to their sex while their achievements are explained by their exceptionality" (Knoppers, 1989, p.41). Women in positions of authority may therefore hide or minimise traits or behaviours that they see as distinctly 'feminine' or different. "They are under considerable psychological pressure to identify with the dominant male members rather than their own social category in all settings" (Ball, 1987, p.207).



In a previous study conducted by the researcher (Bloot, 1992), almost all the female physical education teachers and Heads of Department interviewed made mention of the impact that their perceptions of male dominance in promotional positions had on them personally, or on other female teachers. Despite the confidence they expressed in females, with regard to both possessing the necessary skills and qualities for the Head of Department position, and their ability to cope in such a role, the respondents' comments repeatedly pointed to the perceived male model of leadership as a deterrent to the promotional aspirations of female teachers. Women were judged to be more capable than many males in terms of organisation, communication and time management. The problem was seen to arise in the acceptance of the women's position by those with whom they work, and in the need to continually prove themselves to justify their occupation of promotional positions. Over half of the participants in the study agreed that the Head of Department of physical education would be a more difficult role for women. One teacher had in fact been a Head of Department for eight years, and then regressed to teaching because she did not believe she was suited to the position 'personality-wise', and felt she did not possess the necessary management skills. A number of the participants voiced their despair at the hopelessness of even attempting to fight the male dominance and the expectations of others with regard to the 'suitable' incumbent of the leadership role. They felt that the administration, other staff members, students and their parents tended to perceive females as inadequate decision-makers. Not all of the teachers interviewed perceived potential difficulties for a female Head of Department. A number of the teachers were quite optimistic that the traditional male dominance in leadership positions was being broken down, and was beginning to reflect changes in the wider society. They believed that this process was being assisted by the influx of new graduates with different attitudes and expectations regarding gender-roles.

Davies (1990) posed the question "If women do not strive for senior positions, do we remould women or do we begin to question the hierarchically ordered and increasingly technist notion that we have of education administration?" saying that

the "leadership theory that assumes a male perspective, or theory in which male values are so deeply embedded as to be invisible, ensures that only males or women adopting male views will be selected as leaders" (p.71). "Teachers should not have to adopt a male lifestyle in order to gain status and be in a position to use their experience in decision-making positions" (Hutchinson, 1981, p.40).

A critical analysis of derivations and implication of some of our ideologies about managerial and leadership styles may, according to Davies (1990), highlight how a feminist view may lead to a somewhat altered perception of administrative practice. Research has revealed few differences in the currently 'espoused' leadership qualities, with females and males scoring equally on 'initiation', and females scoring slightly higher on 'consideration'. Such findings have however, made little impact on the overall hierarchical nature of school administration.

The fact that there are so few women in leadership positions to demonstrate their skills and qualities, virtually guarantees the continuation of the well entrenched traditional model and limits the recognition of female leadership as different but equally effective (Davies, 1990; Knoppers, 1989; Spender, 1982).

### **Family Responsibilities**

One of the frequently recurring reasons given in the literature for women not seeking promotion is family commitment. Broken career paths and family leave are commonly described as barriers to women's progress, and their broken and interrupted work pattern is seen as abnormal or deficient (Randell, 1990). The traditional assumption was that women who choose to marry and have children could not seriously expect to pursue a career in teaching. Prior to the implementation of promotional systems based on merit rather than seniority, the structural barriers confronting married females were often insurmountable.

Expectations regarding the role of women in the family are closely linked with patriarchal and heterosexual values. Women still have the primary role for family responsibility. They often value their family commitments ahead of their careers, but they are not valued reciprocally by systems and schools (Randell, 1990). Many men are able to pursue careers via 'two persons' careers' in which nonworking wives support their husbands' work and take responsibility for home duties. Married female teachers on the other hand, are more typically part of a 'two career family' with little support from the husband and dual responsibilities (Ball, 1987; Bryson, 1987). Women tend to perceive home-life as a pressure and hard work, where they have little time to themselves; while for men, home is a place of refuge to recharge their energies. For many women with dependents, the balancing of different roles and responsibilities is a considerable organisational achievement, but it also represents a source of pressure. A move into management comes to be seen as compounding this problem (Al-Kalifa, 1989). With women organised to undertake childcare and home-making, it is undeniable that many males are released from the responsibility of life maintenance tasks and are therefore more able to devote time and commitment to their career. They also tend to be more mobile in terms of transferring from one location to another.

Arnot's research led to the realisation that in the view of female teachers, the ideology of 'familism', that "exaggerated identification with the myth that the family is the only place where a woman may experience self-fulfilment", was firmly established in the thinking of significant others in the workplace and this placed a constraint on career opportunities (1984, p.19). In a study conducted by Sampson (1986) investigating promotion in government schools, women more often than men (37% to 20%) named the reason for not seeking promotion to be that they felt unable to cope with the extra demands and responsibilities; and perceived a conflict of after school commitments and domestic responsibilities. Women, more often than men, also gave their partner's career as an important reason for unwillingness to seek promotion. Sampson concluded that providing women with a wide range of

experience in organisation and administration skills from their early years may "alter the balance between family role and career in some women's lives. In the course of gradually developing leadership work experiences, family responsibilities may become more shared, or may not seem too overwhelming an obstacle" (p.141).

Whatever the underlying cause, women seem to be more involved and committed, in terms of time, to their families. There has been little rethinking in a changing society regarding the automatic allocation of family roles according to sex, regardless of individual interest, talent or qualifications. Notwithstanding the removal of discriminatory policies, many women are still forced to choose between career and family. With women organised to undertake childcare and home-making, personal priorities and responsibilities outside work roles can be seen to vie with professional commitments. This serves to maintain male dominant structures in the education system (Al-Khalifa, 1989; Ball, 1987; Bryson, 1987; Sampson, 1986; Spender, 1982).

Findings from a previous study (Bloot, 1992), highlighted three aspects of family commitment that were perceived by the female teachers to inhibit promotional opportunities. Firstly, the traditional expectation that the female assumes the bulk of responsibility for the family, and consequently has less time than the male to devote to her career. Linked to this is restricted geographical mobility and the tendency to support the husband in his career, perhaps at the expense of her own. Secondly, the additional responsibilities associated with a promotional position place further demands on time, particularly in physical education, due to extracurricular activities such as out of hours training and interschool matches, which constitute 'work' that cannot be taken home. Thirdly, the loss of confidence resulting from breaks in service for child-bearing make it difficult to resume teaching duties and to compete against teachers with continuous service for promotional positions. Almost all of the female physical educators interviewed mentioned family orientation or commitment as an 'obvious' factor for the underrepresentation of females at Head of

Department level. However, the profiles of incumbents of the position tended to contradict these stated perceptions. Of the total seven past and current female Heads of Department in physical education, six were married and had dependents at the time of promotion. Further, of the 13 single teachers interviewed, only one had attained Head of Department status, and one other had any promotional aspirations.

The findings of this study concurred with those of Davies (1990), who argued that the dual role for women of career and family has become a "convenient peg on which to hang explanations of 'underachievement' and has become as much a form of 'victim analysis' as sex role socialisation" (p.39). There is little doubt that family responsibilities are an inhibiting factor in the promotional aspirations of female teachers whose family orientation is mutually exclusive to their pursuit of career, or for those who strive to balance family and career without the support of their partners. For many other teachers however, it may constitute a convenient and stereotypically acceptable excuse, given for and by them, to placate inquiries regarding their lack of promotional aspirations, and to conceal other perceived deterrents.

There is some evidence to suggest that stereotypical expectations are slowly undergoing modification. Participants in a study entitled *Gender in promotion: An examination of the issues*, reflected on the fact that while in the past male teachers tended to take their families with them at each stage of promotion, over the past decade, this pattern had altered due to changing social and personal attitudes and values. Of the participants in promotional positions, a substantial number had left partners and commuted weekly or fortnightly to their location of work. Male participants commented that their wives would not go to the country and did not want to uproot children and disturb their own careers (Saunders, 1993).

## **Mobility**

In the past, country service has been a prerequisite for obtaining permanent status, and an expectation in gaining promotion. Under the present system, the majority of teachers promoted to a Head of Department position are still likely to take up their appointment at a country school. The importance of geographical mobility therefore, presents itself as a deterrent to married female teachers due to restrictions imposed on them by family commitments, and to most other teachers due to their desire to remain in the metropolitan area.

In the past, teaching was often referred to as a 'single woman's career'. However, many single teachers have said they would not consider moving to the country in order to accept promotion largely because of lack of incentives and 'quality of life' decisions (Bloot, 1992; Saunders, 1993). Both single and married teachers, male and female, participating in the two studies, cited their quality of life as one of the major reasons for not wanting to apply for promotion in the country. Apart from the perceived undesirability of many of the country locations, and the prospect of separating from friends and family, financial considerations were a primary focus. Several female participants commented on difficulties female teachers can face in rural communities, particularly with regard to social and emotional isolation. Many women and several men stated that they were not prepared to endure that degree of disruption to their personal lives.

An analysis of the location averages, in male and female second stage applications for promotion, presented in the Saunders' Report (1993), revealed that male applicants apply for more locations than female applicants, and that the differential between male and female location averages diminishes the higher the promotional level, as many of the higher level vacancies are in the metropolitan area. Further, more female applicants chose not to proceed to the second stage of the application process

once locations became known. Data from the merit promotion system indicate that many females apply for city vacancies only.

### **The Low Promotional Orientation of Women**

There are conflicting opinions with regard to the low promotional orientation of women as an explanation of their underrepresentation at senior levels. One proposition put forward to account for this phenomenon, usually by males, is that women are less committed than men to teaching as a career, seeing teaching as a means of providing a subsidiary income and a job that can be easily accommodated to the demands of family duties.

McKinnon (1975) and Sarros (1983) were among those who proposed that the lack of interest in promotion by female teachers was largely a product of gender-role stereotyping and the socialisation process that neither encourages nor provides incentives for females to aspire to career advancement to the same extent as males.

In a study conducted with 40 university academics, Martin and Smith (1993) found that most male interviewees believed women in their departments to be fulfilled and rewarded in what they did, and that women often made the department a more social and cohesive place, both for students and for staff. There was also a dominant belief that the majority of women were not particularly ambitious and that they often received no satisfaction from the career goals more typically pursued by men. Many men acknowledged that women did not all conform to this norm. These 'other women', who did not usually have heavy family commitments, were frequently characterised as being 'aggressively' ambitious and career conscious. The women interviewed endorsed the perception that they were committed to family, adding that dividing themselves between academic careers and family commitments was a great strain. They typically agreed that they found a great deal of satisfaction from their interpersonal aspects of academic work, from working with students and with

colleagues. However, they did not endorse the views of the male sample that this was all they hoped for from their academic careers. They did want recognition and promotion for their achievements.

Others, including Acker (1983), Ball (1987), Sampson (1986) and Whitcombe (1980), believed that to propose women's lack of interest in promotion as the reason for their underrepresentation in leadership was a sexist perception and an oversimplification of a complex situation. They suggested it was more likely attributable to the fact that women lacked awareness of the promotional process and the confidence to more aggressively pursue a promotional path of their own accord. Further, the fact that some women choose not to accommodate the male model of leadership is an act of resistance rather than a passive acceptance of the status quo.

According to Archer and Lloyd (1985), a critical review of research casts doubt on much of the accepted folk-lore regarding the low ambition of females, or significant differences in their aggression. The measured differences between sexes on some socialised traits may be statistically significant, but they are not necessarily educationally significant and have little explanatory power for the gross inequities in social structures. Two early studies, one conducted in Britain - *Promotion and the Woman Teacher* (1979) and one in New Zealand - *Teacher Career and Promotion Study* (1982) both revealed that despite beliefs to the contrary, significant numbers of women teachers seek responsibility and promotion. The report entitled *Girls and tomorrow: The challenge for schools* concluded that unless Australian women differed significantly from their British and New Zealand counterparts, it would be inaccurate to propose that women in this country are not found in leadership positions mainly because they do not aspire to be there (Miland, 1984).

Sampson (1986) also claimed that "women are taking their careers seriously and lack of commitment is not the reason why they don't apply for senior positions" (p.141). In a survey investigating promotion in government schools, she discovered that a significant number of women considered their own careers to be equal to, or



more important, than those of their partners, and that these women would be prepared to take a job which necessitated moving and a change of job for their partner. Although the proportion of male teachers taking this stand was greater (55% to 38%), Sampson concluded that "women's lower career salience is a fallacy" (p.141).

Research evidence from Western Australian government schools suggests that such a conclusion may have limited generalisability. Teachers' responses in a study by Bloot (1992), indicated that a lack of ambition and low career orientation were perceived as reasons for the underrepresentation of females at Head of Department level in physical education. Three quarters of the participants commented on the low promotional orientation of female physical educators. The fact that females tend to 'sit back and wait' to be approached rather than 'promoting themselves', was perceived to be a reflection of their lack of aspirations. This notion was symptomatic of even those women who had attained Head of Department status, with the majority admitting that their promotions had been circumstantial rather than actively sought or carefully planned. Limited awareness with regard to promotional requirements and procedures was a problem common among all but the Heads of Department. The lack of drive and aggression exhibited by female teachers was viewed by a number of the teachers as stereotypically acceptable. Their remarks with reference to promotional success were almost derogatory, devaluing the attributes required to achieve career advancement.

Perhaps this denigration of the qualities perceived as necessary to gain promotion by the female teachers who did not aspire to career advancement, serves as a mechanism to placate their own feelings of inadequacy in this regard. Alternatively, perhaps the seemingly low promotional orientation of these female physical educators is a manifestation of the cumulative effect of a male-dominated system, which has traditionally limited the opportunities for women's advancement through both

systemic barriers and the more subtle regime of sanctions and rewards for fulfilment of role expectations.

### **Women's Perceptions Regarding Promotion and Leadership**

Many women do not consider themselves as potential leaders. Internalised views of the incompatibility of leadership roles with femininity held by women themselves have been cited as a reason why women are viewed as less competent, less objective and less logical than men. There is evidence that highly capable women make a conscious choice not to apply for promotion because it would mean either losing aspects of the job they value, or trying to resolve tensions between their beliefs and the administrative practices of the establishment (Al-Khalifa, 1989; Pavan & Robinson, 1991; Sampson, 1986; Sharpe, 1993). The findings of a previous study, (Bloot, 1992), focusing on the subject area of physical education, indicated that the school, its students, the Head of Department and other physical education staff had an impact on shaping the female teachers' perceptions. Their preference to remain as teachers was based on their positive teaching experiences in contrast to their negative impressions of the senior role. The Head of Department position was seen by a number of the teachers as a job in which many aspects were unrelated to teaching physical education, and therefore not a worthwhile position considering the minimal rewards.

Some female teachers believe that remaining in the classroom is of equal value to being promoted out of it. They value contact with the students, working as part of a team and the fact that they are not forced to assume a set of beliefs with which they disagree. In this way, understandings that women themselves have about their own development may affect their career development (Al-Khalifa, 1989; Sampson, 1986). There is also evidence to suggest that women can be scrupulous in self-

evaluation and therefore more critical and selective about career moves that many males (Saunders, 1993).

There is some disagreement in the literature with regard to the contention that women tend to underestimate their worth and their suitability for administrative positions (Chapman, 1986; Wentworth, 1980). According to Al-Kalifa (1989), promotion into managerial posts is perceived by some female teachers as a move which creates a gap between the teacher's view of her own competence and skills, and those demanded by the position. Sampson (1981) suggested that "the severest obstacle to women leaders may be the lack of acceptability by other women" (p.29). The socialisation process had considerable impact on such perceptions and it is important to remember that women are themselves subject to gender stereotypical attitudes, and therefore may believe that a man is indeed a better administrator than a woman. This is a view that appears to be shared by many men, and by the 'gatekeepers' although usually from a different perspective, probably based on their negative expectations regarding women's abilities and career commitment. Sampson (1986) expressed concern regarding the assumption that women doubt their own competence in administrative roles. Based on her research findings, she concluded that:

A sense of superior confidence is an important factor motivating many women who do apply (for promotional positions) and most women do not demonstrate a personality deficit in this regard...reasons why women do not push themselves and compete with men for appointments are more likely related to their well-founded lack of experience. (p.42)

Female participants in a study conducted in Western Australia, commented that more men applied for promotion because men were likely to seek extrinsic rewards such as status and power in a promotional position. They sought ego-identification and self-validation through their work. Alternatively, women were thought to seek intrinsic rewards such as good relationships and improved student outcomes, viewing career as only one part of their lives (Saunders, 1993).

Individuals' perceptions regarding their achievements can have an important bearing on their self-esteem, expectations and career planning. According to Lips and Colwill (1982), there is a tendency to give different explanations for the successes and failures of men and women, and women and men tend to make different attributions about their own successes and failures. Individuals' causal attributions for their own success and failure, and the success and failure of others, vary along the three main dimensions of stability, internality and intentionality. A stable cause for success is one that endures over time, while an unstable cause is one that varies. An internal cause is one stemming from factors within the person, while an external cause originates in the person's environment. An intentional attribution is made when a person is seen as being in control of her/his behaviour, while an unintentional attribution is seen as being beyond the individual's control.

In general, women make more external attributions than men do for both success and failure. In evaluating their own achievements then, men are more likely to see their success as the direct result of ability, while women are more likely to attribute their success to luck. Some of the research on attributions about failure breaks this pattern by showing an even more disturbing finding: women tend to attribute failures to lack of ability or to other internal stable factors. That leaves women attributing their successes to luck and their failures to lack of ability. (p.79)

Lips and Colwill (1982) believed that causal attributions play a crucial role in understanding career paths. Firstly, self-attributions can affect expectations for success or failure. Sex differences in expectations for success can perpetuate actual sex differences in success, because individuals who expect to perform badly in an activity are less likely to choose that activity, and less likely to do well in the activity if they do participate. Overall, males have higher expectations for success, although there is evidence to suggest that women's expectations are more accurate. Secondly, self-attributions can have a profound effect on self-esteem. Those who think their successes are due to their abilities are more likely to take pride in themselves, but to believe that one's successes are caused by luck is unlikely to raise one's self-esteem. Thirdly, a woman may correctly estimate that she has talent and is a harder worker and still take no responsibility for planning her career,

insisting, if she is successful, that it 'fell in her lap', or expecting, if she is yet to be successful, that it will do so. Men are more likely than women, both to expect and plan for success.

Clearly the cause to which a person's success or failure is attributed has many implications for future achievement. Our attributions about the causes of our own successes and failures can either encourage us to greater and more daring efforts or influence us to give up in despair. The attributions others make about our achievements may determine the nature of organisational rewards for success and organisational punishment for failure (Lips & Colwill, 1982). Unfortunately, the attribution patterns themselves may help to perpetuate differing expectations by providing excuses for unexpected outcomes. Taking account of the differing degrees of power and opportunity accorded to women and men in education, it seems likely that sex differences in attribution to self for success and failure, may in part reflect the different realities experienced by women and men in a male-dominated patriarchal system.

Marshall (1985) noted that women administrators are 'abnormal women' and 'abnormal administrators'. She described a continuum of personal identity stages through which women must pass in order to become school administrators. During the first stage, women are 'culturally-defined'; they accept the gender-based roles for women in society. In order to have career aspirations which are not traditionally defined, women must move beyond this stage. During the second stage, women struggle against the culturally-defined female roles, resisting the change of identity while simultaneously feeling the 'pull' of career. Finally, according to Marshall, women move to a new stage of self-definition; one that is free from the restrictions of female gender-based roles. Women must struggle to overcome the culturally-defined role of female, therefore they become 'abnormal women'. Women must also struggle to overcome the culturally defined role of school leader as male, therefore they struggle with the view of being not only abnormal women but also abnormal

administrators. A study involving female administrators conducted by Schmuck and Schubert (1986) revealed that the women wanted to integrate themselves into the prevailing culture, wanting to be viewed as administrators, not as women.

Sharpe (1993) tended to be critical of women's lack of confidence and their natural inclination to avoid conflict, urging them to 'play to win', to have the desire to compete and to demand and to fight for what they want in the workforce. She proposed that the reasons for women's seeming inhibition and reluctance to exercise the rights they do have, may lie in their 'fears'. Sharpe categorised these fears as:

- **Fear of failure:** It is easier for women not to try too hard or develop too much, blaming the limitations on the situation or other people, but never on herself. By remaining in the limited space women have been allocated, or have allocated themselves, they cannot fail.
- **Fear of success:** With success comes the need to take responsibility for the 'hard' issues, to make major decisions, perhaps to be seen as tough or even hard. Research has shown that many gifted women have not been able to pursue success as men did. The more ability they had, the more anxious they became, which led them to lose the will to succeed. Women tend to feel that doing well professionally will jeopardise their relationships with men. However, Ingleton (1993) did not believe that fear of success was due to fear of a loss of femininity. She offered an alternative explanation for this fear, proposing that "women's success gained at the expense of another's failure generates considerable anxiety about competitive behaviour" (p. 43).
- **Fear of visibility:** Women have a reluctance to push themselves forward or to stand up and be heard. A common finding of research on women leaders is that where women achieve senior status, they experience feelings of high visibility, often being required to make a token presence on senior committees. They also tend to feel isolated and lonely, frequently perceiving their workplace as male-

dominated, hostile and contradictory (Marshall, 1987; Weiner, 1993). With invisibility comes safety. No one will demand that they extend themselves, and consequently there is little chance of failure. Further, outspoken women may be labelled as 'loud', or women with opinions may be perceived as 'pushy' or 'bossy'.

- Fear of change: When others see that a woman is changing, they may be threatened or fearful, wanting her to be the same person she has always been. This is the emotional blackmail that has stopped women. If they change, they may not be as self-sacrificing and therefore may lose a familiar role that has at least made them feel important.
- Fear of asking for what they want: Women tend to perceive that asking for an opportunity, or volunteering as presumptuous, maybe even 'unfeminine'. If they are 'lucky' enough to have opportunity come their way, they are grateful and pleased to demonstrate their abilities.

A further consideration is the fact that some women do not view teaching as a long term career. Previous investigation in the area of physical education, (Bloom, 1992), found that in addition to the rather negative perceptions of the Head of Department position expressed by teachers, three quarters of the participants intimated that women did not see physical education as a career. The expectation of marriage and a family; the desire to find a more challenging alternative; and the unattractive nature of the job for aging females, were all perceived as factors contributing to the short-term definition of the career. Few of the female physical educators, even the Heads of Department, had planned a long-term career in physical education when they commenced teaching.

The literature suggests that a confounding issue is the fact that many female teachers, particularly those who have achieved success in their careers, perceive no evidence of disadvantage or discrimination against themselves or their colleagues

(Martin & Smith, 1993; Weiner, 1993). "Women administrators see their experiences as personal, even idiosyncratic, and fail to comprehend the more fundamental and generalised concept of how gender serves as a critical structural factor in educational hierarchies" (Schmuck & Schubert, 1986, p.21). Some believe that the problem lies in the lack of commitment among their female contemporaries, quoting their own experiences as proof of career possibilities available, if only females persevere. Such a perception, according to Ball (1987), ignores the limited number of senior posts available, the resultant competition and the mechanisms at work in discriminating between candidates.

### **Women's Lack of Skills and Experience**

Female teachers' lack of qualifications, skills and administrative experience is another frequently proposed reason for their underrepresentation in promotional positions (Hutchinson, 1981; Randell, 1990; Sampson, 1986; Spender, 1982).

Hutchinson (1981), in early research conducted in Western Australia, found that females averaged fewer years of teaching experience, fewer years on permanent staff and lower qualifications than males. She concluded that such a profile was probably a legacy of discriminatory regulations existing in past years, and that because the opportunity for promotion for the majority of female teachers was such a recent development in Western Australia "...promotion of women has not yet become the accepted norm for female teachers or male administrators" (p.39).

The results of a more recent study by Sampson (1986) investigating promotion in Australian government schools, revealed that lack of experience and qualifications was given by many females as a reason for not seeking promotion. Results revealed that over half of the female teachers surveyed had added further qualifications and consequently, were eligible to apply for promotion on an equal basis with men in greater numbers than once was the case. Sampson's study also indicated that men



undertook more inservice training and were significantly more likely to have had such training in administrative areas including running a department, senior management and timetabling. Reasons given by the women for not attending such courses included residential requirements, distance, teaching commitments and lack of provision for relief teachers. A greater proportion of males were shown to be allocated organisational or administrative tasks in their first five years of teaching and the lack of early apprenticeship for women was seen to be an important factor in women's reluctance to apply for promotion. Females also had less opportunities than males to try themselves out on everyday organisational activities such as running assemblies, leading committees or coordinating major school events. This situation in many respects provides legitimisation of stereotypical perceptions concerning appropriate roles for women and men in schools. Similar findings were noted by Saunders (1993). Female participants in her study expressed concern about the allocation of additional tasks in schools, and the problems of achieving recognition for one's achievements. They suggested that stereotypical perceptions of gender-based competencies affect the assignment of work practices and roles, and consequently, women were given fewer opportunities to broaden their skill base and demonstrate merit.

Not all writers concur with this perspective. Cahoon (1991, p.15) commented that "the convenient myth of our day is that the absence of women at senior levels of our organisations is simply the lack of their experience and seasoning, and that with the passage of time women will increasingly find positions at the top of our organisations". According to Spender (1982), one of the most common justifications for keeping the promotional ranks confined to men is that of arguing that women are not qualified. "While men are able to monopolise the influential positions, they argue reasonably that women do not occupy these positions and women therefore do not possess the qualifications or experience" (p.42). This becomes a circular argument: that women do not have the experience of being in influential positions can and does become a reason for not appointing them to such positions.

Blot (1992) found that all the female physical educators interviewed for her study, believed that women exhibited the skills and qualities necessary to function effectively as leaders. Further, almost all respondents believed they could fulfil the role of Head of Department in physical education. Reasons for their reluctance to apply for promotion focused on the perceived inability of women to match the 'male model of leadership'. Comments repeatedly highlighted the expectation of a male Head of Department; the way in which male staff and administrators, students and parents might perceive the inadequacies of females in decision-making roles, and the pressures this may bring to bear on a female who chooses to assume such a role. It appeared that while lack of skills and experience was not in itself a constraint for the majority of the female physical education teachers, the doubts of significant others with regard to their competency was perceived as a deterrent to promotion.

#### **Lack of Encouragement and Support**

The differential encouragement provided to females and males by significant others confirms the social perception that leadership and decision-making in administration is more appropriate for males (Acker, 1983; Davies, 1990; De Lyon & Mignuolo, 1989; Sadker, Sadker & Klein, 1991; Sampson, 1986). Many women do aspire to senior positions, but fail to apply because they do not receive the initial patronage and support given to men (Ellis, 1987). Women often feel discouraged from applying for promotion because they believe that men will be preferred, and they see so many men actively encouraging other men to apply (Randell, 1990).

According to Davies (1990), male teachers are more likely to be supported in undertaking inservice training through access to relevant information, positive encouragement and active facilitation, especially in areas linked to promotional opportunity, due to the widespread belief in men's stronger career orientation. Men are offered more opportunities to access work experiences which, in turn, assist them in addressing selection criteria for promotional positions (Saunders, 1993).

Mentoring provides the individual with assistance, encouragement and insights into power relationships, and cultural and informal processes in the workplace. Female participants in a study conducted by Saunders (1993), expressed an overwhelming need for recognition, encouragement and mentoring in the workplace. Findings revealed that there was a recurring feeling amongst the female teachers of being undervalued by both the school management staff, and the system in general. Women shared the perception that men discuss aspects of the promotional career structure with each other and therefore feel more familiar and aware of these aspects of the organisation. Two female selection panellists for Level 3 positions commented that it was apparent during the interview process that in general, male interviewees had been mentored and were much more effective at networking than were female interviewees. Women already in promotional positions said they had initially applied because they had been 'tapped on the shoulder' by a supportive male or female superordinate, frequently the District Superintendent. However, the perception of many of those now in promotional positions is that this sort of mentoring occurs infrequently and is a thing of the past. Similar comments were made by the female Heads of Department in physical education interviewed in a previous study conducted by the researcher (Blout, 1992). Male participants did not tend to discuss the issue of encouragement at the school level as a major factor in career development. They were more likely to dwell on tangible factors such as salary, mobility and aspects of merit promotion. Interestingly, several of the women who had reached Level 6 positions in the secondary system did not perceive a lack of encouragement in their careers. Rather, their motivation seemed to be internalised, they seemed self-driven and appeared to possess high professional and personal self-esteem.

Women's unequal access to informal organisational socialisation is a serious disadvantage. Without mentors or sponsors they do not have feedback on their performance, or access to the 'power-group' norms. Men have long recognised the informal path to professional acculturation which mentorship offers (Shannon, 1993). The lack of significant numbers of women in promotional positions in

schools means that women are often dependent on male superordinates for encouragement and support.

### **The Image of Physical Education**

Characteristics specific to physical education result in a unique set of circumstances which impinge upon the career development of female teachers in the subject area. The image of physical education stems from its ties with sport, and is closely linked to patriarchy and the perceived male model of leadership. The nature of sport and its cultivation of male dominance and superiority, has particular implications for physical education, and serves to exacerbate other factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles in the area. Sport is the key medium for conveying messages of gender domination through its association with physical power, where men are accepted as having the natural advantage (O'Rourke, 1991).

A strange dichotomy seems to exist for females selecting physical education as a career. On the one hand, by choosing a subject area so closely linked with sport, traditionally the epitome of male dominance and power, female physical educators step outside the accepted stereotypical boundaries set for women. To do this they demonstrate assertiveness, competitiveness and a degree of risk-taking, all characteristics associated with leadership. As a result, women in physical education might be expected to be competent and feel comfortable in leadership positions and therefore, have higher promotional aspirations than female teachers in other subject areas. On the other hand, because sport, and therefore to some extent physical education, has been traditionally recognised as male-dominated, and females entering the area have placed themselves outside the weak and submissive stereotype of femininity, they have in the past according to Sikes (1988), adopted an alternative perspective of art and creativity. This has been reflected in the differing activities

comprising the physical education curriculum of girls and boys. While girls' experiences have traditionally focused on movement and gymnastics, the boys' activities have perpetuated the 'macho' sporting image. Pratt, Bloomfield and Searle (1984) believed that in this way, male and female physical education teachers tended to uphold traditional stereotypes and that as a result, a greater percentage of them have traditional attitudes concerning equal opportunity and differential treatment of the sexes, compared with teachers in other subject areas. Based on this scenario, the underrepresentation of females at Head of Department level in physical education would be expected.

Although the physical education programs offered to girls and boys in most schools in Western Australia no longer exhibit a differential allocation of activities, the male dominance of leadership roles remains a reality.

Participants in an earlier exploratory study (Bloom, 1992) highlighted a number of negative aspects related to the image of physical education. The historically founded 'jock' image of a lack of planning and general slackness has been responsible for a great deal of damage in terms of the status and credibility of the subject, and also in the perceptions of female teachers with regard to their role in the area. Such an image of physical education, negative and focused on the male either as teacher or Head of Department, has not been conducive to encouraging females to strive for promotion in the area. A number of respondents were, however, quite optimistic that the 'jock' image was being dissipated, both through the replacement of the old 'slack' physical educator by a 'more dedicated' and 'well organised' male teacher; and the fact that females in the department were gaining a higher profile, taking on more responsibility, and taking a greater part to decision-making. Still other women interviewed were of the opinion that although the image of the subject may be changing, its links with the world of sport preclude an increase in female leadership unless pre-empting modifications are made in terms of the kudos accorded female athletes and female sport in the wider society.

The fact that there have been only seven female Heads of Department in physical education in Western Australia is in itself a significant indicator of male dominance in the area. This originated due to the subject's close links with sport, historically a male domain, and has been perpetuated by the continued higher profile accorded to male sports, and the associated perceptions regarding the nature of physical education. Not one of the teachers interviewed in the study had ever worked with a female Head of Department. There is an expectation that the Head of Department will be male. This expectation exists not only among physical educators, but also other staff, the school administration, students and their parents, and society in general. A number of the women commented that it would require considerable courage and assertiveness to aspire to a promotional position in spite of the commonly held expectations of significant others.

Further, when female teachers had ignored these expectations and overstepped the boundary of their traditional role by taking on the leadership position, they were in many cases perceived rather negatively. A number of the participants in the study commented on the stigma attached to becoming a female Head of Department with reference to the uncharacteristic qualities and behaviours these females exhibit. Perhaps these female Heads of Department were seen as 'butch', 'aggressive', 'defensive', 'going a bit over-the-top', 'autocratic' and 'authoritarian' because the leadership role requires attributes beyond those considered 'feminine'. Whatever the underlying reasons for the negative perceptions regarding these women however, there is little doubt that the cumulative effect of the nature of physical education and the image associated with a female Head of Department, has deterred female teachers from applying for the position.

The issue of sexual harassment was also raised by a number of participants who felt it was an intimidating aspect of working with male physical educators. It was perceived as a greater problem in physical education compared with other subject

areas, due to the clothing worn by females, the 'physicality' of the subject, and the 'macho' attitudes of the males (Bloot, 1992).

Perhaps the Head of Department role in physical education is a particularly difficult leadership role because all the 'usual' disadvantages of being a female-in-charge are accentuated by the low status accorded physical education in many schools. Being the female leader of a traditionally male-dominated and lower status subject becomes a double disadvantage. A further reality which may deter women's promotional aspirations in this subject area is the competition that exists among teachers vying for the limited number of promotional positions. Despite the probability that female physical educators would rank highly on competitive characteristics compared with their counterparts in other subject areas, the fact that they are having to contend with male physical educators who are also highly competitive, in a male-dominated arena, would most likely result in the female stepping aside. Perhaps even the prospect of entering such a competition is intimidating for women, and therefore dampens any aspirations for advancement.

The unfortunate aspect of the situation is, that while such a lack of female leadership in physical education exists, male dominance in the area is perpetuated and women continue to be deterred from striving for promotion. Despite some optimism amongst physical educators regarding changes in stereotypical attitudes and expectations, the numerical evidence suggests that the impact of such change has been negligible.

### **Age Concerns**

An aspect of career development particularly relevant to physical education is age. For physical education teachers whose expertise is based on physical ability, the relationship between age and career is highly significant. According to Sikes (1988), it tends to be taken for granted that physical education teachers will stop

teaching in the subject area at around 40 years of age, and that many females in particular do not enjoy the image of an 'ageing' physical education teacher.

In a previous exploratory study (Bloom, 1992), almost all the female teachers interviewed indicated that age was an important consideration in determining the length of time spent teaching physical education, and a contributing factor to the underrepresentation of females at Head of Department level in the subject area. Physical education was in general perceived as an area for the young with enthusiasm, energy and sporting prowess, and therefore as a short-term career prospect. Teachers made a distinction between the old female and the old male physical educator. The age factor was perceived as far more crucial and relevant for females, probably a reflection of stereotypical attitudes and expectation, rather than biological differences between the sexes. A number of the women in the 40 to 60 years age range commented on the limitations that age imposes on teaching physical education in terms of the ability to demonstrate skills; the cumulative effect of years of exposure to the weather on appearance and health; and the general undesirable image of an 'old phys ed'. For the majority of women in this age range, there was a sense of urgency about finding a viable alternative to teaching physical education. Two Heads of Department, both aged 43, felt that the situation was changing, and that the number of so called 'old phys eders' was increasing. In the current economic climate, the security of a teaching position and the lack of appropriate alternatives were encouraging females to continue teaching physical education. Nevertheless, the overall perception was that age was a deterrent to women's promotional aspirations in physical education.

## Summary

From the literature review, 12 clusters of factors emerged as reasons contributing to the underrepresentation of women in promotional positions in education in



general, and more specifically, at Head of Department level in physical education. These included: policies and regulations; patriarchy within the system; gender-role stereotyping; the perceived male model of leadership; family responsibilities; mobility; the low promotional orientation of women; women's perceptions regarding promotion and leadership; women's lack of skills and experience; lack of encouragement and support; the image of physical education; and age concerns.

Many of the traditional explanations within the literature for women's low representation in promotional positions appear to be legacies from the 1960s and 1970s and are of less relevance today. According to Acker (1983), it is too simple to assume that lack of ambition and family responsibilities produce low commitment or lack of promotion among female teachers. The sequence of events and decisions is more complex. DeLyon and Mignioulo (1989) questioned the stereotypical assumption that men have greater career motivation than women and therefore automatically plan their careers more effectively. They also questioned why having full family and professional lives should disqualify women from being seriously considered for senior positions, suggesting that the focus should instead be on the way career structure, selection procedures and the assumptions of those involved in the appointments system discriminate against women. Sadker, Sadker and Klein (1991) indicated that recent research has identified "more subtle structural issues relating to assumptions about male leadership and new visions of leadership based on female and humanist principles" (p.284). Among these issues are double standards in terms of differential support and encouragement provided to female and male teachers; the 'tokenism' label assigned to women in status positions; and sex-related policy constraints and their debilitating effects on female careers.

Much of the research and commentary cited in this review is of North American or British origin, and relates to the lack of women in decision-making roles in education generally. Australian-based literature is meagre, and there has been little research conducted in the physical education area. An earlier exploratory study by

the researcher, investigating reasons for the underrepresentation of females at Head of Department level in physical education in Western Australian government secondary schools, concluded that the career decision-making of female physical education teachers is based on their personal career experiences, and that their positive or negative perceptions regarding promotion created from these experiences, either reinforce their promotional aspirations, or lead to self-limiting beliefs and values which deter their advancement. Gender-role stereotyping is largely responsible for the construction of these experiences by attributing particular behaviours, attitudes, values and beliefs to one sex rather than the other. Consequently, expectations about individuals are not based solely on their capabilities and personal qualities. Over and above such considerations is an overlay of expectations based on their sex. Men are expected to exhibit dominant behaviour and assume leadership roles and are encouraged and mentored towards this end, while women are not.

A summary of the reasons presented in the literature for the underrepresentation of females in promotional positions and at Head of Department level in physical education, together with the corresponding references, is provided in Appendix C.

## **MODELS OF LEADERSHIP**

Historically, literature has emphasised leadership as a form of individual action and capacities, ranging from charismatic views of leadership reliant upon personality and mystique in the 1960s, to contingency theories in the 1970s, and the notion of leaders as culture builders during the 1980s. The wider socio-economic context within which organisations are framed was treated as given and unproblematic. Post modernist thought tends to deregulate both institutions and individuals by rejecting universals in favour of discourses of difference.

Shakeshaft (1987) identified six stages in the literature on women in educational leadership. These comprised documentation of the lack of women in leadership positions in administration; identification of outstanding women in the history of school administration; investigation of women's place in the schools as either subordinate or disadvantaged; documentation of the 'female world' and study of women on their own terms; questioning of how theory might change to include women; and the transformation of theory to increase understanding of women's and men's experiences.

Schools, as organisations in the postmodern world, face a dilemma with regard to the nature of educational management. Whereas most recent management literature describes leaders as requiring a broad range of skills, which include caring, communication and facilitation, and building teams and organisations as learning communities, the system demands require executive decisions, financial management, rapid solutions, and accountability. This tension is particularly problematic for women, who are purported to favour the collegial, democratic management style, yet are faced with assuming an autocratic form of leadership in order to meet the demands of the system. Women generally are not seen to fit the entrepreneurial image, although in practice many female principals are extremely successful at this aspect (Blackmore, 1993).

Whilst researchers tend to be unanimous in their recognition of the danger of stereotypes, there is considerable debate as to whether women and men manage differently. Opinion is divided with regard to the existence of a distinctly feminine style of leadership. Proponents of gender differences, have tended to focus on one of the following attributions: biological justification for the psychological and behavioural differences between women and men; differences attributable to differential socialisation of males and females; and differences emergent from the differential status, power and authority accorded women and men in organisational life. Aspects of leadership style that have been highlighted as distinctly female

include interactive conversation; minimisation of conflict (Maltz & Borker, 1982; Tannen, 1991); attribution of blame for problems to themselves, as distinct from males who are more likely to blame the organisation and external forces (Martin & Smith, 1993); genuine interest in and concern for other staff and students within the organisation (Martin & Smith, 1993; Shakeshaft, 1986); and democratic and participatory approaches (Marshall, 1985; Shakeshaft, 1986).

Writers such as Gilligan (1982) and Long (1992) suggested that women possess different traits which result in a distinctive style of management. Their view is gender positive. They believe there is value and advantage in this diversity, encouraging an understanding of difference and a realisation of when difference matters. According to this school of thought, leadership has traditionally been defined from a white male perspective, and a gender positive environment may encourage other leadership perspectives. Shakeshaft (1986) proposed that:

...for women to be able to negotiate the world of white males is to be expected. They wouldn't have been selected for school administrators if they didn't comprehend and master the culture. In addition, however, they have knowledge of a female subculture and socialisation that they bring to the job. It is this world that researchers have failed to investigate when they have studied male and female differences, and their absence of knowledge of the female world has led them to assume that differences don't exist. (p. 167)

Others writers contend that there is no evidence to support the claim that women and men have different leadership styles. A large section of the literature (Milligan & Genoni, 1993; O'Leary & Ickovics, 1992; Sitterly & Duke, 1988) has suggested that the leadership style of women is similar to that of men, the only difference being the level of opportunity they experience. According to Colwill (1982), it is popular belief that has turned the two leadership dimensions into sex-role stereotypes. Men are expected to be high in initiating structure, and are supposedly task-orientated and assertive. Women are expected to be high in consideration, and are supposedly emotionally-orientated and supportive. Erickson (1985) suggested that women develop leadership styles which are neither 'masculine' nor 'feminine' but 'androgynous'; defined in terms of self rather than culture. Snodgrass (1985)

reported that traits such as interpersonal sensitivity relate more specifically to subordinate/superior relations, rather than being gender specific, concluding that those who are less powerful have a greater need to be aware of the feelings and reactions of their superiors in order to respond to their needs and acquire their favour. Many of today's leadership programs are based on the premise that while women may find it more difficult to reach top leadership positions, leadership traits in the organisations of the 1990s are nongender specific (Cahill, 1993, p.49). Two studies in the United Kingdom conducted by Weiner (1993), also led her to conclude that there was no evidence to suggest differences in the management styles of women and men. Instead, she suggested, leadership style is dependent on some or all of the following factors: value positions of the manager, ethos of the institution, specific conceptions of femininities and masculinities held by managers, and endemic patterns of inequality, underrepresentation and prejudice.

According to Colwill (1982), much of the confusion in early literature on leadership style can be explained by the ways in which research was conducted. It seems that sex differences in leadership style appeared mainly in studies in which people were thrust into supervisory roles for the purpose of the research. When the leadership styles of actual managers were examined, there were few sex differences. This suggests that men and women who make their own way up the organisational ladder do not really differ from each other as much as our sex-role stereotypes would predict they should (Colwill, 1982). Or perhaps only those women who match the characteristics of males in management positions are successful.

Billing and Alvesson (1989) proposed a framework for the consideration of women and leadership, comprising four perspectives: 'equal opportunity', 'meritocratic', 'special contribution' and 'radical alternative values'. The 'equal opportunities' perspective views women's underrepresentation as arising from fundamental social inequity and the result of structural and cultural conditions which favour males. One strand of thought within this perspective is that men and women are fundamentally

the same and would achieve the same if given the same conditions and starting point. Another strand argues that women are different because of their socialisation and therefore there is some degree of 'misfit' between women and the current management world. The implication is that women need to change to improve the 'fit'. Argument draws largely from issues of ethics and justice focusing on the fact that women are treated unfairly. Australian equal opportunities policy has been founded on this perspective which is largely informed by liberal feminism.

The 'meritocratic' perspective is closely aligned to and overlaps the equal opportunities perspective. Proponents of this perspective argue that society possesses a large pool of untapped talent which could be the source of new energy and ideas in management. Women's skills and capabilities are underutilised. This argument derives from neoclassical economics and human capital theory and is well exemplified in recent government policies which encourage women to enter nontraditional areas of work (Blackmore, 1993). The perspective is based on studies comparing male and female leadership which suggest that women's and men's behaviours as leaders are similar, all adopting a range of leadership styles from democratic to authoritarian. This is a more technocratic view premised upon the notion that organisations and merit are neutral, and on maximising resources for greater productivity. Gender is considered irrelevant. It is this perspective that underlies current initiatives encouraging women into management. The excess of 'good leaders' amongst the reduced male ranks in particular professions means management must address the feminisation of the workplace (Blackmore, 1993). The shortage of skilled labour in management gives rise to opportunities that previous demands for equality and justice could not (Ozga, 1993). It fails to address the issue of rectifying injustice, or of actually seeking to change management practices or cultures.

A third perspective is that of 'special contribution'. According to this view, women bring something different into leadership because of their experiences as mothers,

wives and community workers. Women are believed to influence leadership style, to reduce the hierarchical structure of organisations, and to change workplace climate. Support for this perspective comes from the increased number of women in the workplace and demands for recognition of their values. It also derives from psychological theory which sees motivation as stemming from sources other than economic reward. While not contradicting either of the previously mentioned approaches, this perspective challenges the gender neutrality of organisations and the individual competitiveness embedded within them. This view is reinforced by studies of women in educational management which have found that female principals are more interested in student and staff welfare, curriculum, and interpersonal relationships than finance (Adler 1993; Shakeshaft 1987).

The fourth perspective proposed by Billing and Alvesson (1989), is that of 'radical alternative values'. This viewpoint argues that there are fundamental differences between the sexes and that, due to socialisation, women and men adopt different value positions which are polar; they operate from a different version of rationality and responsibility. The perspective draws theoretically from the work of Gilligan (1988) and Chodorow (1978); from women's work cultures; and from moral and ethical theory. Gilligan (1988) considered there to be deeply embedded differences in the ways that women and men come to form an image of self and an associated basic moral position. For males, the self is formed primarily through a growing capacity to develop autonomy, detachment, objectivity and an accompanying sense of moral responsibility for others who are regarded as autonomous beings. Females develop a different image of self in relation to others. Rather than being grounded in individuality, her self emerges primarily through a growing capacity to develop empathy, attachments, compromises and self-transformation. Therefore, a woman's judgements are influenced more by the outcome for the relationship than the outcome for autonomous individuals. Whilst a number of these arguments overlap with the 'special contributions' perspective, this approach offers some explanation as to why many women choose not to enter leadership positions in management, preferring to

work in areas dealing with people. Blackmore (1993) suggested that women's choice in this regard can be seen as a passive way of rejecting or protesting against a particular male version of career. Evidence that both men and women practice a range of leadership styles from democratic to authoritarian is countered to some extent by the cultural feminist argument that although women's and men's leadership styles may not differ greatly, they tend to frame their leadership within a different world view about issues of morality and rationality; one focusing upon responsibility to others rather than individual rights. According to this perspective, women bring a view from the periphery which is threatening to existing organisational norms. However, the act of entering the male world of management leads to personal conflict and a sense of betrayal of women's values. The fear is that there will be co-option of women (Billing & Alvesson, 1989). The implication is that women should not engage in issues of leadership or power in organisations unless it is on their own terms, and that feminist discourse, although it may be subversive, can never expect to become dominant while it is co-opted by other more dominant male-orientated discourses within bureaucracies (Ferguson 1984). This position largely derives from the negative connotations many feminists associate with power, as necessarily 'power over', being corrupting and self-interested. According to Blackmore (1993), this is a limiting view of agency and how it works. It has problems for feminists working in education, most of whom wish to produce change and promote inclusive notions of equity for all students. One cannot select which students come through the door. Further, it presents an interesting paradox: the notion of a different morality and rationality suggests an even greater need for women to become leaders in order to promote a different perspective which males are incapable of presenting, yet they are less likely to do so because of their particular world view.

Perceptions regarding both the leadership styles of women and required leadership attributes by women, have crucial implications for female representation in decision-making positions. If organisations and institutions have historically developed from traditional patriarchal modes of organisation, then this is the



discourse that males are encouraged to enter as agents from their beginnings, while females have predominantly been the recipients of the discourse. However, during their education and work lives, many women, through the overt cultural practices of seeking equality, also tend to take up the position of agent in this discourse. They may have to prove themselves able to do this, as many men must, particularly men from minority groups, and they may have to do so with persistence and through showing great expertise. Yet the discourse is essentially masculine if not male. Long (1993) poses and answers the question: as women move into leadership, must they be transformed to fit the masculine discourse?

Interestingly the legislation of the early to mid-eighties to provide the possibility of equal opportunity and freedom from sexual harassment, which has enabled women to move more fully toward taking up agency or authority within this discourse, has simply provided an easier access for women to take up agency within the male discourse. It may be that a lot more has to be done in this direction, but maybe also the direction itself does not take women toward an understanding of what might be the feminine discourse, nor aid them in assuming agency in such a discourse at work. (p.128)

The other possibility is that our organisations themselves become transformed to accommodate feminine discourse and leadership styles.

According to Cahill (1993), leadership traits have not been static over time. Western society has traditionally upheld a strong belief in the formal or legal approach to authority in which all power flows from the top of the organisation downward through a hierarchical structure. However, this century has witnessed change in the nature and complexity of groups, from the family unit to large formal organisations, and this, impinges on all aspects of the functioning of women in leadership positions within an organisation. Blackmore (1993) suggested that there is a convergence in the management and feminist literature towards a view that women can offer new forms of leadership skills which are necessary for new forms of organisation. She did express concern however at the fact that this places feminists working in educational management in a problematic situation as they are seemingly seen to be 'co-opted' or in agreement with the wider ramifications of the

restructuring process, its politics and new corporate approaches to management. But whereas the motivation in management literature is to increase profit, the motivation of feminists is for greater equity.

As education tends not only to affect the society it serves, but also to be affected by that society, the bureaucratic, hierarchical type of educational leadership practice prevalent in the past is now yielding to a more person-centred and collegial approach (Cahill, 1993). A new range of leadership behaviours are necessary and women as leaders are seen to be bringing something different into leadership (Blackmore, 1993; Shakeshaft, 1986). Blackmore (1989) argued for a feminist reconstruction of the concept of leadership. This would include a view of power which is multidimensional and multidirectional; a form of leadership which aims to empower others, rather than have power over them. Yeatman (1992) spoke of women being positioned as 'change agents'. The concept of leader-as-person, male or female, is an important element in the quest for quality leadership styles through alternative models. A clear understanding of the context within which leadership is exercised is of prime importance. It is essential that the leader understands that 'the environment is people' (Greenfield, 1992). According to Cahill (1993), it is no longer acceptable to reify the institution, to see the organisation as a 'thing'. The 'department' is not a building but a group of people. The leader who fosters this group of people into a cohesive team committed to a common purpose, develops a powerful unit of collective performance.

While democratic and consultative approaches may in theory present a desirable alternative to traditional hierarchical and authoritarian education management practices, there may be problems associated with the practical application of these approaches in organisations as they presently exist. For example, female managers participating in a study conducted by Weiner (1993), highlighted the possible dangers of adopting such leadership styles. They related instances of some staff who deliberately set out to undermine them using subtle strategies such as questioning

every decision made, preferring to consult with other managers about areas of work which directly come under their brief. Weiner (1993) concluded that some women who consciously try to develop more collaborative and empowering leadership styles find that to do so is almost impossible. She suggested that genuine empowerment of colleagues, as defined by Blackmore (1989) and Grundy (1993), is only possible where an educational manager or leader has a commitment to challenging inequality, and some awareness of the structural and interpersonal factors which contribute to or minimise patterns and experiences of inequality.

## THE NATURE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Characteristics specific to physical education result in a unique set of circumstances which impinge upon the career development of female teachers in this subject area.

Physical education is a social construct, "a selection from culture which contains explicit and implicit values about appropriate missions, goals and objectives" (Dewar, 1985, p. 160). Like all school subjects, physical education constitutes an "ideological statement, a way of classifying, organising, legitimating and transmitting knowledge in society" (Evans & Davies, 1988, p.2), and like other subjects in the school curriculum, it is a site of struggle, a contest of, and for, competing definitions about what is to count as worthwhile knowledge; what the body, the individual, school and society ought to be. These values, assumptions and definitions held by individuals within and outside the profession guide, facilitate and constrain the work of teachers and shape their students' identities and behaviours. Physical education teachers tend to occupy a marginal status within schools and this has severe implications for their career opportunities and professional status. While individual teachers may in theory have equal access and opportunities for career advancement, they do not have equal status, or the social and professional resources to bring to the competitive stakes (Evans & Davies, 1988).

Nevertheless, physical education is a powerful social process which inevitably socialises as it skills. It contributes to establishing the rules of belonging to one's culture, gender and social class, and can and does have a lasting impact on individuals and their attitudes towards themselves and others (Evans & Davies, 1993). According to Hargreaves (1990), because the social processes of physical education centre on performance and the display of physical ability, relations and differences between individuals are accentuated and become more apparent than in other areas of the school curriculum.

Physical education's links with sport, its ideologies and their impact on gender construction, and its relegation to a marginal status within the overall school curriculum are all aspects which contribute to the influence of physical education on the development of identity and self-image.

### **Links with sport**

The nature of sport and its cultivation of male dominance and superiority (Boutilier & San Giovanni, 1983; Bray, 1988; Connell, 1985; Delano, 1990; Knoppers, 1989; O'Rourke, 1991; Theberge, 1985) has particular implications for physical education, and serves to exacerbate other factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in leadership in this area.

According to O'Rourke (1991), sport plays an important role in keeping women unequal, not just within the institution of sport itself, but more generally. Sport supports male dominance (Bray, 1988; O'Rourke, 1991). Historically, men in Western societies have co-opted sport as an essentially male activity. This is attributable to its origins in nineteenth century Britain, where the universal belief was that the sexes were different biologically and in terms of intellectual capabilities, and sport was promoted to enhance male identity, solidarity and exercise of power. The fact that there are still fewer women's sporting events is a

legacy of this earlier exclusion. Although some women today are given recognition as being competent in sport, this recognition tends to be provisional, and O'Rourke (1991) believed that most people accept that men are better at sport than women because they are stronger, faster and tougher. Sporting prowess is positively valued and associated with social acclaim and economic benefits. "'Better at sport' is readily translated into 'better at other things'" (p.7). Men, by implication, can be seen as more capable and skilful than women, at least in activities of importance.

Sport plays a key role at both the individual and societal levels in the construction and maintenance of the dominant form of masculinity (O'Rourke, 1991). Connell (1985) referred to this concept as 'hegemonic masculinity'. Boys are still taught that sport is a significant part of manliness and learn various skills and a sense of superiority, the need to be tougher and to bear pain. In this way sport provides direct training in a sense of power and forcefulness as well as promoting a sense of male solidarity. This has profound effects. Sport is the key medium for conveying messages of gender domination. Not only is it associated with physical power where men are accepted as having the natural advantage, but it is also an important and admired social activity (O'Rourke, 1991). "Sport as a male preserve...is an important cultural practice that contributes to the definition and re-creation of gender inequality" (Theberge, 1985, p.194). According to Boutilier and San Giovanni (1983), sport for boys serves the functions of socialising them into the male gender role, and denigrating women and femininity.

Griffin (1989) suggested that to frame the problem of a lack of female leaders in physical education as one of simply providing equal access, failed to question the structure of sport and physical education and the meaning they have in a male-dominated society. Historically, men in Western societies have co-opted sport as an essentially male activity, believing that the sexes were different biologically and in terms of intellectual capabilities. Sport was promoted to enhance male identity, solidarity and exercise of power. With the entrance and visibility of female athletes,

the nature of sport as a gendered activity has changed, and mere participation by males has become insufficient to establish their superiority. Therefore, by holding on to the leadership positions in sport, men are still able to demonstrate their dominance over women.

This is strongly reflected in physical education at secondary school level. In Australia, teaching physical education tends to be directly linked with sporting ability, and physical educators are seen as physical people who play sport proficiently. The stereotype of the male is a 'macho' image, and the female stereotype promotes vigour and athleticism, and is one in which the female has placed herself outside the weak and submissive stereotype of femininity.

Delano (1990) suggested three approaches to the analysis of the problem of underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in physical education and sport. First the individual approach which ignores social forces, and blames women for their perceived inadequacies, lack of expertise and failure to apply for promotion. This approach focuses on internalised gender roles, role conflict and choices made. Secondly, the 'micro-structural' approach in which the established pattern of human relationships in specific organisations are called into question. Possible reasons given for the lack of women in sport leadership are success of the 'old boys' network', occupational socialisation, occupational segregation and the fact that women receive less support and encouragement. This approach tends to ignore the extent to which male dominance is institutionalised in sport. Finally, the 'macro-structural/ideological' approach which involves a more global view of the problem, taking into account the pervasive ideologically-linked negative stereotypes about women's capabilities in leadership, a double workload, and the maintenance of the status of sport as a male preserve. Sport has traditionally been seen as a place where sexist versions of masculinity are constructed and maintained, and is therefore not perceived as the proper place for women, particularly in positions of leadership in authority over men. This approach views sexism as a structural and

ideological phenomenon which influences the underrepresentation of women in sport leadership. It is the latter approach which has been adopted for this study.

### **Construction of gender**

Physical education is deeply gendered in "ideology, content, teaching methods and through its relationship with the wider dance and sport contexts" (Talbot, 1993, p.74). According to Vertinsky (1992), until recently, physical educators have generally played a larger role than nature in differentiating between genders. She believes that Rousseau's view of biology, as the root of gender role assignment and as the justification for separate educational arrangements based on male power and dominance and female frailty and constraint, has clung tenaciously to physical education. Of all school subjects, physical education, with its central focus on the body, has been most strongly influenced by traditional understandings of ineradicable biological differences between females and males and the social roles assigned to each gender as a supposed consequence of biology. Dewar (1987) has elaborated on this point by noting that "...physical education is an unusual and intriguing area in which to explore constructions of gender in the curriculum, because it is one of the few subjects in the curriculum that has provided patriarchal ideology with an opportunity to present itself as biological fact rather than as a social construction" (p. 41). The strong links between physical education and sport have resulted in a focus on performance outcomes in activities where male-defined standards of power and strength dominate. Physical education has thus been "...able to buttress and legitimate the view that women, because of their biology, go slower, and lower, and are weaker than men" (Vertinsky, 1992, p. 269).

Feminist social and cultural historians confirm that the question of biology has been central to the issue of female involvement in sport and exercise, and that girls' assumed biological differences and limitations relative to boys' have steadfastly been

used to regulate their exercise patterns and exclude them from particular sports and sporting arenas (Boutilier & San Giovanni, 1983; Vertinsky, 1990). It has served male interests to stress these differences while ignoring the more numerous obvious similarities between the sexes. Cockburn (1983) explained how "small biological differences are turned into bigger physical differences which themselves are turned into the gambits of social, political and ideological power play...women are first tendered weak; their weakness is transformed into vulnerability; and vulnerability opens the way to intimidation and exploitation. It is difficult to exaggerate the scale and longevity of the oppression that has resulted" (p. 204).

Further, the historical 'medicalisation' of the female body has been an important process for asserting patriarchal control and contesting females' claims for ownership of their bodies (Vertinsky, 1990). Medically-defined notions of optimal female health and individual and social well-being have long justified the practice of portraying normal female physiological functions such as menstruation and pregnancy as problematic; indicative of the intrinsic frailty of females in comparison to men.

Sport has been an important organising institution for the embodiment of masculinity through its suppression of natural gender similarities, construction of differences between men and women, and the 'naturalisation' of these differences by establishing structures of symbol and interpretation around them (Messner & Sabo, 1990, p. 214). The traditional channelling of males into 'masculine' sports of speed and power and females into 'feminine' sports and rhythmical activities, such as dance and gymnastics, has maximised gender differences and entrenched a masculine-feminine dichotomy (Vertinsky, 1992). Boys' physical education was designed to play a pivotal role in the development and construction of masculinity; presenting a medium through which sports provided the force, skill and competence to turn a boy into a man; gave him a competitive edge and a teamwork mentality for the corporate boardroom; a sense of initiative and control; and built in him the physical fitness to



be a productive citizen and soldier (Fitsclarence, 1987). By contrast, the activities traditionally offered to girls emphasised cooperation over competition, restricted their space, reduced their speed, and constrained their bodies. Femininity was constructed by emphasising sociability, health, and beauty functions that focused not on skilled and competitive performance but on womanly play and the body as a reproductive machine and sexual object (Vertinsky, 1992).

Explanations for the existence of distinct sets of female and male characteristics fall into two areas. First is the attribution to 'natural differences' which are accepted as biologically-determined. Scraton (1992) reported that the majority of female teachers involved in her study used this as justification for their differential programming for girls and boys. She expressed her surprise regarding this interpretation, stating that the reality was so obviously different. Her research observations confirmed that the physical differences within one sex were far greater and more obvious than those between sexes. The second explanation highlights social tradition and cultural determination as more significant in creating gender differences in physical ability and capacity (Connell, 1987; Dyer, 1986; Arnot & Weiner, 1987). On the basis of her interview material, Scraton (1992) concluded that "common-sense assumptions and stereotypes concerning girls' and boys' physical abilities and capabilities have significant consequences for the teaching of physical education and result in gender-differentiated practices. The historical legacy, together with powerful contemporary common-sense assumptions result in the institutionalisation of gender policies, priorities and practices" (p. 50).

According to Evans and Davies (1993), it is not possible to effectively deal with gender issues without considering the social dynamic which constitutes the construction of female and male identities. Altering women's access to promotional positions in physical education necessitates treatment of the way in which both females and males think about themselves and each other.

Scruton (1990) pointed out that powerful gender ideologies are created by the internalisation of gender images and ideas, reinforcing the means by which gender differences came to be taken for granted. Gender divisions in physical education cannot therefore be understood solely as practices of differentiation, they must also be recognised in the ideological underpinnings of the subject. She highlighted the three concepts of motherhood, based on the historically distinct gender assumptions related to the aims of physical education; sexuality, in which the conceptions of femininity and masculinity demarcate clear boundaries which are reinforced by separate and different opportunities afforded to females and males; and physicality, incorporating ideas about the biology, physiology and psychology of women which come to define 'womanhood'.

According to Connell (1987, p.43), physical education is structured by hegemonic masculinity or the "maintenance of practices that institutionalise men's dominance over women" and define women as weak, passive, and submissive. Unfortunately, women in authority also form part of the hegemonic process and, as demonstrated through Scruton's (1992) research, can be significant agents in the conveyance of gender ideology.

However, from the critical perspective, gender should not be perceived as static, pre-given and experienced as a common, universal form. Although gender is reproduced through the institution of physical education and hegemonic masculinity, there are aspects of physical education which involve resistance and negotiation to the structures of gender (Scruton, 1992). All women do not passively accept the definitions of femininity which place them in a weaker and physically subordinate position, neither are teachers all passive agents within a process of cultural reproduction. In their responses and practices, some women negotiate stereotypes and encourage others to challenge 'femininity'. This highlights the need for a cultural analysis which allows for those involved to resist, negotiate and perhaps

even transform the institution of physical education and ultimately the structures of gender.

To frame the problem of female underrepresentation in senior positions in physical education as one of simply equal access, fails to question the structure of sport and physical education and the meaning they have in a male-dominated society. Important considerations include the socio-historical context; the differential power relationships among different social groups by sex, race and class; and perspectives and experiences of women in a male-dominated society (Griffin, 1989; Hall, 1990; Scraton, 1990; Vertinsky, 1992). Griffin (1989) proposed a framework for the discussion of gender socialisation in physical education comprising four perspectives: gender as a performance variable; gender as an issue of sex difference; gender as a perspective from which sport performance and interest differences in women and men are not biologically based, but the result of inequitable distribution of resources, opportunities and rewards in sport; and gender as a socially constructed set of power relations in which the function of gender is to perpetuate a male-dominated society. It is the latter perspective that has been adopted for this study.

### **Marginality of the subject area**

Teachers receive messages regarding their worth and the extent to which they are valued in the overall school structure, from the context in which they work. Louis and Smith (1990), drawing on organisational socialisation literature, identified seven criteria which act as indicators of a quality worklife environment: respect from relevant adults; participation in decision-making; frequent and stimulating professional interaction; a high sense of efficacy; use of skills and knowledge; resources to carry out the job; and goal congruence. Relative to these criteria, an investigation of the workplace conditions of 11 high school physical education

teachers by O'Sullivan and Dyson (1994), revealed that the participants received little respect from relevant adults; had few professional interactions within their school setting; were not always able to use their skills and knowledge about physical activities due to program restrictions; and although able to make decisions, these were usually enacted only in the teachers' own classroom settings. Numerous studies have reported similar findings with regard to physical educators' feelings of marginalisation, lack of support from administrators, and lack of respect for their subject area from colleagues and parents (O'Sullivan, Seidentop & Tannehill, 1994; Sparkes, Templin & Schempp, 1993; Stroot, Collier, O'Sullivan & England, 1993; Templin, 1989).

The fact that many perceive physical education to be of lower status compared with other subject areas, and as a troubled department, lacking leadership, direction and support from the administration within the school, has important implications for the career opportunities and professional status of women in the department (Evans & Davies, 1988; Templin, 1988). Being the female leader of a traditionally male-dominated and lower status subject becomes a double disadvantage.

## THE SOCIALISATION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATORS

Schools are work organisations which attempt to socialise their members. Within the cultural context of schools, teachers learn appropriate behaviours (Dodds, 1989; Lawson, 1989). A school's culture is largely unwritten and consists primarily of deeply embedded assumptions about the school and its functions, which are accepted and professed by experienced and powerful school personnel. While all teachers may learn the culture, some will not accept it or internalise it (Lawson, 1989).

Research on the socialisation of physical education teachers conducted over the past two decades illustrates a shift from a functionalist to a dialectic perspective. The

functionalist framework suggests that individuals are products of society, socialised to fit social structures and thereby maintain social order and stability. Such a view does not address failure, deviance or nonconformity, and has created the 'oversocialised conception of man' (Templin & Schempp, 1989). In contrast, the dialectic perspective of socialisation represents the individual as an active agent capable of producing and creating rather than simply reproducing the expected and familiar. This view advocates the constant interplay between individuals, societal influences, and the institutions into which they are socialised, as individuals negotiate their beliefs, behaviours and perceptions. However, although individuals enjoy agency or the power to act, only a few possess power over resources resulting from power in structures. The shortfalls of social psychological views of socialisation such as the Wisconsin Model is the underestimation or neglect of the effects of social structure on the life chances and experiences of individuals, and the corresponding assumption that the institutional order allows equal and unencumbered access by all persons. It is therefore essential that research not only generates understanding regarding agency and the social 'construction' of reality, but also that it attends to the social 'constitution' of reality, particularly in the ways that agency is facilitated, constrained or prevented, and the reasons why (Lawson & Stroot, 1993).

Much of the research in the physical education area has focused on three primary socialisation phases, namely : recruitment to teaching or pretraining socialisation; professional preparation or professional socialisation; and the influence of the school setting and related education agencies on organisational socialisation (Schempp & Graber, 1992; Templin & Schempp, 1989). Although each of these interrelated phases of socialisation will be addressed in this study, major consideration will be given to events which take place in the school setting, and the attempt to locate individual experiences in this context in the wider political and sociocultural framework. Five assumptions about the socialisation of physical education teachers have been proposed by Lawson (1983), namely : socialisation is a lifelong process;

operations in physical education are institutionalised, and are therefore instruments of social control not social change; socialisation is problematic rather than automatic; prospective and experienced teachers face acculturation, professional socialisation and organisational socialisation, often simultaneously; and judgements regarding what is effective or functional socialisation are inherently ideological and reflect the custodial or innovative orientations of the 'judges' (p.4).

Zeichner and Gore (1990) suggested that politics, traditions, power and personalities construct a school culture that the teacher must assimilate, and that this process of assimilation and the influence of these factors remain largely unexplored in research literature. According to Lawson and Stroot (1993), there is a need for researchers to examine their own values, the values perpetuated within social contexts, and the values within the society to determine how both researchers and teachers might come to understand and improve experiences in schools. They proposed that interpretive and critical paradigms may provide improved perspectives and support appropriate methodologies with which to gather information regarding the socialisation process.

It is essential that socialisation be viewed from a macroperspective as well as a microperspective (Stroot & Williamson, 1993). The dialectic view acknowledges the historical, political and social contexts in which the socialisation process is embedded, and highlights the differential power sources available to individuals to create, negotiate and contest their professional identities and career paths in schools. "Research provides a powerful form of engagement that can widen women's awareness of the structural realities of their lives, including the ways that the socialising process conditions them to accept masculinised images of schooling, to accept/tolerate discrimination, and to undervalue themselves in teaching" (Sparkes, Templin & Schempp, 1993, p. 392).

This study embraces the need for a dialectic perspective on the socialisation of female physical education teachers in order to take account of historical, political

and social impacts on their experiences, and the contexts in which these women negotiate their beliefs, behaviours and perceptions.

## **TEACHER CAREERS AND PROMOTION IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The definition of career has been interpreted in many ways, but is typically defined in terms of two characteristics: occupational mobility through a series of related positions, and participation and commitment to a line of work (Templin, 1988). According to Ball and Goodson (1985), there are both subjective and objective dimensions to a career in teaching. "By definition, individual careers are socially constructed and individually experienced over time. They are subjective trajectories through historical periods and at the same time contain their own organising principles and distinct phases. However, there are important ways in which individual careers can be tied to wider political and economic events" (p.11).

Teachers' careers are structured by ideologies that influence and differentially define the position and status of females and males (Evans & Williams, 1989). Opportunities for advancement are constrained by sex, social class and the occupational status of the subject area, and extend across schools to provide structural advantages for certain groups and disadvantages for others (Acker, 1989; Ball, 1987). In the physical education context, Burgess (1988) provided research evidence concerning the inequity of career prospects for females and males. Similar evidence was provided by Evans and Williams (1989), who confirmed a gender differentiation in terms of access to, and maintenance of, key power positions in physical education. It is predominantly the male physical education teacher who successfully moves into decision-making roles.

According to Ball (1987), women teachers may validly be regarded as a distinct interest group within the school, because the overall pattern of their career development is so different from that of men. Women and men have different

physiological and biological careers, which carry different social interpretations and identities (Sikes, 1988). Many women have to manage two careers, paid and unpaid, which has important implications for how women are perceived in schools and concomitantly for their occupational careers. Further, research findings have indicated that there are gender differences in perspectives about self, and self in relation to others. Women tend to perceive self in the context of connection with and responsiveness to others, while for men, their sense of self is created by differentiating themselves from others in terms of abilities and attributes. This relational component is an important influence in identity and personality development, and must therefore be considered in career development theories (Forrest & Mikolaitis, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Lyons, 1983). The implicit power of developmental concerns to define how women see the world, their choices and their opportunities, renders these concerns a critical part of recognising the distinct nature of women's careers (Gallos, 1989). The fact that women's career development is characterised by attachment to significant others also has implications for the impact that these significant others' expectations will have on the aspirations of women.

While there have been a number of studies of careers in physical education (Evans, 1986; Locke, Griffin & Templin, 1986; Sikes, 1986; Williams, 1988), these have tended to focus exclusively on males. Evans and Williams (1989) acknowledged that "We have hardly begun to touch the surface of the process in which the identities of men and women are constructed and constrained in the process of physical education, in which their identities and opportunities are structured by the conditions of their work and the ideologies that prevail within them" (p. 238). The data from research to this point are not sufficiently qualitative to allow full exploration of how, in particular circumstances, individual teachers experience or attempt to challenge and improve their conditions of work (Evans & Williams, 1989; Sikes, 1988; Templin, 1988).



## SUMMARY

This review began by investigating the underrepresentation of women in promotional positions in education generally, and in the subject area of physical education in particular, firstly addressing evidence in the literature regarding the dominance of males in authority. The significance of such a sex imbalance in decision-making roles was then considered in terms of implications for curriculum and policy development and implementation, role modelling and subject image. Suggested reasons for the lack of women in senior positions in education and physical education were then examined to reveal 12 clusters of contributing factors: policies and regulations, patriarchy within the education system, gender-role stereotyping, the perceived male model of leadership, family responsibilities, mobility, the low promotional orientation of women, women's perceptions regarding leadership and promotion, women's lack of skills and experience, lack of encouragement and support, the image of physical education, and age concerns. An investigation of models of leadership followed, focusing on the perceived differing management styles of women and men.

The review concluded with a more specific examination of the nature of physical education in terms of its links with sport, the construction of gender within the subject area, and its marginalised status in schools; the socialisation of physical education teachers; and teacher careers and promotion in physical education.

Critical questions relating to the primary source of women's underrepresentation in decision-making roles have led to two main feminist stances which are now well documented (Arnot, 1985; Delamont, 1990; Weiner, 1985, 1990). Firstly, the 'equal opportunities' or 'implementary' approach which tends to advocate change within the system, such as greater opportunity of access and of representation, and changing stereotypical images; and secondly the 'antisexist' approach (Acker et al., 1984; Weiner, 1990; Gerwitz, 1991) which advocates changing unequal power relations in society between men and women. The former stance is concerned with

issues focusing on socialisation and challenging discriminatory practices and has led to policies of accessibility and entitlement, while the latter has led to policies of empowerment, which, it is claimed, deal with the causes, rather than the symptoms of injustice and inequality. At the heart of this approach is the recognition of a power structure whereby women are placed in a subordinate position. In practice many of the policies of the two approaches come together and differences are blurred (Weiner, 1990).

From the literature it is clear that critique regarding the absence of women at Head of Department level in physical education must move the analysis of gender beyond questions of distribution to questions of relation, with gender defined as a set of socially-constructed power relationships subject to historical change and hence amenable to transformation (Hall, 1990). This demands that gender be analysed within a framework that locates gender inequality in the culturally-constructed expectations and social relations of exercise and sport, rather than in biological and behavioural differences between women and men. Its attribution to stereotyped notions of femininity and masculinity perpetuate inequality (Talbot, 1993; Vertinsky, 1992). Emerging radical feminist analyses demand that the links between sport, femininity, and sexuality be examined, along with the ways in which female sporting participation is constrained by sexism and heterosexist assumptions (Lenskyj, 1990, 1991; Scraton, 1992).

This literature review provided the basis for the theoretical framework presented in the chapter to follow, and informed the development of the conceptual framework which guided the research design of this study.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework guides investigation in accordance with a particular perception of reality and is based on previous research, others' beliefs and values, and personal values (Field & Morse, 1985). Further, data analysis is heavily shaped by the theoretical framework within which the research is conducted (Patton, 1990). This study investigates the impact of the expectations of significant others in the secondary school setting on the promotional aspirations of female physical educators, in order to discover how meanings and expectations are constructed and negotiated; to sensitise participants to the construction and impact of these expectations, so that they may make more informed decisions regarding their actions and their life choices; and to develop recommendations for appropriate initiatives to redress the current imbalance in female leadership in physical education.

Consequently, the theoretical perspective on which the proposed study is based is a critical one. The goal of critical research is to understand the patterns of belief and social conditions that restrict human actions, and to provide those being researched with the insight necessary to 'demystify' and critique their own social circumstances and to choose actions to improve their lives (Lather, 1986a). Therefore, it is designed to provide a critique of the 'status quo' (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

The critical perspective has much in common with the interpretive paradigm in that it views the social world from a position which tends to be "nominalist, anti-positivist, voluntarist and ideographic" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p.32). However, it moves beyond this approach through a frame of reference committed to a view of society which emphasises the importance of overcoming the limitations of existing social arrangements, so that individuals can realise their full potential. What essentially distinguishes critical theory is its moral imperative and its

emphasis on the need for both individual empowerment and social transformation (Weiler, 1988). According to Kincheloe and McLaren (1994):

Inquiry that aspires to the name critical must be connected to an attempt to confront the injustice of a particular society or sphere within the society. Research thus becomes a transformative endeavour... Whereas traditional researchers cling to the guard rail of neutrality, critical researchers frequently announce their partisanship in the struggle for a better world. Traditional researchers see their task as the description, interpretation, or reanimation of a slice of reality, whereas critical researchers often guard their world as a first step towards forms of political action that can redress the injustices found in the field site or constructed in the very act of research itself. (p. 139)

The central assumptions ascribed to a critical approach as summarised by Candy (1989), include the following:

- much human action is outside the conscious control of personal agency, and is embedded in social conditions beyond the consciousness of the actors involved;
- any interpretive explanation makes sense against a background of social rules, practices and beliefs, and consequently there is a 'logic of situation' which differs from the 'logic of causes';
- unless research is restricted to merely recording participants' interpretations and understandings, it inevitably involves the reformulating of events or expressions which is an act of construction rather than of discovery;
- researchers make use of expert knowledge that potentially sets them apart from the participants in the research, and gives them access to interpretive perspectives not accessible to the people being studied; and

- human agency may be constrained by social rules, constitutive meanings of the social order and by traditions within the system, and the central focus of uncovering such constraints through research is one of human liberation and emancipation.

Further, the broader social categories of structure and agency are seen as dialectic aspects of the interrelated notions of both reproduction and resistance. Social structures and knowledge are viewed as socially-constructed and therefore open to contestation and change (Weiler, 1988). While the intended role of the school as a mechanism of social reproduction and a site of cultural reproduction; its relationship to the wider society; and the realities of class and gender relations in terms of power and control must be acknowledged, it is also essential to recognise the acts of resistance, negotiation, and contestation of individuals in the production of meaning and culture.

Critical research requires researchers to construct their perception of the world anew, not just in random ways but in a manner that undermines what appears natural, that opens to question what appears obvious (Slaughter, 1989). It focuses on the interactions and negotiations through which people reciprocally define expectations regarding appropriate behaviour, by examining and interpreting such expectations within the social, political and cultural contexts in which they occur. The meaning of any experience depends on the struggle over the interpretation and definition of that experience (Giroux, 1983; McLaren, 1986; Weiler, 1988).

Specific to this investigation, the socialisation of physical education teachers into gender roles and the construction of expectations regarding leadership in the subject area is viewed as problematic rather than as a neutral process. The present underrepresentation of females at Head of Department level is seen as historically produced and socially-constructed. The expectations of significant others, which are perceived by female physical educators as a deterrent to their promotional

aspirations, have been examined in the context in which they occurred. The intention was to centre and make problematic female physical educators' diverse situations, and the institutions and frames that influence those situations, in order to identify ways in which women create meaning and experience life from their position in the social hierarchy.

The critical paradigm has been adopted in response to two major criticisms directed at the interpretive approach to social research. Firstly, that the interpretive tradition seeks objectivity and value-free inquiry, therefore reducing the researcher to a passive role, and the subject of the research to an 'object' of research, which has been one of the criticisms of positivism (Candy, 1989; Jennings, 1985; Schwandt, 1994). Secondly, that merely describing a situation from the perspective of the participants, no matter how systematically, ignores the fact that there are certain external features of social reality which are influential in shaping that reality, of which the participants may not be aware (Candy, 1989; Carr & Kemmis, 1983; Murphy, 1986; Scruton, 1992). While research on teachers' perceptions is important in that it describes how teachers hold and promote expectations based on stereotypes, and serves to demonstrate that these expectations are generalised constructions which inform and influence behaviour, it fails to give an adequate account of the power relations involved. Critical research looks beyond the perceptions held by individuals, to the factors which influence such perceptions, since "the very process whereby one interprets and defines a situation is itself a product of the circumstances in which one is placed" (Cohen & Manion, 1985, p. 38). Whereas interpretive approaches may reveal misconceptions and confusion, describing situations while leaving them unaltered, the intent of critical theory is to understand the relations among value, interest and action, and to initiate change (Popkewitz, 1984).

While acknowledging the need for a critique of the 'status quo' in the sex imbalance in physical education leadership, and therefore a need to move beyond an interpretive

perspective, the critical paradigm as adopted for this study is qualified by rejecting the notion of a need for total restructuring of existing social systems as a requirement for improving the position of disadvantaged individuals. While it is essential that policy does not remain locked into an 'equal opportunity approach', it should be acknowledged that some equal opportunity initiatives have represented an important political response to generations of limitations on women in all aspects of education.

The study has adopted a perspective which takes into account the pragmatic reality of attempting to change the schooling system, by recommending modifications to current structures and systematic and rational change within existing frameworks. That is, I recognise the futility of proposing massive restructuring that has no chance of acceptance by the Education Department and which would therefore be ineffectual in altering the present circumstances regarding the underrepresentation of females at Head of Department level in physical education. Instead, the research will create awareness of the nature, construction and impact of the expectations of significant others amongst both female and male participants, thereby empowering individuals to instigate change from 'within'; and on the other hand make recommendations regarding appropriate action to redress the present inequities to the Education Department and teacher education institutions to inform systemic initiatives.

## **THEORETICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS**

The way in which we analyse and interpret data is not only conditioned by the way it is theoretically framed, but is also dependent upon the researcher's own ideological assumptions (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994). Guba and Lincoln (1989) argued that the observer cannot and should not be neatly disentangled from the observed in the activity of inquiry. Hence the findings of outcomes of an inquiry are themselves a

often unwittingly, implicated in the reproduction of systems of class, race and gender oppression.

It is crucial according to Carspecken (1993), that researchers recognise where they are ideologically located in the normative and identity claims of others, and at the same time are honest about their own subjective referenced claims to prevent normative evaluative claims interfering with what is observed. "Thus critical researchers enter into an investigation with their assumptions on the table, so no one is confused concerning the epistemological and political baggage they bring with them to the research." (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994, p.140)

In the present study, which adopts the critical perspective, the research methodology is qualitative, the inquiry is value-bound and the inquirer/respondent relationship interrelated. It is therefore both necessary and important to describe my background and assumptions.

During 15 years as a physical education teacher in Western Australian government secondary schools, I have taught across the spectrum of courses offered within physical education: sport, health education, physical recreation and outdoor education. When offered acting Head of Department positions, I chose not to accept them. This was a conscious decision as I had always seen my future beyond face to face teaching and yet not in administration. Instead, I chose to broaden my career opportunities through curriculum development and consultancy work for the Secondary Education Authority, and postgraduate studies. It was not until returning to study that I developed an awareness of, and interest in, the sex imbalance in leadership in physical education. In 1992, I completed a Master of Education by thesis investigating this issue.

Through personal contextual experience, extensive reading and exploratory research in the area of reasons for the underrepresentation of females in decision-making roles, it was inevitable that I approached the study with a collection of beliefs and



assumptions that impacted on the research design and interpretation of findings. Having outlined the theoretical perspective of the investigation, the following theoretical and philosophical assumptions which may have influenced the research should also be made explicit :

- Socialisation is a complex cumulative lifelong process, focusing on the interplay between individuals, societal influences, and the institutions into which they are socialised, and therefore must be seen within the contexts in which it is negotiated and experienced. It is a dialectic process, that is, a negotiation between a social system and an individual. Teachers are active agents in their socialisation, deciding which beliefs and behaviours are acceptable and will be acquired, and which will be ignored.
- Schools are sites of ideological struggle in which there is contestation and competition over material advantage and vested interest, and in which power is unevenly distributed amongst members. Because the 'contest' between individual and institution is not always balanced in terms of power, the 'dialectic' is often contested in forms other than direct opposition. Passive resistance, noncompliance, indirect negotiation and withdrawal are possible outcomes.
- Sport represents an arena in which male dominance has been, and still is, reinforced and perpetuated. The close links between sport and physical education have led to similar perceptions regarding this subject area, which has a history of male dominance, a male perspective and consequently, a masculine image.
- The underrepresentation of females at Head of Department level in physical education is a gender-based phenomenon. Gender is a socially-constructed set of power relations which serve to preserve a male-dominated society, and a patriarchal education system. This perpetuates the male perspective and

expectations of male leadership in schools and is a significant deterrent to female promotion.

- Expectations about individuals are not based solely on their capabilities and personal qualities. Over and above such considerations are expectations based on their sex, and these are backed by sanctions expressing acceptance or disapproval of particular behaviours and attitudes.
- The differentiation of men and women and their investment with rigidly separated predispositions, desires and emotions is not an expression of an underlying 'natural order', but rather a series of complex social artefacts. These processes are neither arbitrary nor immutable, and can be influenced, challenged and contested (Evans & Davies, 1993, p. 3).
- The expectations of significant others are perceived by female physical educators as a deterrent to their promotional aspirations. The framework of attitudes and ideas which causes most people to judge females according to male criteria, imposes restrictions on females' perceptions regarding promotion.
- Despite societal changes, the gradual impact of less discriminatory Education Department policies and regulations, the promulgation of equal opportunity legislation, and the implementation of affirmative action policies, many legacies of past policy, male dominance in leadership, and stereotypical expectations regarding 'female' roles remain firmly entrenched. Unless equal opportunity policies are accompanied on the one hand by programs to bring about attitudinal changes in men, and on the other hand by a willingness to modify the system so that the female perspective is valued equally with that of the male, then any real change in the circumstances of females will be slow, if it occurs at all.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework, derived from the theoretical background, should indicate the interaction or interrelationship between the concepts and constructs under consideration in the research. This conceptual framework has been developed from a combination of the findings of a previous exploratory study completed by me in 1992, a review of the relevant literature, and personal observation and experience in the area of investigation.

Although the socialisation of physical educators was not the focus of this study, it is recognised that this process is a vital underlying construct in the development of the identity, beliefs, values, expectations and aspirations of individuals. As such, the socialisation process constituted an integral, though implicit consideration during both data collection and analysis. I recognise that the traditional notion of 'socialisation' may lead to problems of determinism and ignorance of the immediacy of social contexts which influence the choice of behavioural stances. 'Therefore, 'the socialised' were viewed as active participants rather than objects of repression or domination, and socialisation recognised as a relationship between people, rather than an unchallenged, unidimensional process.

To understand the construction of the expectations of significant others in the secondary school setting, and the impact these expectations have on the promotional aspirations of female physical educators, it is essential to examine the dialectic that takes place between individuals and the social system within which they function. This socialisation process is problematic rather than automatic, and represents the individual as an active agent capable of not only reproducing, but also of creating meanings. It focuses on the constant interplay between individuals, societal influences, and the institutions into which they are socialised. Therefore, while persons are constrained by social and structural limitations, they play an important part in shaping their identities, and may act in ways that contradict the norms and values that pervade the social setting. An important consideration is that individuals

differ in the various resources they bring to bear during interactions, and the fact that not all resources have equal legitimacy of power in influencing the behaviour of others.

The socialisation of the female physical educator is an ongoing process that includes experiences beginning in early childhood through interaction with socialising agents in the home environment. It continues in the school context through studentship experiences; in sport through participation and competition; in the tertiary education setting through teacher training; and through teaching experiences in a variety of school contexts. Through this socialisation process, the female teacher constructs values, beliefs and meanings in relation to her role as teacher, including the gender-roles implicit in the organisational structure of physical education departments and schools.

The expectations of significant others in the school setting are also constructed and shaped through socialisation. There are characteristics associated with stereotypical views of femininity and masculinity which strongly reinforce the expectations of what is appropriate for women and men. Expectancy inputs including the patriarchal nature of society, school organisational norms and values, the male model of leadership, gender-role stereotypes, the nature of sport and its links with physical education, and past experiences with female leaders, are 'filtered' by significant others in accordance with variables such as their personal knowledge, beliefs and values. These are communicated to female physical educators through verbal and behavioural interactions. Such expectations, like all other socialising factors, are interpreted by the female teacher, based on her personal knowledge, values, beliefs and meanings, and the characteristics of the significant other. These function as a filter through which interactions are judged.

The expectations expressed by significant others, as perceived by the female physical educator, impact on her career development and aspirations to the Head of Department position. Her choice of action serves to either reaffirm original

expectations, or prompt a reassessment of expectations, which may or may not be altered as a result. Figure 1 provides a diagrammatic representation of the conceptual framework for the study.

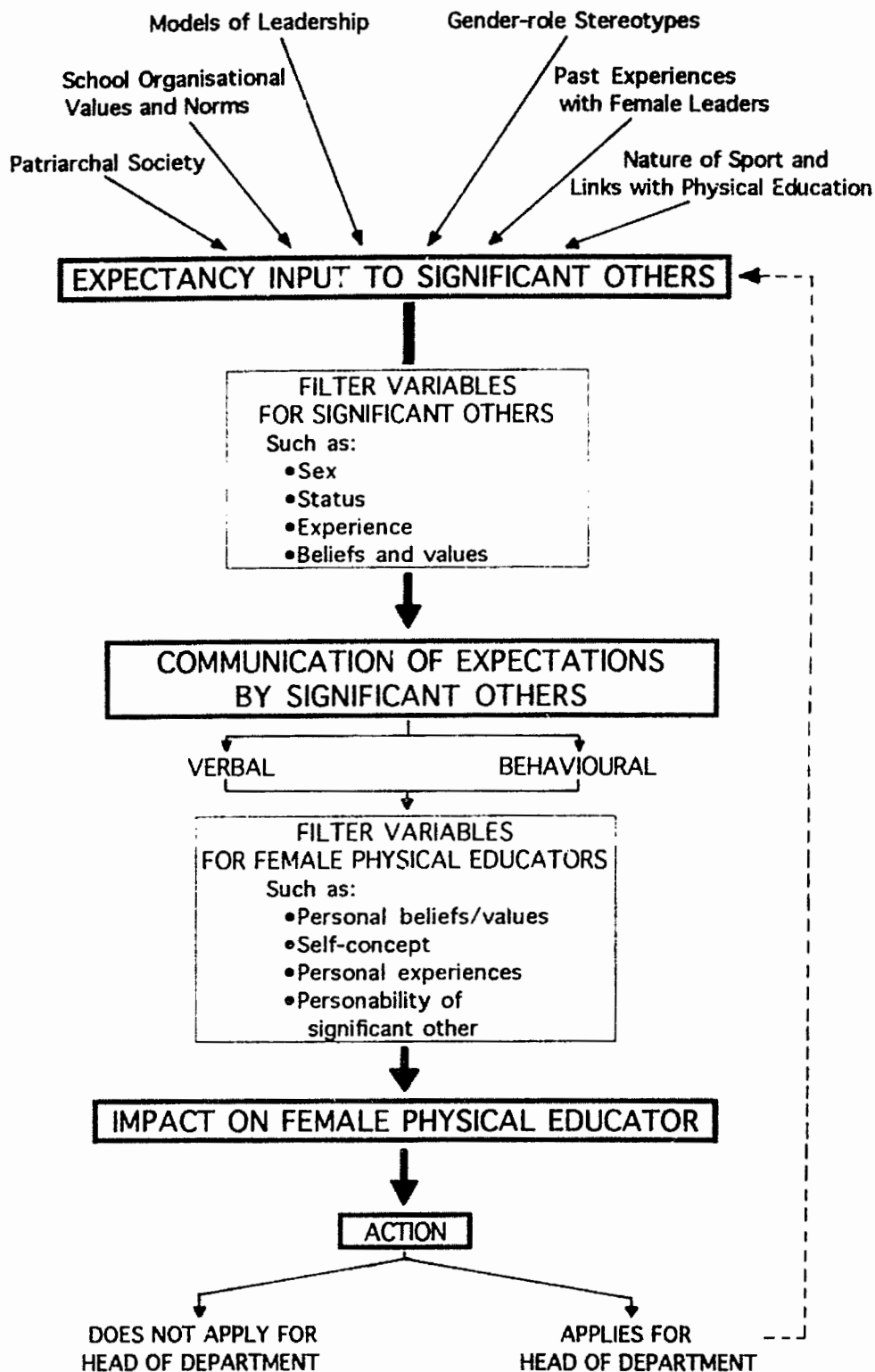


Figure 1: The impact of the expectations of significant others in the school setting on the promotional aspirations of the female physical educator.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology for this study is discussed in seven sections. These sections describe the research design; the sample; instrumentation for data collection; data collection procedures; the process of data analysis; reliability and validity issues; ethical considerations; and the perceived limitations of the study.

#### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design has its base in the naturalistic paradigm, and is framed according to a critical perspective. Qualitative methods were used as the primary means of data collection. Qualitative methodology, being inductive in nature, allows the researcher to develop the analytical, conceptual and categorical components of explanation from the data itself, rather than imposing preconceived categories which dictate relevances in concepts and hypotheses (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miles & Huberman, 1988; Patton, 1990). According to Patton (1990) qualitative inquiry aims to elucidate and understand the internal dynamics of relationships, and is highly appropriate in studying process, since depicting process requires detailed description; the experience of process typically varies for different people; process is fluid and dynamic; and participants' perceptions are a key consideration. These relationships were then examined and interpreted within the social, political and cultural contexts in which they occurred, in accordance with a critical approach.

The study used in-depth interviews in order to document female teachers' own accounts of their lives, career aspirations and the expectations of significant others in the context of the school and wider social world; and the accounts of female teachers' significant others with regard to their perceptions and expectations

concerning female leadership. Follow-up interviews with the female teachers served two purposes, firstly to triangulate findings, thereby strengthening the study design (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1990); and secondly to inform and create an awareness amongst the women as to the nature and construction of the expectations of significant others and the implications of these for women's choices and action.

The initial research design comprised the following four interrelated and sequential phases:

1. Preliminary data collection on the perceived essential skills and qualities required by Heads of Department in physical education.
2. In-depth interviews with female and male physical education teachers and Heads of Department.
3. Interviews with identified school administrators.
4. Follow-up interviews with the female physical education teachers.

However, during the course of data collection it became evident that the female physical education teachers interviewed did not consider school administrators to be 'significant others'. Further, participants persistently alluded to contextual differences between the government school system and the nongovernment sector. Consequently, the research design was modified to incorporate the following stages:

1. Preliminary data collection on the perceived essential skills and qualities required by Heads of Department in physical education.
2. In-depth interviews with female and male physical education teachers and Heads of Department.
3. Interviews with female Heads of Department of physical education in the nongovernment sector.



4. Follow-up interviews with the female physical education teachers.
5. Group discussion forum with female physical educators considering promotion to Head of Department.

## **THE SAMPLE**

The sample comprised the following groups of physical educators:

- Group 1: Female physical education teachers with eight or more years teaching experience working in Western Australian government secondary schools.
- Group 2: Male physical education teachers with eight or more years teaching experience working in Western Australian government secondary schools.
- Group 3: Female Heads of Department in physical education working in Western Australian government secondary schools.
- Group 4: Male Heads of Department in physical education working in Western Australian government secondary schools.
- Group 5: Female Heads of Department in physical education working in Western Australian nongovernment secondary schools.
- Group 6: Female physical education teachers considering applying for promotion.

The rationale for the delineation between groups was to obtain a broad view of female teachers' perceptions and experiences within the school setting; to obtain multiple perspectives on expectations of female leadership in physical education; and to facilitate comparison between the expectations of female physical educators'

significant others in the way these expectations are communicated and the way they are perceived. More specifically, the female teachers with eight or more years teaching experience were at a stage in their careers when promotion could be considered as an immediate alternative. In their early years of teaching, these women saw the promulgation of equal opportunity legislation in 1984 and the development of affirmative action policies in 1986; and more recently, the institution of 'merit promotion' in 1991, and have experienced considerable changes in both Education Department policies and societal expectations, in a variety of school contexts. Further, previous investigation in this area by me revealed that data from interviews with teachers of less than eight years experience added little to the findings, due to the inability of these women to effectively conceptualise the promotional process and the implications for female teachers (Bloom, 1992).

Male physical educators teaching for eight or more years had experienced changes in Education Department policies and societal values, similar to those of the female teachers. These men were also at a stage in their careers when promotion was an immediate alternative. They had sufficient experience to be acquainted with the requirements of the Head of Department position, and had taught with a variety of female and male teachers, under different departmental leaders.

Female Heads of Department in physical education had seemingly overcome the many barriers to promotion cited in the literature. It was anticipated that these teachers would add valuable insight regarding the requirements of the leadership role, their experiences in attaining the Head of Department position, and their perceptions of others' expectations and aspirations.

Male Heads of Department had experience in the leadership role, and had worked with a variety of staff. Their expectations regarding the promotion of female teachers would be based on a knowledge of the requirements of the Head of Department position, and perceptions of teachers' capacities and attributes. Further, these men could be considered potential mentors for aspiring female teachers.

Female Heads of Department in physical education in nongovernment schools emerged during the study as a sample group worthy of investigation. This was the result of repeated references to perceived differences in the nature of nongovernment schools by both female and male physical educators from the government system, together with numerical evidence indicating a greater proportion of female Heads of Department in the nongovernment sector (see Appendix D). These women were included in the sample because they had seemingly overcome the many barriers to promotion cited in the literature and it was anticipated that they would add valuable insights regarding their experiences in attaining the Head of Department position, the requirements of the leadership role, and their perceptions of others' expectations and aspirations in the nongovernment system.

Female physical education teachers considering promotion to Head of Department working in government schools also emerged as a sample group during the course of the study. The women in Group 1 presented a rather unidimensional perspective, voicing little or no interest in applying for promotion. It was considered important to also hear the accounts of female physical educators who aspired to the Head of Department position, in order to construct a more accurate interpretation of the situation.

School administrators were to be interviewed because they would potentially have a more holistic view of leadership within the school setting. They are also in potentially powerful mentoring positions with regard to teachers' career development, and could serve as effective role models for aspiring female teachers. However, because no school administrators were identified as being 'significant others' by the female physical educators, this sample group was deleted from the study.

## **Sampling Methods**

Cluster sampling by school was utilised for the preliminary data gathering in Phase 1. Metropolitan secondary schools were randomly selected, and the Heads of Department of physical education contacted to explain the purpose of the study and to request a meeting with the physical education staff. An appointment was then made with six consenting departments to conduct a brief group interview.

Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants for the in-depth interviews in Phase 2 of the research. The logic and power of this form of sampling lies in selecting 'information-rich cases' for study in depth, that is, those from which the researcher can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the investigation (Patton, 1990, p. 169). Participant selection was randomised to add credibility to the sample. Metropolitan schools were randomly chosen and contacted to compile a list of teachers who met the criteria described for Groups 1, 2, and 3. Each of these groups comprised 10 physical educators. Group 4 comprised the two female Heads of Department holding substantive positions in 1994, one of whom was on maternity leave.

From the names listed within the four categories, contact was made with individual teachers to explain the purpose of the study and to request an interview. An appointment was then made with those consenting to take part. Interviews took place in a private location of each respondent's choice in order to ensure an environment conducive to anxiety-free and informative responses. Follow-up interviews were conducted with the selected female physical education teachers from Phase 2 of the research.

Participants for Phase 3 of the study (sample Group 5) were purposefully selected from a list of all female Heads of Department in physical education in the nongovernment sector. Group 5 comprised 10 women, five from coeducational schools and five from single sex girls' schools. Contact was made with individual

teachers to explain the purpose of the study and to request an interview and an appointment made with those consenting to take part. Interviews took place in a private location of each respondent's choice in order to ensure an environment conducive to anxiety-free and informative responses.

The female physical education teachers comprising Group 6 agreed to take part in the study by responding to an invitation sent to all metropolitan government secondary schools (see Appendix E). The invitation was open to all female physical educators who were considering applying for promotion to Head of Department at some time in the future. Seven women responded and subsequently participated in a group discussion forum conducted at Edith Cowan University, Churchlands Campus.

## **INSTRUMENTATION**

It is recognised that the 'instrument' in qualitative inquiry is the researcher, and therefore that the 'trustworthiness' of data depends to a large extent on the methodological skill, sensitivity and integrity of the researcher. The interview was used as the primary means of data collection. I gained experience in the techniques of interviewing through previous research, and was familiar with the setting in which the study was to be conducted. These factors assisted in gaining access to, and the co-operation of, participants.

The decision to use interviews was based on the following advantages. Firstly, the interview is holistic in that it enables the conceptualisation of individuals' beliefs, values, careers, perceptions and expectations within their total life experiences, and therefore takes account of historical influences on their perspectives and meanings. Secondly, the interview allows flexibility, depth of clarification, and permits probing in order to obtain 'richer', more complete data. It provides the respondent a form of reference within which to react without placing any constraint on the reaction. "The fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a

framework within which respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms" (Patton, 1990, p.290). Thirdly, unexpected responses which may reveal significant information not anticipated by the research design can be incorporated. A fourth advantage of the interview lies in the fact that the researcher is able to establish and maintain a rapport with the respondent to assess the respondent's level of knowledge, and to monitor and ensure the effectiveness of communication between the researcher and the respondent (Isaac & Michael, 1981; Patton, 1990; Sikes, 1988).

In-depth interviews using a guided interview schedule were considered the most appropriate form of interview, as such guides provide an outline of the topics to be covered to make data collection more systematic and comprehensive for each respondent, while providing sufficient flexibility to explore concepts as fully as necessary. In this way, the participants were given some joint responsibility for the structuring of the interview in terms of ordering of topics and the interviews remained both conversational and situational.

Six interview guides (see Appendices F, G, H, I, J, and K), with foci specific to each of the categories of participants, were developed on the basis of the literature and the preliminary phase of the research (Phase 1). Drafts of each interview guide were piloted to determine whether they were sufficiently comprehensive to address the research questions as seen by both the researcher and the respondents. The piloting also provided insight into the possible nature and scope of responses to be expected and assisted in the preparation of effective questioning techniques. A matrix of the clusters of topics from the interview guides and their correlation with specific research questions is presented in Table 2.

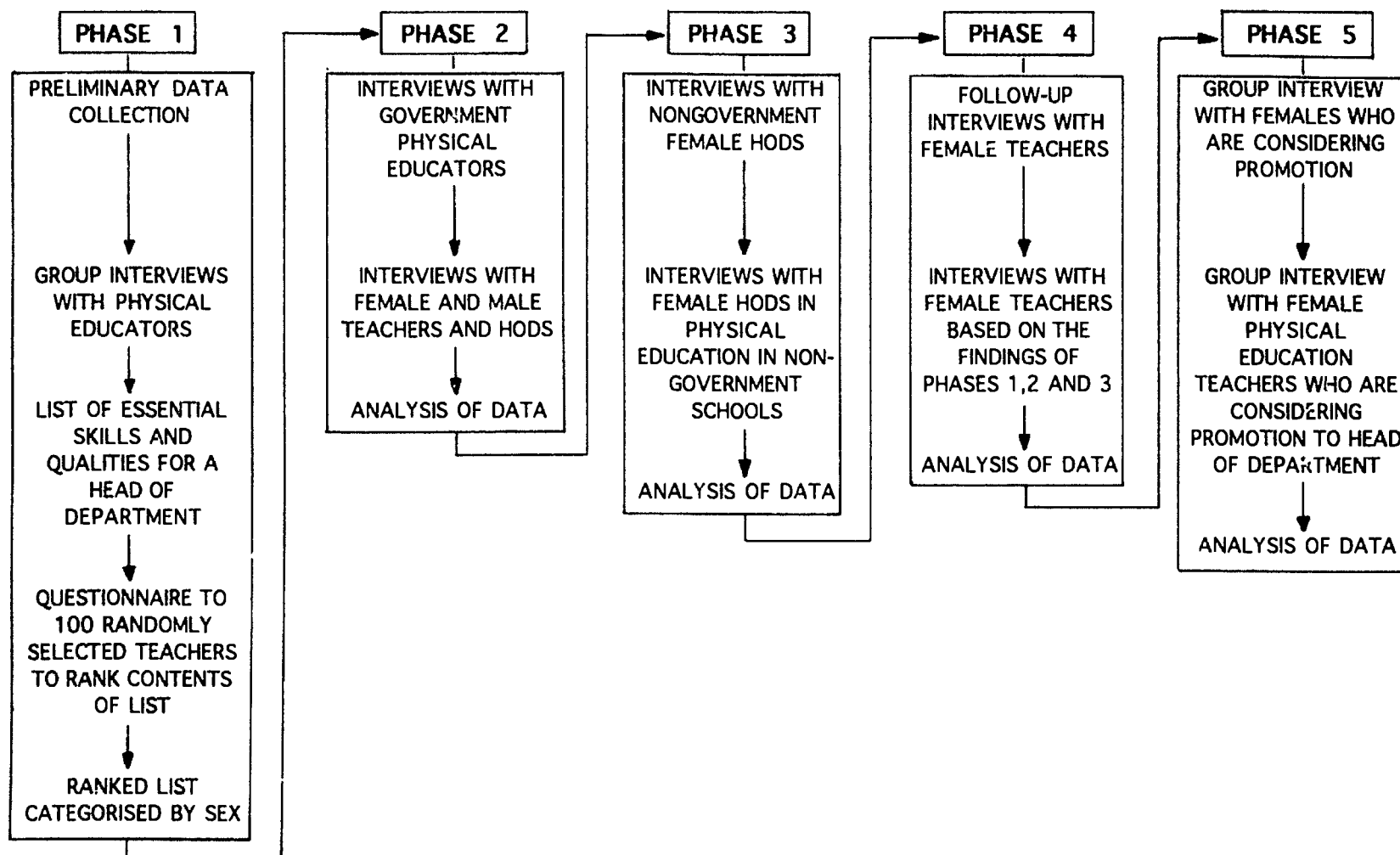


Figure 2 : Summary of the data collection phases

**TABLE 3**  
**SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTION**

RESEARCH PHASE	NATURE OF SAMPLE	METHOD OF SAMPLING	NUMBER IN SAMPLE	PURPOSE OF INVESTIGATION	RESEARCH QUESTION ADDRESSED
1. PRELIMINARY DATA COLLECTION	Physical educators in six schools.	Random	Staff of six PE Departments	Comparative data on female/male perspectives of the skills and qualities necessary for a Head of Department.	1
	Physical educators in Western Australia	Random	100 (72)		
2. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS	Female physical education teachers	Purposeful random	10	Data on perspectives, experiences and expectations of leadership in physical education, and the female role.	1,2,3,4,5
	Male physical education teachers		10		
	Female Heads of Department		1	Background and demographic data.	
	Male Heads of Department		10		
3. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS	Female Heads of Department in physical education in non-government schools	Purposeful random	10	Comparative data from the nongovernment sector on perspectives, experiences and expectations of leadership in physical education, and the female role.	1,2,3,4,5
4. FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS	Female physical education teachers	Previous sample	10	Clarify issues raised, discuss anomalies, raise awareness of female teachers regarding the findings.	3,4
5. GROUP FORUM	Female physical education teachers considering promotion to HOD	Response to invitation	7	Alternative perspective on issues from those interested in applying for promotion.	1,2,3,5



## DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Because the research was of an inductive, emergent nature, the intention was to avoid imposing categories on the data from the researcher's viewpoint that 'create order' rather than 'discover' it. The informants' knowledge was organised into categories which were in some way systematically related. My goal was to employ methods of analysis which would lead to a discovery of the construction and organisation of this knowledge (Spradley, 1979).

The preliminary data gathered in phase 1 of the research comprised ranked lists of skills and qualities required by a Head of Department in physical education. These lists were collated by sex, and statistically analysed using the Spearman rho correlation coefficient.

Data analysis for phases 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the study was therefore conducted according to the following steps, derived from the work of Goetz and LeCompte (1984), Jones (1985), Mostyn (1985), Strauss (1987) and Woods (1986). The first step involved a systematic review of the interview guide questions. Secondly, the transcriptions of the interviews were read and re-read to detect suggested lines of analysis and to point to connections with the literature. Thirdly, the data were coded as emergent major categories were identified. In this way, data were organised in a form more conducive to concept formation. Fourthly, cognitive mapping took place to diagrammatically represent the modelling of the categories. Finally, the data were interpreted by examining the emergent themes and patterns that had been identified in relation to relevant literature.

The NUDIST computer program was used to enhance data management and coding consistency. NUDIST aids in the handling of nonnumerical and unstructured data in qualitative analysis by supporting processes of indexing, searching and theorising. It creates an environment to store and explore data and ideas, to minimise clerical routine and maximise flexibility, and to discover new ideas and build on them. The

interrelated categories and constructs emerging from the analysis were then placed in a more holistic social context, to highlight their ideological aspects and the interests that benefit from the maintenance of current definitions (Anderson, 1989).

The findings, as derived from the interview transcripts were discussed with the respondents for purposes of clarification and verification.

## **RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY ISSUES**

It is recognised that there can be difficulties in establishing that the findings and interpretations of qualitative inquiry are valid and reliable, and that the value-based and openly ideological nature of critical research raises validity issues beyond those of other naturalistic methodologies (Angus, 1986; Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994; Lather, 1986b).

Because the data gathering 'instrument' in qualitative study is the researcher, concerns of researcher competency were alleviated to a large degree by previous experience in the techniques of interviewing. In the analysis of data, the reliability of coding was enhanced through the use of the NUDIST computer program.

Further, the following measures were taken to enhance the reliability of results. External reliability was addressed by identifying the researcher's role and status, delineating the types of people serving as informants, describing the social context within which the data were gathered, and detailing the data collection and analysis methods. Internal reliability was enhanced by using an audiorecorder to obtain verbatim accounts of respondents' conversations and to facilitate accurate transcription; and participant scrutiny and peer examination of the results were used to corroborate findings. Follow-up interviews with female physical educators served to triangulate sources.

It is generally accepted that critical researchers do not search for methods of inquiry that will guarantee the validity of their findings. As Giroux (1983) maintained, "methodological correctness" will never guarantee valid data, nor does it reveal power interests within a body of information" (p. 17). Traditional research argues that the only way to produce valid information is through the application of rigorous research methodology that follows a strict set of objective procedures which separate researchers from those researched. According to Kincheloe and McLaren (1994), traditional approaches have focused on rigour, the 'how' and the form of inquiry, to the neglect of the 'what' and the substance of inquiry, the dynamics of the lived world and the pursuit of justice in the lived world (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994).

Therefore, validity is generally considered an inappropriate term in the critical research context, as it reflects a concern for acceptance within a positivist concept of research rigour. To the critical researcher, validity means much more than the traditional definitions of internal and external validity usually associated with the concept. Traditional research has defined internal validity as the extent to which a researcher's observations and measurements are true descriptions of a particular reality. External validity has been defined as the degree to which such descriptions can be accurately compared with other groups (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). It has been suggested that 'trustworthiness' is a more appropriate word to use in the context of critical research because it signifies a different set of assumptions about research purposes than those of validity (Anderson, 1989; Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994 ; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Troublesome issues for critical researchers which derive from criticisms of empirical qualitative work include bias, questions about adequacy or credibility, and researcher-participant relationships. Firstly, bias is related to the problem of objectivity in empirical research and has been a long standing criticism of the subjective qualitative methodologies. From the perspective of critical research, bias is a misplaced term. Rather, the objectivity-subjectivity dichotomy and the notion

of bias can be viewed as a resource which a sufficiently reflexive researcher is able to evoke in order to guide data gathering and to understand personal interpretations and behaviour in the research (Olesen, 1994). What is required is sufficient reflexivity to uncover what may be deep-seated but poorly recognised views on issues central to the research and a full account of the researcher's views, thinking and conduct. "We cannot rid ourselves of the cultural self we bring with us into the field any more than we can disown the eyes, ears and skin through which we take in our intuitive perceptions about the new and strange world we have entered" (Scheper-Hughes, 1991, p.28).

Secondly, adequacy and credibility parallel validity in quantitative work (Hall & Stevens, 1991). Because critical researchers tend to make problematic taken-for-granted situations, raise challenging questions about contexts and power relations, and stress the importance of subjectivity, they are particularly vulnerable to positivists' criticisms regarding credibility. According to Kincheloe and McLaren (1994), critical researchers award credibility only when the constructions are plausible to those who constructed them, and even then there may be disagreement, for the researcher may see the effects of oppression in the constructs of those researched; effects that those researched may not see. Suggested measures to address criticisms of credibility have included detailing the use of theoretical sampling to find 'negative cases' with which to refute or amend interpretations; explicating analyses and concerns regarding the researcher's interpretive voice and the integration of respondent's voices; detailing how the research problem emerged and how different data sources were 'triangulated'; describing the conduct of the researcher; and 'taking the account back to respondents' (Olesen, 1994). Nevertheless, the measurement of credibility in critical research remains difficult. Acker, Barry and Esseveld (1991) proposed new criteria for adequacy and credibility which included being sure the participants' voices are heard; accounting for the researcher as well as those participating; and revealing conditions that result in their daily lives being studied. However, they also recognised that "it is

impossible to create a research process that erases the contradictions (in power and consciousness) between researcher and researched" (p. 150).

Finally, critical research shares with interpretive work in general the assumption of intersubjectivity between researcher and participant and the mutual creation of data. Participants, together with the researcher, construct the meanings that become 'data' for later interpretation by the researcher (Olesen, 1992). Such an approach challenges researchers on a number of issues including assumptions about the participants' knowledge; representations of the participants; modes of data gathering, analysis, interpretation, and writing; diversity among participants' views with regard to the issues under investigation, particularly where views differ from those of the researcher (Hess, 1990); and the risk of appropriating participant-generated data to, or along the lines of, the researcher's interests (Opie, 1992).

Because the purpose of critical research is to move beyond assimilated experience in an endeavour to expose the way ideology constrains the desire for self-direction, and to confront the way power reproduces itself in the construction of human consciousness, Lather (1991) proposed the concept of 'catalytic validity'. Catalytic validity points to the degree to which research moved those it studied to understand the world and the way it is shaped in order for them to transform it. Research that poses catalytic validity not only displays the reality-altering impact of the inquiry process, it will also direct the impact so that the participants in the study gain self-understanding and self-direction (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994).

While the present study adopted standard practices associated with the 'trustworthiness' of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the social critique agenda of critical inquiry, and its attempt to locate the respondents' meanings in a wider social context, raised additional validity issues. According to Anderson (1989), the most pressing of these is 'reflexivity', or the self-reflective processes that keep the "critical framework from becoming the container into which

the data is poured" (p. 254). In addition to reflecting on the relationship between theory and data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and the effects of the researcher's presence on the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the critical researcher also attempts to integrate reflection on the researcher's bias by the bracketing of assumptions, and reflection on the dialectic relationship between historical/structural forces and human agency. Therefore, reflexivity in critical inquiry involves a dialectic process among the researcher's constructs, the informant's commonsense constructs, the research data, the researcher's ideological biases, and the historical and structural forces that informed the social construction under study (Anderson, 1989). The researcher was aware of these issues and such reflexivity was incorporated in documenting the audit trail for data analysis and interpretation.

## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The need to carefully consider ethical issues in qualitative research was highlighted by Spradley (1979), who stated that:

...ethnographic research always pries into the lives of the informants...interviewing presents a powerful tool for invading other people's ways of life. It reveals information that can be used to affirm their rights, interests and sensitivities or to violate them. All informants must have the protection of saying things 'off the record' which will never find their way into the (researcher's) field notes. (p. 36)

Ethical considerations in critical research draw on a theme which both characterises the critical approach and leads to ethical dilemmas, namely, concern for, and involvement with, the participants.

In order to address ethical concerns related to the present study, as far as was possible, the following measures were undertaken. Firstly, the aims of the investigation were communicated to all participants and they were made aware of the value of the research in terms of promotional opportunities for female physical

educators. Secondly, all participants were required to complete a form of disclosure and consent (see Appendix M). Thirdly, neither the educators interviewed during this study, nor their schools, have been identified by name. Fourthly, the analysis of data did not compare or contrast individual educator's attitudes, perceptions, aspirations or expectations. Fifthly, all interviews were confidential and conducted in a place where privacy was guaranteed. And finally, interviewees were assured that data gathered would not be used for any purpose other than that outlined for the study, and feedback on the findings would be provided to all participants.

Audiotapes and written transcripts have been securely stored and are accessible only to the researcher and supervisors. All records will be destroyed after five years.

#### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The scope of the study is limited to metropolitan government and nongovernment secondary schools in Western Australia, and it is therefore context bound in terms of time and location. The findings of the study are an interpretation of the data gathered during the research process, and no attempt has been made to suggest they hold any generalisability. It is hoped that this does not detract from the study's significance since, in qualitative research, the onus is on a particular audience to interpret the findings of the study and to determine their applicability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In so far as the selected educators within each of the categories are deemed to be representative of the population, the findings are representative of the perceptions of other like educators in Western Australian government and nongovernment secondary schools.

A second limitation of the study lies in its reliance upon the fact that participants' accounts of their experiences and perceptions are 'honest'. As cautioned by Olesen (1994), simply allowing the audiorecorder to run in order to achieve full representation overlooks the fact that the responses of the participants are already

mediated when they come to the interview. It is likely that this was more particularly the case for the male physical educators, who may have entered the interview with either a defensive attitude, or a desire to 'say the right thing'. It is hoped that the researcher's experience as a physical educator in the context being studied, and the participants' knowledge and acceptance of the researcher, served to on the one hand, facilitate 'honest' accounts from both the female and male physical educators interviewed, and on the other hand, to provide the researcher with insight regarding the extent to which the accounts given were 'honest'.

A third limitation of the study is its dependence upon the participants' accounts of their 'experiences'. According to Olesen (1994), a number of critics have highlighted the unstable nature of a concept of 'experience', arguing that merely taking experience into account does not reflect on how that experience came to be, and have advocated the need to also analyse the conditions that produce 'experience'. Scott (1991) commented that "experience is at once always already an interpretation and in need of interpretation" (p.779). "...Oppressive systems are replicated rather than criticised in the unquestioning reliance on 'experience'" (Olesen, 1994, p. 167). By adopting a critical approach and therefore viewing 'experience' as historically produced and socially constructed, it is hoped that the present study provides both an account and an interpretation of the experiences of the participants.

An account of the experiences, perceptions, expectations and aspirations of the five categories of physical education teachers in relation to the major issues addressed by the research are presented in Chapters 5 to 10. Profiles of the respondents are described in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 compares the views of female and male physical educators concerning the essential skills and qualities for a Head of Department in physical education. Chapters 7 to 10 present the perspectives of government and nongovernment female physical educators and government male physical educators on female leadership in their subject area.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DEMOGRAPHIC AND BACKGROUND PROFILES OF THE RESPONDENTS**

The demographic and background data gathered from the respondents constitute 'presage variables'. These variables comprise the characteristics of the teacher, including formative experiences; teacher-education experiences; and personal properties, which individually or collectively can have a major influence on the job performance and career aspirations of teachers.

Since the sample selected for the study comprised five groupings of physical education teachers, namely Education Department female teachers with eight or more years teaching experience; Education Department male teachers with eight or more years teaching experience; Education Department female Heads of Department; Education Department male Heads of Department; and nongovernment school female Heads of Department, the respondents' profiles will be discussed in terms of these five delineated groups.

#### **AGE RANGE**

The female physical education teachers from government schools ranged in age from 28 to 45 years. Of the 10 respondents, three were aged between 20 and 29; six were aged between 30 and 39; and one was in the age range 40 to 49.

The 10 male physical education teachers interviewed had a similar spread of ages, ranging from 29 to 45 years. This included two in the 20 to 29 age group; six in the 30 to 39 age group; and two aged between 40 and 49 years.

The one government school female Head of Department in physical education was aged 46.

Male Heads of Department comprised a group of 10, ranging in age from 35 to 47 years. Three of these respondents were aged between 30 and 39, while the other seven were in the 40 to 49 age grouping.

The female Heads of Department from nongovernment schools were aged between 32 and 43 years, with nine of the respondents being in the 30 to 39 age range. One woman was aged 43 years.

Table 4 presents an overview of teachers' ages by decade for each category.

**TABLE 4**  
**CATEGORY OF TEACHER BY AGE**

CATEGORY OF TEACHER	AGE GROUP		
	20-29	30-39	40-49
FEMALE TEACHERS	3	6	1
MALE TEACHERS	2	6	2
FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT			1
MALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT		3	7
NONGOVERNMENT FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT		9	1
TOTAL	5	24	12

Age is a factor which provides valuable insight into a teacher's maturity; possibly her/his teaching experience, dependent upon the number and length of breaks in service; her/his present stage in life and therefore critical influences which have

impacted on her/his career; and in the case of the female teachers, the extent to which policies and regulations have impinged on their development and advancement in the teaching profession.

It was expected that the female respondents in the 20 to 29 and 30 to 39 years age groupings would exhibit promotional aspirations, having entered the education system at a time when there were few policy restrictions or imposed limitations on their career opportunities, and when the issues of equal opportunity and gender equity held a high profile. The female respondents in the 40 to 49 year age group embarked on their teaching careers when policies were extremely discriminatory against females, a disadvantageous climate unconducive to seeking promotion, and yet the only government school female Head of Department was within this age range.

Further, it was anticipated that the perceptions and expectations of male physical educators would to some degree be fashioned by the prevailing norms and values of society. Therefore, the male respondents in the 40 to 49 year age range, having trained and commenced teaching prior to equal opportunity perspectives, may be expected to exhibit more patriarchal, stereotypical and chauvinistic attitudes and behaviours, than the respondents in their 20s or 30s with a greater awareness of, and sensitivity to, gender issues. Considering the significant role played by Heads of Department in mentoring and encouraging staff to apply for promotion, the fact that seven of the 10 male Heads of Department interviewed were aged over 40 years may be problematic with regard to the support offered female physical education teachers in their career advancement.

## **MARITAL STATUS AND DEPENDENTS**

Of the 10 government school female teachers interviewed, five were single, four were married and one was divorced. No teachers in this category had any dependents.

In the sample of 10 male physical education teachers, one was single, seven were married and of these six had dependents. Two of the respondents were divorced. The only government school female Head of Department was single. All 10 male Heads of Department were married, nine having dependents. Of the 10 female Heads of Department in nongovernment schools interviewed, five were single and five were married. Two of the married women had dependents.

Table 5 summarises the marital status and number of dependents of the respondents in each category.

**TABLE 5**  
**CATEGORY OF TEACHER BY MARITAL STATUS AND DEPENDENTS**

CATEGORY OF TEACHER	MARITAL STATUS			DEPENDENTS
	SINGLE	DIVORCED	MARRIED	
FEMALE TEACHERS	5	1	4	6
MALE TEACHERS	1	2	7	
FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	1			
MALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT			10	9
NONGOVERNMENT FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	5		5	2
TOTAL	12	3	26	17

Marital status and breaks in service for child rearing have been particularly strong determinants of career opportunities in the past due to policy restrictions imposed on females. Accouchement leave was not granted until 1968, and the regulation allowing married female teachers to receive permanent status was not officially gazetted until 1972. Despite the removal of the policy limitations more than 20

In the sample of 10 male physical education teachers, one was single, seven were married and of these six had dependents. Two of the respondents were divorced. The only government school female Head of Department was single. All 10 male Heads of Department were married, nine having dependents. Of the 10 female Heads of Department in nongovernment schools interviewed, five were single and five were married. Two of the married women had dependents.

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MALE TEACHERS	1	2	7	
FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	1			
MALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT			10	9
NONGOVERNMENT FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	5		5	2
TOTAL	12	3	26	17

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years ago, married women, particularly those with children, continue to be faced with the dilemma of the duality of family and career roles. It was expected that marriage and dependents may have been barriers to the promotion of females, both in terms of past policy and the added responsibilities that family imposed. On the other hand, it appears that no such barrier to promotion existed for male teachers since all the male Heads of Department interviewed were married, and nine of the ten had dependents.

## QUALIFICATIONS

All 41 of the physical educators interviewed had attained permanent status. Further, all respondents, with the exception of one male teacher who was completing the final unit towards his degree, were four year trained with either a Bachelor of Education Degree, or a Bachelor of Physical Education degree and a Diploma of Education.

Of the 41 respondents, 18 had undertaken further study after graduating in order to raise their qualifications to either a Bachelor of Education degree, or a Higher Certificate. In addition, two male teachers had completed Graduate Diplomas, one in Teaching English as a Second Language and the other in Outdoor Pursuits, with a view to expanding career alternatives. One of the male Heads of Department had also recently completed a Graduate Diploma in Outdoor Pursuits and another had obtained a Master of Education.

Table 6 summarises the number of years' training undertaken by teachers in each of the five categories and indicates how many of them have undertaken further study to upgrade their qualifications.

**TABLE 6**  
**CATEGORY OF TEACHER BY QUALIFICATIONS**

CATEGORY OF TEACHER	QUALIFICATIONS		IMPROVED ORIGINAL QUALIFICATION
	3 YEAR TRAINED	4 YEAR TRAINED	
FEMALE TEACHERS	1	10	5
MALE TEACHERS		9	6
FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT		1	1
MALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT		10	6
NONGOVERNMENT FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT		10	4
TOTAL	1	40	22

Qualifications are a vital consideration in the eligibility of a candidate for promotion. A teacher must be four year trained and have permanent status in order to apply. On this basis, only one of the respondents interviewed would be precluded from applying for a Head of Department position in physical education. There were however three nongovernment school female Heads of Department who were unable to advance their careers in education due to the requirement for a Masters degree for further promotion.

#### **NUMBER OF SCHOOLS AT WHICH TEACHERS HAVE TAUGHT**

Amongst the sample of teachers interviewed, there was little difference in the number of schools at which the male and female physical educators had taught, while Heads of Department in government schools generally had experience in a greater

number of schools. By contrast, all 10 of the nongovernment female Heads of Department had taught in only two or three schools. In the case of two of these women, two of their three schools were in the government sector.

The number of schools at which respondents within each of the categories have taught is summarised in Table 7.

**TABLE 7**  
**CATEGORY OF TEACHER BY NUMBER OF SCHOOLS AT WHICH TEACHERS HAVE TAUGHT**

CATEGORY OF TEACHER	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS				
	1	2	3	4	5
FEMALE TEACHERS		3	5	2	1
MALE TEACHERS		2	6	2	
FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT					
MALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT		1	5	4	
NONGOVERNMENT FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT		6	4		
TOTAL		12	20	8	1

The relevance of this profile variable lies in the nature and variety of experiences encountered by teachers as they transfer from one school to another. Perceptions of career and promotional aspirations may both be impacted upon by positive or negative dealings with various Heads of Department, school administrators, other staff and students.

Country service can be an indicator of teacher mobility, although in many instances, transfers to country centres are enforced rather than voluntary. Until the



introduction of promotion by merit in 1991, country service was a prerequisite for promotion, and the likelihood of a country posting in order to gain promotion to a Head of Department position in physical education remains high.

#### **LENGTH OF SERVICE AT PRESENT SCHOOL**

Across the categories of teachers interviewed, length of service at the present school varied from one year to 26 years. Female physical educators tended to have been in their respective schools for fewer years than their male colleagues: two having two years' service; three having four years' service; two having five years' service; two having seven years' service; and one serving for 16 years in her present school.

The majority of male physical educators had served six or more years at their present school. Two had been in their schools for three years; one for five years; one for six years; two for seven years; two for eight years; one for 10 years; and one had taught at the same school for 20 years. The longest serving male had no promotional aspirations and commented that he was teaching at the best school in the state, loved his job, and had no intention to transfer.

The female Head of Department had occupied the promotional position at her present school for seven years. Of the male Heads of Department interviewed, two had been newly appointed to the position and were in their first year of service at their schools; two had served two years; one had served six years; one had served 11 years; one had served 18 years; one had served 19 years; and the longest serving male Head of Department had worked for 22 years at his present school.

The nongovernment female Heads of Department ranged in length of service at their respective schools from two years to 10 years. Two of these women had been at their schools for two years; one for three years; one for four years; one for five years; one for seven years; one for eight years; one for nine years; and two for 10 years.

The number of years respondents within each category have served in their present schools is summarised in Table 8.

**TABLE 8**  
**CATEGORY OF TEACHER BY LENGTH OF SERVICE AT PRESENT SCHOOL**

	NUMBER OF YEARS SERVICE							
CATEGORY OF TEACHER	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-11	12-14	15-17	18-20	20+
FEMALE TEACHERS	2	5	2			1		
MALE TEACHERS		3	5	1				1
FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT			1					
MALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	4		1	1			2	2
NONGOVERNMENT FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	2	3	2	3				
TOTAL	8	11	11	5		1	2	3

Length of service at a school tends to be a consideration in appointing teachers to acting promotional positions. Therefore, longer serving teachers, supposedly with greater awareness and knowledge regarding the workings of the school, have increased opportunity to gain experience in a role for which they may wish to apply in the future, and to augment their chances for a successful application. A further aspect of length of service in one school, with respect to Heads of Department, is that while individuals remain incumbents of a position in a school, there exists limited opportunity for others to gain that position. Numerous government school male Heads of Department, who have remained at the same school for 20 or more years, have been criticised by younger physical educators for 'clogging up' the system.

## **BREAKS IN SERVICE**

Until 1968, accouchement leave was not granted to pregnant women, and child-bearing required resignation and a consequent loss of seniority. Leave without pay and accouchement leave, while no longer termed as breaks in service, impose the penalty of nonaccruement of leave time in terms of service and therefore seniority. Resignation constitutes a loss of seniority and permanent status.

Government school male teachers constituted the sample category with the greatest number of breaks in service. However, none of the participants felt that their breaks in service had been detrimental to their careers.

Table 9 lists the number and nature of breaks in service taken by teachers in each of the five categories.

Since the introduction of promotion by merit in 1991, the damaging effects on promotion of a teacher's breaks in service have theoretically diminished, as seniority is no longer the major criterion.

**TABLE 9**  
**CATEGORY OF TEACHER BY BREAKS IN SERVICE**

CATEGORY OF TEACHER	NUMBER	NATURE OF BREAK IN SERVICE
FEMALE TEACHERS	3	12 months' leave without pay
MALE TEACHERS	4	12 months' leave without pay
FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	1	12 months' leave without pay
MALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	1	Three year secondment to university - lecturing position
	1	Two year secondment as a writer to the Distance Education Centre
	1	12 months' leave without pay
NONGOVERNMENT FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	1	12 months' leave without pay - twice
	1	Four years' leave without pay to travel overseas with husband

## REASONS FOR CAREER CHOICE

The reasons underlying an individual's choice of career may have a bearing on the extent of her/his dedication, and provide insight into possible career development and aspirations. Table 10 lists the reasons why respondents chose physical education teaching as their career.

**TABLE 10****CATEGORY OF TEACHER BY REASONS FOR SELECTING PHYSICAL  
EDUCATION TEACHING AS A CAREER**

<b>FEMALE TEACHERS</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>
Loved sport and had positive experiences with coaches as a junior.	1
Enjoyment of sport and a male role model.	1
Talented in sport and considered it a better option than nursing.	1
Always involved in sport and coaching.	3
Enjoyed sport, liked the idea of teaching hours and the holidays.	2
Enjoyed sport and saw physical education as the only option.	2
<b>MALE TEACHERS</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>
Sporting background. Did not like physical education teachers at school, thought he could do a better job.	1
Positive school experiences and sporting talent.	4
Easier alternative than science, and friends were doing physical education.	2
Interest in outdoor pursuits and a healthy lifestyle.	1
Good at sport and physical education teaching seemed like a great lifestyle.	2
<b>FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>
Always wanted to be a teacher, loved sport and liked the physical education teachers at school.	1

MALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	NUMBER
Heavily involved in sport and physical education teaching seemed like a good life.	2
Positive school experiences. Admired physical education teachers.	2
Good at sport. Talked into it as a preferable alternative to primary teaching.	2
Family influences towards teaching. Physical education seemed like an interesting area.	1
Interested in the human body and its capabilities and limitations.	1
Enjoyed sport and coaching.	2
NONGOVERNMENT FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	NUMBER
Liked sport and being outdoors.	2
Enjoyed sport and liked physical education teachers.	2
Love of and talent in sport. Positive role model - female physical education teacher.	2
Sport was always a part of life. Physical education teaching was the natural progression.	1
Considered physical education teaching more enjoyable than the alternatives of engineering or architecture.	1
Outstanding female role model.	2

To facilitate further analysis, the reasons listed in Table 10 have been broken down into single factors influencing career choice, and are presented in Table 11, together with the frequency of respondents who acknowledged each of the factors as contributing to their decision to become physical education teachers.

Differential emphasis was placed on various factors by the five categories of teachers interviewed. The female teachers identified 'love of sport' (7) to be the most influential factor, followed by 'involvement in coaching' (3) and physical education as the 'best alternative' (2).

The male teachers prioritised the factors somewhat differently. The factor most frequently identified was 'talent in sport' (7), followed by 'positive school experiences' (4).

The government school female Head of Department attributed her career choice to a love of sport, her desire to teach and the fact that she had liked and admired her physical education teachers as a student.

**TABLE 11**  
**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CAREER CHOICE**

FACTOR	FT	MT	FHOD	MHOD	NG F HOD	TOTAL
Love of sport	7		1	2	7	17
Talent in sport	1	7		4	2	14
Best alternative	2	2		2	2	8
Positive school experiences	1	4		2		7
PE a good lifestyle	1	2		3		6
Positive role models	1				4	5
Liked PE teachers			1	2	2	5
Involvement in coaching	3			1		4
Interest in healthy lifestyle and outdoor life		1			2	3
Talked into it by friends		2				2
Family influences				1		1
Desire to teach			1			1
Interest in the capacities of the human body				1		1
Did not like PE teachers at school - wanted to do a better job				1		1

The male Heads of Department attributed the greatest influence to their 'talent in sport' (4), followed by their perceptions of physical education teaching as a 'good lifestyle' (3).

Overall, the women identified a 'love of sport' to be the major influence in their career choice (15 of 21 teachers), while the men attributed their choice of career primarily to 'talent in sport' (11 of 20 teachers). This distinction between the sexes tends to fit traditional views of the 'confident and competitive' male and the 'affiliative' female, and may relate to the seeming lack of promotional aspirations among female physical educators. Other factors considered to be influential were the perception that physical education was the 'best alternative' available and 'positive school experiences', identified by eight and seven of the total sample, respectively.

It is interesting to note that almost half of the nongovernment female Heads of Department were influenced in their career choice by positive role models, perhaps an indication of the impact that role models can have on girls during their school years, and the part they might play in shaping future career aspirations.

## **FUTURE CAREER PLANS**

None of the physical educators interviewed expressed regret with regard to their career choice. However, a number of them were either actively seeking alternative careers or promotion out of the physical education area. Still others expressed a desire for change, but believed there was no satisfactory alternative.

Of the 10 female teachers, three were considering promotion to Head of Department; three wanted to move out of physical education teaching through either promotion to Deputy Principal, or an alternative outside the school system; one was content to accept 'whatever came along'; and two saw no satisfactory alternative but to remain teaching physical education.



Six of the 10 male participants were either applying, or would in the future consider applying, for promotion to Head of Department. Two others were also considering promotion, but were reluctant to change their lifestyle by moving to the country, and were therefore seeking alternatives outside the school system in sport administration. The other two males had no promotional aspirations, one opting to remain teaching which he still enjoyed, and the other wishing to job share with his wife.

The female Head of Department in the government sector having tried the Deputy Principal position, elected to return to physical education and remain there.

Six of the 10 male Heads of Department enjoyed physical education and intended to remain in the subject area. Of these, four had tried the Deputy Principal position but did not like it. A further two of the Heads of Department were considering applying for a Deputy Principal position, but had reservations due to family commitments. One Head of Department thoroughly enjoyed teaching physical education and the promotional position, expressing no desire for any change, while another would have liked a change, but believed there to be no satisfactory alternatives.

Of the 10 nongovernment school female Heads of Department, seven were considering promotion to Deputy Principal. Three felt constrained in their aspirations by a lack of postgraduate qualifications required for higher promotional levels. Two women were looking for challenges, but had no desire to promote to Deputy Principal, and were therefore exploring other alternatives within the school. One of the women preferred teaching duties to those required by the Head of Department position and wanted to regress to classroom teacher.

Table 12 provides a summary of the possible future career plans of the respondents.

**TABLE 12**  
**CATEGORY OF TEACHER BY FUTURE CAREER PLANS**

CATEGORY OF TEACHER	PERCEIVED CAREER PLANS	NUMBER
FEMALE TEACHERS	Promotional aspirations for a Head of Department position.	3
	No aspirations to be Head of Department, but perhaps Deputy Principal or something in the physical education area outside the school system.	2
	Loves teaching physical education. Would like to work at a tertiary institution and may return to study to enable this.	2
	No career ambition - whatever comes along will be fine.	1
	Will stay in physical education, because there is no satisfactory alternative.	2
MALE TEACHERS	Has applied for Head of Department, but is limited in terms of location of the position by a young family.	1
	Will eventually apply for Head of Department and may be interested in a Deputy Principal position in the future.	3
	Still enjoys teaching and the contact with students. There may be a need to contemplate promotion in the future.	2
	Would apply for Head of Department but does not want to upset current lifestyle. Is looking for an alternative in sports administration.	2
	Has no aspirations for promotion. Enjoys teaching, is located at an excellent school and intends to remain in physical education.	1
	Would like to job share with wife, preferring home duties and caring for the children to teaching.	1

CATEGORY OF TEACHER	PERCEIVED CAREER PLANS	NUMBER
FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	Thoroughly enjoys physical education teaching. Has tried the Deputy Principal position, but returned to physical education and will remain there.	1
MALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	Is looking for a challenge. Will possibly apply for promotion to Deputy Principal, because of age concerns. However, this is heavily dictated by family commitments.	1
	Enjoys physical education and will remain teaching. Has tried the Deputy Principal position but did not like it.	4
	Has enjoyed physical education but is looking to retire early at 55. Is considering establishing own business.	1
	Would like to try for promotion to Deputy Principal but must also consider wife's career.	1
	Thoroughly enjoys physical education and the Head of Department position. Has no desire for any change.	1
	Loves physical education. Family and lifestyle are the primary concerns. May consider the position of Principal in the future, but definitely not interested in becoming a Deputy Principal.	1
	Would like a change in job. Tried, but did not enjoy Deputy Principal. Limited alternatives.	1

CATEGORY OF TEACHER	PERCEIVED CAREER PLANS	NUMBER
NONGOVERNMENT FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	Concerned about age. Has enjoyed physical education and the Head of Department position, but is now looking to move up the scale.	2
	Would like further promotion but feels restrained by lack of qualifications (Masters degree required for higher promotional levels). Family/sporting commitments preclude further study.	3
	Thought about promotion to Deputy Principal but reconsidered. May move to a new school to build up the Physical Education Department.	1
	Would like to regress to classroom teacher because misses contact with students. Prefers teaching to administrative duties.	1
	Feels frustrated in physical education due to age concerns. Would like to apply for Deputy Principal position.	2
	Always looking for challenges, but not interested in being a Deputy Principal. May try for alternative positions in the school system (eg pastoral care).	1

The views of the respondents in Table 12 raised two questions. Firstly, if the majority of the teachers selected physical education as their first career choice, then why did so few wish to remain in the area? Secondly, why did so few of the women in the female teachers' category indicate any aspirations for promotion to the Head of Department position, as compared with their male colleagues? These issues will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES ASSUMED IN ADDITION TO TEACHING DUTIES**

All the female teachers and eight of the 10 male teachers interviewed had taken on responsibilities within the Physical Education Department, additional to their required duties. Because of their promotional position, Heads of Department had all assumed additional responsibilities. These extra duties included co-ordinating health education and outdoor education, staging dance productions, organising carnivals and co-ordinating sporting events. Four of the females and three of the males had been acting Heads of Department in physical education.

With the exception of two male teachers and one of the nongovernment female Heads of Department, all the respondents had assumed additional responsibilities within the whole school system. These responsibilities included membership of various school committees dealing with school development, discipline, reporting procedures, timetabling, and taking on roles such as year co-ordinator.

Table 13 summarises the number of teachers within each of the categories who had taken on responsibilities additional to their teaching duties, either in the Physical Education Department, or more generally within the whole school structure.

By assuming added responsibility within the Physical Education Department, teachers become better acquainted with the administration and functioning of the Department, and have the opportunity to develop their organisational and leadership skills. It also provides individuals with challenges and invites them to demonstrate their capabilities in various roles. While some responsibilities may be allocated and therefore mandatory, others taken on voluntarily may indicate a teacher's willingness or desire to assume some control over the functioning of the Department, and thus provide insight regarding her/his promotional aspirations and perhaps her/his potential as Head of Department. It is interesting to note that all of the female respondents had assumed such additional responsibilities.

Membership of school committees indicates an interest in the functioning of the school as a whole, demonstrates a desire to contribute to decision-making, and promotes the leadership potential of the teacher involved. Committee membership has also become a prerequisite for advancement under the promotion by merit system now in operation.

**TABLE 13**  
**CATEGORY OF TEACHER BY RESPONSIBILITIES ASSUMED IN ADDITION TO TEACHING DUTIES**

CATEGORY OF TEACHER	DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES	WHOLE SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES
FEMALE TEACHERS	10	10
MALE TEACHERS	8	8
FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	1	1
MALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	10	10
NONGOVERNMENT FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	10	9
TOTAL	39	38

The commonplace acceptance of additional responsibilities amongst the respondents indicates that the majority of participants in the 'female teacher' and 'male teacher' categories would have gained a number of the skills required for a Head of Department.

## **MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL AND SPORTING ORGANISATIONS**

Membership of professional associations and sporting organisations demonstrates an interest in the area and a dedication to the profession. Through such membership, teachers' awareness of relevant changes and developments is maintained, and they are provided with reference groups and a networking system beyond their immediate department or school.

The male Heads of Department had the highest overall membership of professional associations (23), followed by the male teachers (20), female teachers (16), and nongovernment school female Heads of Department (15). Table 14 lists the major professional associations and sporting organisations patronised by the respondents. From this table, it is evident that the highest membership is accorded to the two professional associations, Australian Council for Health Physical Education and Recreation (30) and the Western Australian Physical Education Teachers' Association (27). ACHPER is the original and perhaps best recognised professional body for physical educators in Australia, but is viewed by many practising teachers as irrelevant to their immediate needs, hence the relatively low membership rate amongst respondents in the 'female teacher' and 'male teacher' categories. WAPETA is a local body and was formed in Western Australia in 1989. Its focus remains largely in the government sector, hence the lack of patronage by the nongovernment respondents. Many government school physical educators find it more personalised, with better access to individual teachers within schools than ACHPER. The low registration fee is possibly a further reason for its relative popularity.

## **SUMMARY**

The demographic and background data gathered from the respondents included age, marital status and dependents, qualifications, number of schools at which the teacher

**TABLE 14**  
**CATEGORY OF TEACHER BY MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL AND SPORTING ORGANISATIONS**

CATEGORY OF TEACHER	PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND SPORTING ORGANISATIONS						TOTAL
	ACHPER	WAPETA	COEDAWA	DANCE ASSOC.	WASSA	SPORT ORGAN.	
FEMALE TEACHERS	7	7		1	1		16
MALE TEACHERS	3	8	3		3	3	20
FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	1	1				1	3
MALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	10	10	1		2		23
NONGOVERNMENT FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	9	1				5	15
TOTAL	30	27	4	1	6	9	

ACHPER: Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation  
WAPETA: Western Australian Physical Education Teachers' Association  
COEDAWA: Camping and Outdoor Education Association of Western Australia  
DANCE ASSOC: Dance Association of Western Australia  
WASSA: Western Australian Schools' Sports Association  
SPORT ORGAN: Other Sporting Organisations



had taught, length of service at the present school, breaks in service, reasons for career choice, future career plans, responsibilities assumed in addition to teaching responsibilities, and membership of professional and sporting organisations. Overall, there were few differences between the profiles of the female and male physical educators.

However, three aspects of the respondents' profiles were perceived to be distinctly different for women and men, in terms of any influence these factors may have on promotional aspirations. Firstly, the 'marital status and dependents' data revealed that considerably more males than females were married and had dependents. On the one hand this may indicate a reluctance or inability on the part of female teachers to manage a dual career, and may therefore be seen as a factor in their lack of promotional aspirations. On the other hand however, the data could be interpreted as an optimistic indicator that the female teachers were in a position to apply for promotion, since many were unencumbered by additional family commitments.

Secondly, the 'reasons for career choice' of females focused on their enjoyment of sport, in contrast to the males who chose physical education teaching primarily because of their sporting talent. This differential influence may indicate a deeper significance with regard to female and male perceptions of the subject area, their aspirations and levels of competitiveness. Perhaps the stereotype of the 'confident and competitive' male and the 'affiliative' female has some application with regard to the teachers interviewed.

Finally, the 'future career plans' of respondents in the 'female teacher' and 'male teacher' categories differed considerably. While only three of the women indicated any aspirations towards Head of Department, six of the males expressed intentions to apply for the position. Possible reasons for this differential career planning will be discussed in the chapters to follow.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND QUALITIES FOR A HEAD OF DEPARTMENT IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

This chapter outlines the findings of Phase 1 of the study regarding female and male physical educators' perceptions of the essential skills and qualities required by a Head of Department in physical education.

A categorisation of responses by sex revealed few differences in the way in which females and males viewed the Head of Department position, their expectations of the leadership role, or the skills and qualities they believed to be essential in order for a Head of Department in physical education to be effective. The complete ranked list comprised 27 skills and qualities. Statistical analysis of the comparative mean rankings of these skills and qualities by female and male teachers, using the Spearman rho correlation coefficient, yielded a correlation of 0.922. This is significant at the 0.001 level.

The top 10 'skills and qualities' were ranked by female teachers in the following descending order: organisational skills; able to produce a positive working environment; management skills; communication skills; good people skills; leadership skills; openness/honesty/fairness; ability to promote physical education in the school; decision-making skills; and enthusiasm. Male teachers' rank order for the top 10 skills and qualities was, in descending order: organisational skills; communication skills; leadership skills; good people skills; decision-making skills; management skills; able to produce a positive working environment; openness/honesty/fairness; administrative skills; and staff oriented /loyal.

Table 15 lists the mean rankings of essential skills and qualities for a Head of Department in physical education by sex.

**TABLE 15**

**MEAN RANKINGS OF ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND QUALITIES FOR A HEAD OF DEPARTMENT IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION BY SEX**

RANKING	FEMALE	MALE
1	• Organisational skills	• Organisational skills
2	• Able to produce a positive working environment	• Communication skills
3	• Management skills	• Leadership skills
4	• Communication skills	• Good people skills
5	• Good people skills	• Decision-making skills
6	• Leadership skills	• Management skills
7	• Openness/honesty/fairness	• Able to produce a positive working environment
8	• Ability to promote physical education in the school	• Openness/honesty/fairness
9	• Decision-making skills	• Administrative skills
10	• Enthusiasm	• Staff oriented/loyal
11	• Administrative skills	• Reliability
12	• Approachable and caring	• Positive role model
13	• Staff oriented/loyal	• Knowledge of the subject area
14	• Reliability	• Enthusiasm
15	• Flexibility/adaptability	• Ability to promote physical education in the school
16	• Positive role model	• Teaching skills
17	• Knowledge of the subject area	• Forward thinking
18	• Ability to delegate	• Approachable and caring
19	• Forward thinking	• Democratic/inclusive
20	• Democratic/inclusive	• Flexibility/adaptability
21	• Assertiveness	• Assertiveness
22	• Teaching skills	• Realistic attitude
23	• Realistic attitude	• Rapport with students
24	• Rapport with students	• Ability to delegate
25	• Innovative	• Disciplinarian
26	• Disciplinarian	• Innovative
27	• Sporting ability	• Sporting ability

It is evident from Table 15 that within the 10 skills and qualities considered most important for a Head of Department, only two were not included by both the female and male teachers. The women ranked 'enthusiasm' tenth, while the men ranked 'staff oriented/loyal' in that position.

The similar mean rankings of 'essential skills and qualities' given by female and male physical educators implies that their perceptions and expectations of the Head of Department role are congruent and compatible. Had the two sexes differed significantly in their conceptualisation of the leadership role, then a lack of acceptance of a female incumbent by male physical educators would be anticipated, as would possible expressions of dissatisfaction by female physical educators concerning the nature of leadership exhibited by many male Heads of Department. The absence of such a dichotomy in perceptions clarified a fundamental uncertainty regarding the nature of female and male views, and served to guide the subsequent phases of the study.

If both female and male teachers expect similar skills and qualities to be present in their leaders, the question then becomes one of whether they believe that both sexes are equally capable of fulfilling the desirable criteria. This question, together with its implications was investigated in Phases 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the study, and will be addressed in the chapters to follow.

Chapters 7 to 9 will present the composite findings of interviews conducted with government school female and male physical education teachers and Heads of Department concerning their perceptions and expectations of female leadership in physical education.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOL FEMALE PHYSICAL EDUCATORS REGARDING FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

This chapter outlines the composite findings of interviews conducted with female physical education teachers and Heads of Department from government schools, during phases 2, 4 and 5 of the study. The interview data are presented in seven interrelated sections.

Discussion begins with an examination of the Head of Department role. This is followed by a consideration of barriers to promotion, as perceived by the female physical educators. The women's perceptions regarding the expectations of significant others are then addressed. Discussion proceeds to an investigation of the nature in which these expectations are expressed; possible ways in which female physical educators may interpret the expectations; and their resultant career aspirations, or lack of interest in promotion. The chapter concludes with two case studies which serve to illustrate the reality of many of the perceptions and expectations expressed by the female respondents.

#### **THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT ROLE**

Discussion in this section focuses on the Head of Department role; its skill requirements; the ability of women to assume the role; possible differences inherent in female leadership of physical education; preferences for female or male leaders in the subject area; and the image associated with the Head of Department position.

## **Necessary skills for a Head of Department in Physical Education**

Female physical educators' perceptions of the essential skills and qualities for a Head of Department in physical education were outlined in Chapter 6. The quotations which follow serve to elaborate on the exact nature and application of the most crucial of these skills. Aspects highlighted include interpersonal skills; good communication, both within the department and at a whole school level; the ability to delegate and include all staff in the functioning of the department as a team; and the need to promote physical education within the school.

People skills have to be really good, like with your own staff, and being strong with things you want done in the school. Also your discipline, as like a last resort to back up the teachers if there is something they can't resolve ... being able to deal with that. (F20)

Definitely good communication skills and being able to relate to people and the needs of running your department. And then being able to go up to senior staff with everyone else and smooth things over if there are any problems ... to deal with difficulties for your staff. I would definitely say communication and being up front have to be the most important things. Then everything else falls into place. (F25)

An effective HOD gives you a sense of responsibility. You feel you can contribute, you feel you have a part to play, you are a part of the team, rather than the HOD on a pedestal and you as one of the plebs. (F10)

A good sense of fun, sociable, good interpersonal skills, relate well. They are very essential skills. A good communicator. They have to be very good at looking after your interests, making sure they are on the right committees, so that the department is being looked after very well, and PE is being promoted in the school. (F4)

Organisational skills, the ability to delegate, the ability to not take everything on yourself, but to use your other staff members. ...The ability to include everyone in the staff and make them feel important. And making sure that they pick up skills along the way, so you are in fact educating them. (F19)

A number of the women believed that the Head of Department role was undergoing considerable change as it became increasingly managerial in nature:

...The amount of things that you need to do as far as budgeting and costs and management and liaison with other staff. Things at HOD meetings... definitely more management of the staff, supporting them... rather than being a 'dictator' and 'disciplinarian'. (F19)

It's funny isn't it, traditionally you were viewed as the disciplinarian, the manager of students who weren't doing the right thing in PE. I think it is changing. I think there is more encouragement for girls to want to come into that area, because you are more of an administrator or facilitator now, rather than previously I think the HOD was the real... the managing of student behaviour side of it. (F10)

I think it would be difficult to be the aggressor all the time, to be the disciplinarian. But I don't see that as the role as much any more... they can perceive their world to be a little bit more dynamic and diverse, rather than 'you are the disciplinarian'... yes it is an incentive, it is encouraging. (F15)

Some of the respondents felt that this change may render the leadership position more attractive for women who typically favour the collegial, democratic management style, thereby encouraging a greater number of females to apply for promotion.

#### **The ability of females to assume the Head of Department role**

Based on the identified essential skills and qualities required, support for the ability of women to assume the Head of Department role in physical education was unanimous. Further, more than half the participants believed that certain aspects of the position could be fulfilled more effectively by a female. They perceived women to be "more organised", "more flexible", "better communicators" and "more supportive of the staff" than males, highlighting their listening abilities and caring qualities in remarks such as:

An important skill is the ability to listen, just sit back occasionally and listen... and look at what is happening in your department ... awareness, I suppose. And I think females are a little better at that than males. Males tend to bulldoze through. I just think you have to have an awareness and be able to look at the dynamics. (F19)

A female generally has better organisational skills. The organisation of carnivals and things like that, I think they could do that very well. (F2)

...Definitely capable, probably more so in a lot of cases, especially if they are more aware of what people are thinking and feeling and concerned for them, rather than just getting the job done and going home. (F25)

A female can be just as good in charge as a male... A different sort of approach when it comes to discipline, obviously. There is no reason why each can't hold equal status. I don't see that it's a matter of sex. (F3)

These promising remarks raise the obvious question of why then are there so few females in Head of Department positions, and what has dampened their promotional aspirations? If these women saw themselves as capable of doing as good a job, if not better, than the males currently occupying the positions, then why did they not apply for promotion? Perhaps some answers lie in the subtleties of qualifying statements made by a number of respondents, who expressed concern over the acceptance of women in the Head of Department position by other members of the physical education staff. They believed that the success of women as leaders depended upon the level of support provided by their colleagues.

It can be done by females and done well, as long as the rest of the department works behind the person. (F5)

I don't see that there are any problems, especially since I really believe that the role of HOD has changed. There are some, not dominating, but very, very competent females out there, that would be suitable for those positions. And they have been there long enough to know... I think seniority is quite important. I think, often with that, goes that extra respect and that sort of thing. But I can't see why that would be a problem. For the males who work under them it might be an issue, if they have very rigid views of women, and their place in society. (F10)

I think, being objective, if you look at what needs to be done in the job, then males and females can do that, but when you look at the people side of things and who you're dealing with, I think that maybe the female has a little bit of a more difficult job. It depends on your staff, but I think if you have an older Phys Eder, whether they're male or female, they're not as accustomed to having a female in charge, and that some of those things are more difficult because of that. (F4)

Such comments provide some insight into women's perceptions about the responses and anticipated reactions of significant others regarding female Heads of Department, and how these views may function to cast doubts in their minds concerning the appropriateness of applying for the position. The barrier appears to be one of perceptions, both those of the female teachers themselves and those of significant others, rather than inadequacy through lack of essential attributes.

### **Differences inherent in female leadership in physical education**

Within the literature, there is considerable debate as to whether women and men manage differently. Opinion is divided with regard to the existence of a distinctly



feminine style of leadership. Aspects of leadership style, that have been highlighted as distinctly female by proponents of gender difference, include interactive conversation; minimisation of conflict (Maltz & Borker, 1982; Tannen, 1991); attribution of blame for problems to themselves, as distinct from males who are more likely to blame the organisation and external forces (Martin & Smith, 1993); genuine interest in and concern for other staff and students within the organisation (Martin & Smith, 1993; Shakeshaft, 1986); and democratic and participatory approaches (Marshall, 1985; Shakeshaft, 1986). Other writers (Cahill, 1993; Milligan & Genoni, 1993; O'Leary & Ickovics, 1992; Sitterley & Duke, 1988; Weiner, 1993) contend that there is no evidence to support the claim that women and men have different leadership styles, suggesting that the only difference is the level of opportunity they experience.

When the respondents were asked whether they believed that a female would lead the Physical Education Department differently, six of the 18 teachers felt that some changes would be evident. One suggested area of change was the creation of a more open, flexible, and inclusive environment, as indicated by comments such as:

Females seem to value the ability to produce a positive working environment more than the males. They are more concerned about the individuals in the department... just more approachable. (F25)

I think too that women are more open to suggestions, and they're open to change... if somebody says something and they think "Oh yeah, that's right, perhaps that is the best way to go about it"... they're quite happy to change, but I find that the guys that I've worked under - it's no way... what they say tends to go, and it's under great stress and duress that they give up. (F5)

A second aspect, that the respondents believed may be different, related to the efficiency and precision with which tasks would be completed.

I think women are much more conscientious. Generally women tend to... I don't know whether it's because they do feel that they are under scrutiny and they have to do things well, or whether it's just one of those things that is built in, but if they have taken on something, they will finish it and make sure it is done well. (F5)

I think the good ones would. I think attention to detail might be different. It's OK for a female to do lots of paper work and make sure every last thing is covered. ...I have not worked with a male HOD who has been fastidious in paper work and attention to detail. (F1)

The third suggested difference focused on more equitable opportunities for girls in physical education, and a more balanced and meaningful program for all students.

One comment that I've had from another female staff member, is that since I've been here (as Acting HOD), and I took over from a male, there's been an improvement in the sport and the opportunities for females. That's just been picked up from results and mentions and that sort of thing in the daily notices. She said there seemed to be more of an equal opportunity for the girls, rather than the males dominating. (F4)

A lot of the information that comes into the department is directed towards the male high profile sports like football or basketball, and things like that. For a male as HOD, he can follow it up and get information out, whereas when things come in from the female side, like the Women's Sport Foundation, or the sports girls' breakfast perhaps he thinks, or he's got the impression that it's not important. I certainly make an effort to make sure that we get girls going along to those sorts of things, and I advertise it as well. So I think that probably there is more of a balance. (F13)

Yes. I think they have more empathy with the students and how they feel - both boys and girls. But I sort of see that male Phys Eders and the boys don't see that they need the other side of things... the co-ordination side of things as much, and I think female HODs would probably make sure that would happen, which would be an advantage to the boys. I also think they would give more chances to the girls to be able to develop at their own level. (F5)

Three of the female teachers interviewed believed that the traditional stereotyped nature of physical education was undergoing some change, and that programs were becoming more balanced and equitable, even with male leadership. They concluded that having a female Head of Department would not alter the situation.

I think people out there have changed. We don't have the footy, the cricket, for the boys, the netball and the hockey for the girls and that is it. I think Phys Eders in general have become a bit better educated and they are actually exposing the kids to a lot of sports, rather than just the same stereotyped ones every year. (F19)

One other respondent, who had been an acting Head of Department on three separate occasions, spoke of the limited impact she had been able to have on the functioning of the department during her leadership terms.

There's a real dilemma between whether females getting into the position can change things about the system, or whether in fact, they just become a part of the system and take on those characteristics that have always been attached to the position and just reinforce what the men are saying, and nothing in fact changes. (F13)

It is possible that her frustrations were amplified due to the 'acting' nature of her position, and the fact that she was temporarily fulfilling someone else's role. This was raised as a problem by a number of the participants, who had become disillusioned with the Head of Department position following 'acting' experiences. It is unfortunate that such seemingly valuable leadership experience is being perceived so negatively by many female physical educators. Weiner (1993) warned of the possible dangers of adopting democratic and consultative approaches within existing structures, and suggested that this is only possible in an open and supportive environment. For a woman temporarily assuming the leadership role of a well established male Head of Department, the likelihood of a fully supportive department is questionable.

#### **Preferences for a female/male Head of Department**

When asked to indicate their preference for a female or male Head of Department, a number of the women expressed difficulty in answering, because they had never worked with a female in the position. However, the majority of respondents intimated that it was the skills and qualities of the individual that mattered, rather than their sex. Comments included:

I think it is the individual. If you are good enough then people would respect you. If you are not they don't. That's how I judge it. I don't think it matters being male or female. (F1)

I think it all comes down to the individual. If the individual is a good communicator and a skilled person, it makes no difference. I have seen some absolutely fantastic female HODs and some fantastic male HODs and I have seen some shockers. I don't think the sex makes any difference. (F2)

Having not worked with any other HODs other than a male, that is a difficult one to answer. I don't think it is a gender thing. If they do their job... if they fulfil those qualities that I perceive as being very important to their role... sex is irrelevant. (F10)

While none of the participants expressed preference for a female Head of Department, two of the women suggested that they would find it easier to work with a male leader.

I think it depends on the person. If you can relate well to that person, and communicate well and generally get on with them, I think you can have a good working relationship, and I've certainly had that with my male HODs. It would depend on the female how you would relate to that as well. Maybe I wouldn't like a female telling me what to do... I don't know, I haven't experienced that. (F4)

Yes, I think it would depend on who it was. I would find it very difficult now to work under another female... That person would have to be... in my mind I would have to know that they knew better than me and could do better than me. I would find that very difficult. You get set ideas of what you're going to do... if a younger female came along and was HOD and was good, and could prove that she knew exactly what was going on, then I would be happy with that, but she would have to prove that to me. (F5)

Sampson (1981) stated that "the severest obstacle to women leaders may be the lack of acceptability by other women" (p.29). It was suggested by the female Head of Department that this situation was magnified in physical education due to the historical male dominance in the area. Her comment was:

Some of the biggest knockers of females are females. They just don't give each other credit for being able to do things, particularly in physical education which has always been that sort of a male domain. They seem very reluctant to be told what to do by another female. (F13)

Although the female physical educators interviewed were clearly able to identify the essential skills and qualities for a Head of Department, and unanimously agreed that females exhibited the required characteristics and were capable of assuming the leadership role, less than half of the women expressed any interest in the promotional position. One emergent contributing factor was doubt regarding the responses of significant others and the extent of their support for a female Head of Department. This is reinforced by the preferences for male leadership expressed by two of the respondents. A further perceived deterrent is the image of the Head of Department position.

## **Image of the Head of Department position**

Historically, physical education developed a poor image which has been responsible for a great deal of damage in terms of the status and credibility of the subject, and also in the perceptions of female teachers with regard to their role in the area. This negative image, focused on the 'slack' male physical educator, has not been conducive to encouraging women to strive for promotion. Although a number of respondents were optimistic that the 'jock' image was being dissipated through the influx of "more dedicated" and "well organised" male teachers, and the fact that women in the department were gaining a higher profile, taking on more responsibility and making a greater contribution to decision-making, one half of the participants expressed their continued disenchantment with current male Heads of Department and the image of the leadership position. Comments included:

Sadly in PE the impression is you've got to be seen to be slack, you've got to be seen to be not preparing. Like in our office, if anyone ever dares say they did work on the weekend, everyone teases you. You do work on the weekend but to say you do is the big 'no-no'... especially the boys. They expect it of the girls I think, but the boys, no, and to do work at lunchtime is a real 'no-no'. They have to give the impression of being macho men, that 'she's cool', or shoot baskets at lunchtime... that is how they are cloned. Don't try anything new and don't worry about anything. It's almost like the easiest, slackest way is the best way. Let's have no fuss, no extra work, and let's go through the motions to keep the admin happy, or the parents happy. I could tell you a million times I've heard this statement... "We are not getting paid for that so why do it". (F13)

I think some women are put off by the discipline factor, because with HOD comes discipline. They tend to think "I couldn't do that. I couldn't barrel down a kid if he or she had done the wrong thing." When in fact they could, in a slightly different manner, and still be just as effective. I think that might put a lot of females off. Also fighting for time and timetabling and all that sort of stuff, with other HODs and the negotiation skills that are needed. Maybe that is what women see as really hard. (F19)

That is a real problem, the fact that the men who have been in there for 20 years are just not moving anywhere else. And they don't have the qualifications or even the ability to do the Deputy's job. So they can't move up... and they get everyone else in the department to do their work for them... they delegate... (F6)

When you consider the position of health and even physical education in the whole of the state, it doesn't have a very high profile at all. A lot of schools are actually getting rid of PE out of the school curriculum, and to be honest, in my opinion, that's got a lot to do with the people who are

the key role players.- the HODs. They've been there, and they've done the job for 10/20 years, and they're not good, and they don't fight for it. They're happy, they come to work, they get their pay, they're not motivated, and the profile of PE reflects the HODs in the positions. (F3)

I just think all senior masters have given up and hate teaching. They're bored - I never want to be like that. Quite a lot of my friends are always peeved that I won't do the job because I don't want to become like those guys... the further away from being a 'doer' you get, the less in touch with reality you become, and I always thought I don't ever want to lose touch with what's actually happening. I have come across two HODs that have been good in all the 13 years I've worked. I'm around senior masters that are forever wearing you down about "Don't do this, don't do that"... in the end you become disillusioned and it is much better to breathe in and do your thing, being quite flamboyant in what you do, and breathe out and let their being disillusioned be their problem. (F1)

A further deterrent to the promotional aspirations of women is the perceived incongruous relationship between the Head of Department workload, and the rewards offered.

As a HOD you do get the time off which is kind of nice for organisation, but the increase in pay I don't think is relative to the extra pressure and the responsibility. I don't think it's enough. (F5)

It is just not for me. It is just not what I want to do. I have no desire to get there. I would like to be in a place where I have more responsibility and more authority but I don't think HOD is it. I think I could handle it, I don't think I would have a problem with it. I'm pretty organised, and I would like to think that I was fair... They would have to make it a lot more attractive though. Just for the sake of saying "I'm HOD" - no way!. Just saying at present that you can have a couple of extra periods off, and two thousand extra dollars a year, which is nothing after tax anyway... I can't see it is an attractive enough proposition for the extra stress and everything else. (F2)

The acting position - a lot of work. I think that you sort of deserve your extra four dot periods. You know, that's not enough. I never get to do any marking at school. It's always admin, and I think that PE is an area where you really have to do a lot as HOD with the out-of-school activities. It's one of the few jobs where you actually have to organise the whole school into things like the swimming carnival and athletics carnivals, and it's a big commitment. (F4)

## REMAINING SYSTEMIC BARRIERS TO PROMOTION

Education Department policy and associated regulations have historically had a significant bearing on women's promotional opportunities. These policy-initiated

barriers to female advancement were largely removed during the period 1968 to 1972, and affirmative action was implemented in 1986. In 1995, the remaining structural barriers which may differentially impact on women's promotional prospects are status, with regard to requirements for permanency and four-year training; subject-specific limitations, in terms of the requirement for teaching experience at Year 12 level; and aspects of the merit promotion system.

The female physical educators interviewed identified three aspects of the government education system which hindered their advancement, namely the lack of opportunity to advance within the system; the implicit expectation of country service; and the requirement for experience.

### The system

It is worthy of note that comments regarding systemic barriers were made only by those respondents who expressed aspirations for promotion to Head of Department. The female teachers who were not interested in career advancement had obviously not experienced, nor did they perceive, any such structural impediments.

The frustrations of the women who desired promotion, in terms of the lack of opportunity to advance within the government education system, are evident in comments such as:

I have these goals that I want to achieve.. I don't want to be 40 and get the HOD position. I don't want to be 35... I had these plans that in two years I want to be HOD, but the system is not helping me to achieve my goals. (F3)

It's not so much in the system, but the system itself that doesn't give you the opportunities. (F13)

So my block is the system, I can't go anywhere... and now I'm trying to apply for positions to go sideways to get to promotion, and find that the HODs are also applying for those sideways positions, because they want to get out of the schools for a while. But, when that job finishes at the end of the year, guess who goes straight back into the system- the HODs do, because it's 'their' job. (F6)

There's nowhere to go. because we are being restrained by something that happened 20 years ago, and that is that these men got their jobs, not necessarily on merit, and now we can't get rid of them. (F2)

The reality of a limited number of promotional positions and the stagnant nature of the system is both a major constraint on the effective implementation of all policy changes, and a significant barrier to increasing the number of female Heads of Department in physical education.

### **Experience**

In addition to the constraints imposed by the limited number of available promotional positions, aspiring respondents voiced their frustrations regarding the emphasis placed on 'experience'. They felt discriminated against through having to compete with current Heads of Department who had gained experience over the years by virtue of their position. These women believed themselves to be equally, if not more, capable of leading a department, but said that they had no chance of gaining the appointment, because of the need to compete against the accumulated years of 'experience'.

Equal opportunity has been around since 1986, but when you consider it in our the education system, it has really only been effective since 1991 with merit promotion. However, a lot of people who hold HOD positions have been in them for a lot longer than 1991... they've been there for 15 or 20 years. (F6)

I think our problem is that we're competing against something which happened 20 years ago. Decisions that were made then are affecting our chances now. You know...how I perform today isn't really being considered because 'they've got the experience'. (F3)

The comment has been made to me that if I applied for a position outside teaching- HOD positions- that I would have had 10 times the chance of getting a position over the other people that were interviewed with me. However, the others keep getting the positions because they've got the experience. They may not have the ability, but they've got the experience. I've got the potential, and I've got the skills, so in private enterprise I'd have far more chance, whereas in our system, it's like "Sorry we don't want to know you because this other person did this 20 years ago". (F2)

But how do I get the experience? Tell me and I'll go and get it. (F3)

A traditional means of gaining experience in the leadership role has been to assume the 'acting position' when a Head of Department has been on leave or secondment.



However, when this avenue was suggested to the women, their response was rather negative:

I was in the position where I had to go to another school in order to get permanency, so I worked at one school for three years and when the acting position came up it went to the second male- we weren't even given an option. Then I went to the next school and actually went out of the government system. I needed that time to get experience in the other system, and now I'm back. From my point of view, I've been at a number of schools over a short period of time, so I haven't been able to qualify in other people's eyes for acting positions. (F3)

It's the luck of the draw... you could be at a school where the HOD doesn't go on leave for 10 years, whereas at the next school, the guy might die or go on long service leave. So it's the luck of the draw, where you are at a particular time. (F6)

Clearly, the respondents felt that the opportunities to assume an acting role were somewhat arbitrary, and there was little guarantee that the positions would arise. Further concern lies in the disillusionment expressed by a number of women who had been acting Heads of Department, and the fact that their experiences in this role had in many cases deterred them from applying for a substantive position.

An alternative solution to the problem of gaining experience was offered by one aspiring young physical educator who related her struggle for recognition. Frustrated by her lack of opportunities in the school, she approached the Principal with her proposal and was granted support and status.

I am now totally separate to PE. HE is run as its own entity. I'm seen as the HOD of Health- it's just totally separate. The new HOD had no expertise in the area of health so he handed it to me. And that's the only way I can advance in PE now, is to try and move through this way... I've persisted and it hasn't put me off because it's made me angry, and I've channelled my anger into the fact that I will make something of it. (F6)

A number of other respondents wishing to advance their career saw no alternative but to move out of the government education system.

But I think I can use my skills to better myself, and if those skills are more appreciated elsewhere, then I'm going to get out! (F6)

That's the situation I've come to.. I'm looking for positions outside education, because one, they don't recognise my qualifications, and two, there are just no positions for me to move up into. (F3)

You look at a lot of women in the system that I could classify as being ambitious, they go outside the system... there's a lot of movement of capable women outside the education system to positions in the Health Department or what ever... They perceive themselves as successful, but there's no avenue for them in the Education Department. And most of them have gone on and done really well. I can't think of anyone I know that hasn't succeeded. Once they've gone out of PE they've gone straight to the top. (F13)

What's the point in continuing in a system like this. Why not just bide your time and get a job at a private school. Personally, I'm just waiting for one person to leave and then I'm going for it. (F2)

Perhaps this is a contributing factor to the lack of female representation at Head of Department level in physical education, in that females with any aspirations simply leave the teaching profession to pursue alternative careers which offer more avenues for advancement. Such moves may have led to a depletion of female teachers with desirable skills and qualities from the physical education area, leaving behind those with few promotional aspirations.

#### **Country service**

In the past, country service has been a prerequisite for obtaining permanent status, and an expectation of gaining promotion. Under the present system, the majority of teachers promoted to a Head of Department position are still likely to take up their appointment at a country school. The importance of geographic mobility therefore, presents itself as a discriminating factor against married females due to restriction placed on them by family commitments. It is also perceived to generally disadvantage female teachers due to the isolation of many country centres.

All the female teachers interviewed perceived country service as either a personal deterrent, or a major factor discouraging other female teachers from applying for promotion. Responses included:

There is something that I want to do and somewhere that I want to be, but I don't think the system is geared towards me, or women in general, who can't go country. Hopefully there's some other avenue that I can go through to get there, because otherwise I'm going to go out of the system. It's crazy really. (F3)

There are no positions to apply for and those that come up are East Mukinbudin or just so remote. I can't go to the country because my husband owns a business and I'm not prepared to live down there when he's up here - that's no life! (F13)

It's really unreasonable for women to uproot and go to the country - let's face it, it's much easier for a man to do it. No matter what, we are still not an equal sex to males. Men are still perceived as the breadwinners, and they predominantly go where their jobs take them. (F6)

In my situation my husband would have to fold his business, and we earn too much money through the business to give it up and try to live on one wage somewhere in the outback. My husband's a DJ, so if I went remote bush, what would he do? (F3)

People just don't want to go back to the country. They have already got a partner who has a very secure position. A female would have to be earning more, to make that sacrifice. (F10)

I will try again for promotion. A lot of it is going to depend on which schools come up. For me, having a husband as well, it makes it difficult... He has also applied for level 3, so we are hoping he gets a position down in the country. (F19)

This is my third year as acting HOD. I think I've probably changed my thought on promotion a little bit after having been in the job, so if it happens, then it happens, but I'm not now at the stage where I'll go to the country and really chase promotion. (F4)

...I wonder if it is as daunting for males to go to Gnowangerup for four years as it is for a female. ...there is still a lot of traditional family type structures where the male gets the promotional position. And if it is he who has the promotional position, it is not as difficult... you know there is the family... like he can take his family up there. But if I at the time was going up there, I was going up there as a single female. Fitzroy Crossing, Gnowangerup... just didn't appeal to me! If on the other hand I was applying for a promotional position within the city and I knew that my chances of getting a job in the city were just as strong as, you know, that I had as much chance of getting a job in Perth as I had in the country then I perhaps would have made a move earlier. Promotion wasn't the be all and end of it for me at that stage. (F31)

The fact that country service is so closely linked with promotion is perceived by women as a barrier. The expectation that teachers will move to the country appears to continue to dampen promotional aspirations despite changes in other aspects of policy over the past 25 years.

## **Redressing the imbalances**

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, concern regarding the imbalance of promotional opportunities for females and males escalated. By this time most of the discriminatory policies and regulations had been removed, and measures to encourage greater participation by female teachers in decision-making at the school level were being put into place. The Equal Opportunity Act (1984) and Affirmative Action (Equal Opportunity for Women) Act (1986) propagated new Education Department policies and initiatives to redress past injustices.

Almost half of the female teachers interviewed commented on the implementation of what they perceived to be 'compensatory' measures. They viewed the attempts of affirmative action to encourage female promotion rather negatively, making comments like:

I think it should be a matter of having the right people in the job, and not just because they're female. I haven't liked a lot of the affirmative action which is pushing females forward. (F13)

I feel it's important that somebody who wants to be in that position should be able to stand on an equal footing with males to get the position, rather than have any special favours granted to her because she is a woman. (F3)

i disagree with putting people in positions just because they are female, as happened in a few instances. "We have 15 positions available so 10 must be filled by women." I disagree with that. (F25)

There is still a lot of bitterness and I have heard the guys speak about women who have picked up special promotion, and it is not always complimentary. (F1)

These women believed that the injustices of the past could not be reversed, and that females and males should be judged on their merits and personal attributes, rather than being either discriminated against, or compensated for, because of their sex.

Females might be perceived as having been put in the position unfairly without having earned it... and in a lot of cases I'd say that would probably be true. A lot of females who would end up getting a position wouldn't necessarily end up demonstrating their capacity to handle it... It could then be a complete cycle and people would be pointing the finger and saying "I told you she should never have got the position" because she's not doing a good job. (F13)

I just know from the experiences I have had that the new males coming through are definitely not as bitter at this stage in their career. The three I worked with early on, all of them were due for deputies jobs and right at that moment equal opportunity came in. In those days you worked so many years, your name was on the list, you got a position... and women weren't getting it. Then it came in that half of the deputy positions had to go to women. In theory a female may have only taught for four years and walked in and picked up a deputy's job and beaten a man who had been teaching for 19 years. That bred a lot of dissidence really. A senior master I was with... that was the end of him. He was really next cab off the rank. He didn't get a promotion, still hasn't got one. Very bitter. That era, and in this region, there are a lot who were due for promotion and who didn't get it because the women who were much less experienced picked up the positions. There may have been eight women vying for six jobs... nearly everyone was a winner. Whereas there may have been a 100 men vying for six jobs, so they perceived it as very unfair and I kind of do too. I think they were a bit hard done by. (F1)

I know that a lot of males on staff are anti this positive discrimination or affirmative action to do with deputies, believing that females seem to get a better opportunity. And I think it harbours a bit of resentment among the males, and they wonder whether a female in a promotional position got there because of how good she was, or because of some special conditions that were applied. I've heard before that when a guy's gone for a deputy's job, and some of them are still sex-linked, he said "If I had been a female, I would have got a job.. I missed out this year because I'm a male, and I can probably do the job better than those females can." So I think it does cause resentment. (F4)

In 1991, 'promotion by merit' was introduced for secondary schools, thereby devaluing seniority as the major criterion for advancement. The aim of this new promotion policy was to select the most suitable applicant for each position in a fair and equitable manner.

Respondents who raised the issue of merit promotion tended to express some reservations regarding the policy's worth for women. Their comments included:

A lot of females have said they would have preferred to stick with the old system because they don't feel they can push themselves forward, and it's going to advantage those people who can promote themselves. It's hard to write and be so 'cocky' about yourself - the boys can do it. Women tend to see it as being full of themselves, whereas the guys say "Well - I'm just writing down what I've done." (F2)

The guys just don't seem to mind boasting about themselves. I sat down with a guy to write my CV, and I said "I can't say that, that's nothing..." and he said "No, no. Put it down, and we can make it bigger and better than it is." I think our modesty can be a disadvantage. (F13)

I think men make more of what they do, everyone knows what they do, whereas women tend to get on and do it, and they don't get the accolades.

But the men still end up moving through the system a lot quicker because people have had to hear about what they have done. Women might tend to move things along more quickly and get more done, but they don't make that much of a scene about it. (F3)

I applied for this acting HOD position for six months only, and the guy who got it couldn't do the job. And I did his job while he got the pay. I went to all his meetings, everything. It's around our district that I was HOD and he was getting the money for it. He wrote his application up really well, having had experience at a primary school six or seven years ago... and people thought he would be able to do the job better because he had done something like it before. I just found that really trying... (F6)

These comments reflect a sense of disillusionment regarding the fairness with which merit promotion is administered. They suggest that the true attributes and capabilities of applicants can still be overlooked due to the need to espouse one's virtues, be they true or false. While overcoming the discriminatory criterion of seniority, it introduces alternative criteria which may prove to be equally discriminatory. The need to promote oneself, an essential element of merit promotion, may also be disadvantageous to females who have traditionally been portrayed as less adept at this skill.

In summary, the nature of the government promotional system in education was perceived by aspiring women as a major barrier to their career advancement. Their frustrations with regard to the lack of opportunities to gain promotion; the requirement for experience, but limited means of gaining it; the implicit expectation of country service in order to secure a position; and the questionable purported advantages for women of the merit promotion system, have in many cases combined to lead these women in search of alternatives outside the government education system.

A further reality which may contribute to the lack of female applicants for promotion in physical education is the competition that exists among teachers vying for the limited number of promotional positions. Despite the probability that the female physical educators would rank highly on competitive characteristics as compared with their counterparts in other subject areas, the fact that they are

having to contend with male physical educators who are also highly competitive, in a male-dominated arena, would most likely result in the woman stepping aside. Perhaps even the prospect of entering such a competition is intimidating for many female teachers, and therefore dampens their promotional aspirations.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

Participants in this study identified a number of assumptions or expectations that they perceived as delimiting the promotional opportunities and aspirations of women. These expectations have been grouped under the headings of assumed male leadership; a short-term career for women; family responsibilities; lack of ambition; stereotypical roles and behaviours; and the male model of leadership that pervades the subject area.

### **Assumed male leadership**

The fact that there have been only seven female Heads of Department in physical education is in itself a significant indicator of male dominance in the area. This originated due to the subject's close links with sport, historically a male domain, and has been perpetuated by the continued higher profile accorded to male sports, and the associated perceptions regarding the nature of physical education. As a result of the historical male dominance in the area, there is an associated expectation that the Head of Department will be male. This expectation exists not only among physical educators, but also among other staff, the school administration, students and their parents, and society in general. The majority of respondents in this study recognised this as a major deterrent to aspiring females.

A comment made by one of the women summed up the situation as seen by many teachers:

I just find the situation in PE, as it is... it just doesn't seem to fit a female. It's just a feeling that you get. The guys, the admin, the students wouldn't be happy with it. It just wouldn't be right. (F5)

A number of other respondents embellished this statement to highlight their perceptions of traditional societal expectations regarding female leadership in physical education:

Of course a female can be HOD. It's just our society that has branded us. Certain qualities or not certain qualities. ...When you are talking about sporting society, even though it is changing slowly, I think a lot of people still regard PE as being a male-dominated profession. I actually had that comment passed onto me, by some people who aren't my friends. We were in a situation where the cricket was on TV... one of the people from a very traditional type family made a comment about me knowing the rules. And one of the guys said "You're one of those that likes to compete with the men aren't you?". That went down like a lead balloon. The traditional sector of the lounge room laughed, but I didn't. That attitude is still around. That is the biggest thing to shake off. (F2)

Men want to make their career their life. Women see other things in life apart from their job. There is still that mentality of the men being the bread winners and providing, and I think that's still very much ingrained. While those sorts of expectations are there within society, although we're making some inroads, the guys think they have failed if they haven't gotten somewhere in their careers. (F3)

Everything is so firmly entrenched in our society and in the education system that it's unfortunately working against us. ...The expectation is there that a male will be HOD. Women don't continue to fight... I guess they don't see it as worthwhile to persist. It's a lost cause. (F6)

I guess it has been only recently accepted that the women can do the job. I was talking to one of the females here and she said "It is always a man who does the job" type of thing. Traditionally in the back of your mind, it is still there. (F20)

I know that many people feel really uncomfortable about the thought of a female in charge. I think it depends on the male staff that she has to cater for in her own department. I think that could be a real problem. (F10)

Three of the teachers related their personal experiences in the school system as evidence of how such expectations can hinder the advancement of women:

I did have an experience in one school where the senior master was going off on long service leave, and one of us would be acting head, and I was actually the most experienced, but he didn't ask me. He just gave it to one of the other males who was one of my really good buddies. He had taught for two years less than me, and was a fantastic guy but not a really good organiser, and I often giggle to myself that he never asked me if I wanted to do it. ...He said he didn't because I was a female.... He was



very much locked into male leaders and women workers. I probably would have done it. (F1)

I've been applying for a number of positions and someone approached me and said "You know you're female... well it's sort of a male club". All the positions are in the male club. That's the perception that people have, that women aren't getting the positions because they're just women. (F3)

An acting position came up at my school and the females weren't even considered. A guy automatically got the position. (F3)

I think it depends on the person, but certainly a lot of the time mail is addressed to 'sports master' or 'dear sir'. ...People have come into the staff room and they look for the guy in charge, and then it's "Oh... right... female" sort of thing. So it depends whether the person wants to take on that role or take all those things to heart. (F4)

A number of the respondents suggested that the expectations of male leadership also existed amongst students, most of whom had only experienced male Heads of Department in physical education. The comments of two acting Heads of Department were:

You've still got the perceptions of the students as well in terms of who's in charge. When I first came here, they just assumed that one of the male staff from last year would be HOD, and sometimes six months down the track, they'd go "Oh, you're in charge of PE!" And some of the kids just expected the HOD to be male, and I think that's because of the role models they've always had... a male has always been in charge. (F4)

With Australia being a multicultural society, there are 90 nationalities in this school alone. And some of the boys are still coming from a family where the female has little or no say. And so... we are fighting things that are a lot bigger than just what can I do in my class?. We are fighting society, and when kids bring traditions and things like that in, and we are considered 'only females'... So you are fighting society as well, not only with male chauvinists... (F19)

Throughout conversations with the female physical educators, there was repeated reference to the Head of Department as "he" or as "Senior Master". This further substantiated the strength of the underlying expectations of male leadership. It would require considerable courage and assertiveness to strive for a promotional position in spite of the commonly held expectations of colleagues, students and the wider society.

Not all of the women interviewed perceived the delimiting impact of expectations regarding male leadership in physical education. More optimistic comments included:

I think some men would find it difficult working with a female HOD, but once again it depends on the male. I think that might be the initial perception, but once you have worked with them for a while and you have shown that you're capable of doing the job as HOD, then they're probably more accepting of it. (F4)

Females have been traditionally held back by males and treated badly by males. I agree that we have in the past. But the males are becoming more and more accepting of the female's ability to do things and giving them the leeway, letting them organise important functions and showing that they are just as capable as them. And I think that is the same with anything. That if you show and you prove that you are just as capable. In some cases you do have to prove you are better than them. But if you get in there and show that you are capable, I don't think anyone can put anyone of either sex down. (F19)

It's funny here because a lot of the kids actually think I'm in charge. It's quite a weird situation. And even the staff here... I wasn't in the room when they announced who was taking on the acting HOD position, and there were a few shocks, because the other staff thought it would be me. So I don't really think that there's always that expectation, I think it depends on the person, again. If others know what you're doing around the school and what you can do, and they believe that you can organise things and that you can get on with it, I don't see that being male or female is a problem. But I do think that females have to show that they can do it, and I can also see why they don't, because I can see that organising guys into doing things is difficult. (F5)

It is interesting to note that the third comment was made by the same teacher who was earlier quoted saying that a female Head of Department in physical education "just didn't seem right". She had in fact been offered the acting position on numerous occasions, but had declined.

One respondent spoke of the positive reception she received from the school and community to which she was to be promoted as Head of Department.

I find that really sad. That is really unusual, because when I... I actually went up to the country school and was introduced to a lot of the people on staff. And the principal that was there, he had been there for a while and he was more than happy to have a female HOD PE. He came over, he said it was great, and introduced me to the kids. The kids thought it was great. As he said to me "You are in a tough mining town now. They are going to expect certain things of you." And I actually met a couple of parents. He introduced me to some of the people working on the mines. When they realised where I was coming from and what I stood for, it was very quickly... "this person knows what she is doing". It was quick

acceptance. It wasn't put downs or anything like that. You have to know your own mind and speak up for yourself... (F19)

Unfortunately, she later discovered that she had lost the position on appeal, and did not actually transfer to the school. Details of her experiences will be related as a case study at the conclusion of this chapter.

### **A short-term career for women**

Society's attribution of stereotypical roles to females and males has led to the assumption that women do not consider physical education as a career. The expectation of marriage and family, and the unattractive nature of the job for aging females, were perceived as factors contributing to the short-term definition of the career. The majority of women interviewed alluded to the potency of this expectation, which they perceived to exist amongst both female and male colleagues.

Their comments included:

In society you've still got this thing that it is the female's role to look after the children, and they have to give up their career. (F4)

The women that are married in our department - they're seen as an extra \$35,000 a year. That's how their husbands see it. It's a great way to pay off the mortgage. (F6)

There's always the argument that women aren't going to stay in it for a long time. The baby business has always been a really big argument and I think a lot of females have thought that they wouldn't really stay in teaching a long time, whether it's the babies or not. (F1)

I think the female Phys Eders, a lot of the younger ones, see themselves in the job for only a short time and then "Boom I am out! I am having my family or doing whatever, or I am going to change jobs. I am only in this for a short while". (F19)

Women don't tend to stay in the job as long as what men do. Maybe men see it as once they are in there then that is their career until they retire, and they have a family to support, and so they do that. Women don't look as long term maybe. A lot expect to get out instead of staying till 55. The attitude of being an old Phys Eder and particularly a female Phys Eder, I think that still holds with people. (F1)

Four of the respondents admitted to having remained in physical education, not as a result of their career plans, but rather because their expectations of a short-term career, curtailed by marriage and family, had not come to fruition. They never

intended to make physical education their career. Few of the female physical educators, even the Head of Department, had planned a long-term career in physical education when they commenced teaching.

A further aspect of career development particularly relevant to physical education is age. For physical education teachers whose expertise is based on physical ability, the relationship between age and career is highly significant. There tends to be a distinction made between the old female and the old male physical educator. The results of a previous exploratory study (Bloot, 1992) revealed that the age factor was perceived as far more crucial and relevant for females, probably a reflection of stereotypical attitudes and expectations, rather than biological differences between the sexes. Only a quarter of the women interviewed in this study acknowledged the delimiting impact of expectations regarding the aging female physical educator.

Their comments included:

Unfortunately, a lot of female Phys Ederers think they don't want to be running around on the netball courts when they're 45, 55. (F3)

I hate being in the sun now. I hate that. I hate it. I suppose it is a sign of age. I just hate being out there battling the elements. That is probably one of the reasons I have tended towards the health area. (F10)

That comes back to staying in PE... a lot expect to get out instead of staying till 55. The old attitude of being an old Phys Eder and particularly a female Phys Eder, I think that still holds with people. It should not matter as long as they both kept themselves in reasonable shape and kept up with things and skill level and stuff. Skill level does decline obviously. PE is seen as being for the young people with enthusiasm and vitality... get out there and get involved... sometimes you don't feel like that when you get older. (F2)

The unfortunate consequence of expectations regarding the short-term nature of female careers is that the women who have career aspirations tend not to be taken seriously, or are judged as falling outside the norm. One determined teacher, obviously frustrated by the delimiting impact of such assumptions, suggested that the adjustment of these expectations required two actions:

I think probably the first thing is to change society's thoughts... "That I am the female Phys Eder, I am going to be in the game for five years, and then I am going to retire, have babies, and that is it. I am not going to go any further." Probably the second thing, and I am having to fight this

with my husband at the moment, is the fact that I want a career. I don't want to sit at home and just play mum. But I am different to a lot of other females. (F19)

Two other respondents suggested that, due to the increasing number of women entering and remaining in the workforce, attitudes regarding careers for women are slowly being modified. Such changes will probably take far longer in the education system by virtue of its conservative nature.

### **Family responsibilities**

An important reason frequently cited in the literature for women not seeking promotion is family commitment. Prior to the implementation of promotional systems based on merit rather than seniority, the structural barriers confronting married women were enormous. These clearly reflected societal expectations regarding the acceptable role for women. Despite the eradication of these discriminatory policies, for many women with dependents, the reality of the dual roles of career and family remains a source of pressure, and a move into a promotional position could be perceived to compound the problem.

Traditionally, the female stereotype has been that of wife and mother, supporting the husband in his career and taking on the major portion of the child-rearing responsibilities. There has been little rethinking in a changing society regarding the automatic allocation of family roles according to sex, regardless of individual interest, talent or qualifications.

All of the women interviewed mentioned family orientation or commitment as an 'obvious' barrier to the career advancement of females. Time away from teaching due to child-rearing, restricted geographic mobility, and the tendency to support the husband/partner in his career were three of the inhibiting aspects highlighted.

We've still got that thing in society where... most of the promotional positions come up in the country, so even if you've done country service, you've got to go back there for your promotion, and if females have got children and that sort of thing, they probably won't go because they're still the ones who do all the raising of the kids. So if the married couple

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decides to go its separate ways for promotion reasons for a couple of years, then it's the male who will probably take off. (F4)

I think it is just a difficult one for females to balance if they are going to go into that role, as HOD. I don't think a promotion is something that is going to be happening aged 30. I think it is more likely 35+, and by that stage most females will be, if not already, family planning. For a while the career would definitely be put on hold. And that is where the males are being appointed, while the women are in that age gap. They are busy with family this, family that... Obviously many go back to work now, but that is where the men are getting those positions... that little gap while the females are away. (F10)

When you do apply you're sent to Widgemooltha. I know the guys are too, but the guys are marrying later. So they don't have the commitment or the responsibility. In fact they probably aren't marrying at all. No commitment, they never have it. It is very easy, they are not giving up as much. (F2)

I wouldn't say my partner's position is more important than mine, but certainly he is having more of a say with regards to staying in the city. Having to travel would be out of the question. (F11)

One of the respondents who was in an acting Head of Department position at the time of the interview, explained her dilemma as she considered applying for promotion:

I want to have a family. I am getting older. That becomes a concern. If I go for promotion, and I want to have a family, then I don't particularly want to go back to work for ages. So why bother going for promotion. It all takes too long. It takes let's say seven, eight, or what ever years, maybe more, to then get that promotion, and that is at a time, for females, when you want to have a family. So you are sort of stuck. (F25)

Expectations regarding family responsibilities and a short-term career for women are obviously closely linked, and may result in a variety of scenarios. The fact that men assume female physical educators will teach for a few years and then leave to start a family, is likely to cause them to take women less seriously, and to fail to recognise and acknowledge the endeavours of those women who have career aspirations. Further, it is probable that this attitude will be reflected in men's dealings with women and in the expectations they communicate.

On the other hand, women's anticipation of a career curtailed by marriage and family may be interpreted in one of three ways. For some women with family responsibilities, the reality of raising children and supporting the husband imposes

such time constraints, that promotion is genuinely not an option. For other women, who are not themselves constrained in this way, but have these expectations of females as a societal group, such assumptions may lead to a lack of acceptance of female leadership, due to the perceived instability and inconsistency of a female Head of Department. The following comment illustrates such a view:

...Having a female HOD?... depends who it is. I know of one situation where a female HOD was continually taking leave, having children and coming and going, getting acting people. I wouldn't like that. As long as they were reliable and fairly stable for at least a five year period rather than year on, year off, sort of thing. (F20)

A third interpretation of the expected family responsibilities of women is, that for some, it may have become a convenient excuse for their lack of career aspirations, rather than a real constraint on their advancement. Of the seven past and current female Heads of Department, six were married and had dependents at the time of promotion. Further, of the 10 women interviewed who expressed a desire to be Heads of Department, nine were married, and three had children. Davies (1990) argued that the dual role for women of career and family has become a "convenient peg on which to hang explanations for 'underachievement' and has become almost as much a form of 'victim analysis' as sex role socialisation" (p.39). Since all but one of the female Heads of Department were married with dependents, it would seem that family commitments do not necessarily preclude career, nor act as an insurmountable barrier to the advancement of females. Perhaps for some women, it is a stereotypically acceptable excuse given to placate enquires regarding their lack of promotional aspirations, and to conceal other perceived deterrents.

### **Lack of ambition**

The low promotional orientation of women is frequently offered as an explanation for their underrepresentation at senior levels. The literature reviewed provided conflicting views with regard to the authenticity of such a notion. Sarros (1983) was among those who proposed that the lack of interest in promotion by female teachers is largely a product of gender-role stereotyping and the socialisation



process which neither encourages nor provides incentives for women to aspire to career advancement to the same degree as men. A priority of family commitments has also been suggested as a reason for the lack of ambition amongst women. Others, including Acker (1983), Ball (1987) and Whitcombe (1980), believed that to give women's lack of interest in promotion as the reason for their underrepresentation in leadership positions was a sexist perception, and an oversimplification of a complex situation. Sampson (1986) believed that "women are taking their careers seriously and lack of commitment is not the reason why they don't apply for senior positions" (p.141).

Earlier research evidence from Western Australian government schools indicated that a lack of ambition and low career orientation were perceived as reasons for the underrepresentation of females at Head of Department level in physical education (Bloot, 1992). One third of the women interviewed in this study shared this view, making comments such as:

I guess I haven't really thought about my future. I've always just gone from day to day... I guess I'll just sit back and see what comes along... I've had a go at the acting job and quite enjoyed it, but I have no real ambitions, as you can tell. (F20)

Being in a school like this, none of us have a bad timetable. It is not as if you are going up there to ease your load or anything else. I don't have any desire to be HOD. (F2)

Most people are just quite happy plodding along, and I think that most Phys Eders are fairly active in their life outside the school and are involved in sport and other commitments, and that takes up a lot of their time, so maybe for that reason a lot of them don't have extra ambition to go that one step further. (F4)

Four of the respondents voiced strong objections to the assumption that the desire to seek promotion is perceived as the only measure of career saliency. They expressed a genuine commitment to, and a great deal of satisfaction in, their teaching, and believed that they deserved recognition for their achievements.

Not every one thinks that in life that to be successful you have to keep going up the ladder. You don't. To be successful is to be successful everyday. It is not getting to the top of the mountain, it is going up the mountain that is very important. I just think that sometimes people lose the plot. In our office one of the boys is trying for promotion. He does

all these things to put on his CV. He doesn't do them that well, but as long as it's on your CV. ...I would prefer to do something really well because I think it is important. He does it for another purpose. Not everyone in the whole world wants to be prime minister or not everyone wants to be HOD. Some are just very happy in what they are doing. (F1)

There is definitely more pressure for the male to get on the promotional ladder. They have to get on the promotional band wagon... We have these big chats in the department... like it is better for the guys who are looking for promotion not to do any interschool sport at all, ever, because that counts for nothing when you go for promotion. So one of them is on the finance and school committee and another one refuses to do any interschool sport. Whereas another two of us (females), have something like 15 teams this year and haven't got time to go on any of those committees. Yet the guys will both be in for a promotion. That's one of those bits of inequality you've got. It's very sad that you are forced into satisfying those criteria to get a promotion. Things that should really matter like the interschool sport and being a people's person, being out there doing your thing, that counts for nothing. To me that is really sad. (F13)

I tend to look at things like upper school co-ordinator and coach of a state team as important, instead of just thinking about promotion, and I think females tend to do that. They tend to rationalise things a little bit. (F5)

The kids interest me more than anything else, that's one of the reasons I didn't take the acting job now. I'm involved with the upper school, and I would have to take that job away, and I'd lose that contact, and I really do get on with the kids and I love the kids, so I prefer being in that sort of area. PE isn't the be-all and end-all for me, and I just see that there's an awful lot I have to offer outside of the area. (F17)

The fact that some women choose not to accommodate the patriarchal system by applying for promotion can be viewed as an act of resistance, rather than a passive acceptance of the status quo. The results of a study conducted by Saunders (1993) suggested that more men applied for promotion because men are likely to seek extrinsic rewards such as status and power in promotion positions. They sought ego-identification and self-validation through their work. Alternatively, women were thought to seek intrinsic rewards such as good relationships and improved student outcomes, viewing career as only one part of their lives. However, it is unlikely that many significant others, particularly males, would perceive such a choice in a positive light. It would more probably serve to reinforce their expectations regarding the lack of ambition exhibited by women.

## **Stereotypical roles and behaviours**

According to Randell (1990), deeply entrenched societal attitudes about the roles of men and women as leaders and followers discourage competent women from assuming leadership roles. Stereotypes portraying females as subordinate and dependent, subtly shape the perceptions and attitudes of both women and men in our culture, and their resultant expectations are a major barrier inhibiting women from developing their full range of career opportunities (Al-Khalifa, 1989; Ball, 1987; Davies, 1990; Dyer, 1986; Griffin, 1989; Hoferek, 1986; Knoppers, 1989). These views were supported by a number of the respondents' comments:

I suppose it's society's attitudes that prevail... it's OK for the male to go and chance promotion in the country, and to expect the female to follow, but the other way around, maybe it wouldn't work as well. In society you've still got this thing that it is the female's role to look after the children, and they give up their career rather than actively pursue it. (F4)

You can't say that one sex is better than the other. But I think, probably in the past, not a lot of females have gone ahead and shown that they are capable. They have hidden their light under a bushel and just got on with their own little thing and that is it. Whereas the males have been more loud and "I can do this and I have organised this and I have done this". And therefore they have got ahead. (F19)

I think women are a little more inclined to show that they are not happy with something or admit "This is the pits, I'm out of here", where a guy's ego says "I'm going to stick at this". The men don't like to be seen as quitting or admitting that they made a mistake. (F2)

The lack of drive and aggression exhibited by women was perceived by a minority of the respondents as stereotypically acceptable. Their remarks with reference to promotional success were almost derogatory, devaluing the attributes required to achieve career advancement:

Females in power are too aggressive rather than assertive. I think sometimes some of the power seems to go to their heads. You don't have to be aggressive and totally anti... I have seen some that are totally anti the opposite sex, and blame the men for everything. Now I don't think you can go that far... I think you can be assertive, but still work with both sexes. Some females have been highly aggressive, and I think they need to take a back step. (F19)

When women have ignored the stereotyped notion of male dominance in physical education, and overstepped the boundary of their traditional role by taking on a leadership position, there is a fear that they will be perceived rather negatively, even by their female colleagues. Several of the respondents commented on the stigma attached to becoming a female Head of Department with reference to the uncharacteristic qualities and behaviours these female leaders exhibit:

In PE it's accentuated far more than in the other subject areas, because of the physicality. A lot of women don't particularly want the HOD position because they might be perceived as 'butch'. Particularly if they didn't look very feminine, they are afraid that they'd be perceived as having male characteristics. (F13)

Perhaps the female Heads of Department are seen in this light because the leadership role requires attributes beyond those considered 'female'. Perhaps the struggle against male dominance and the defiance of others' expectations has resulted in an 'overcompensation' in terms of forcefulness and aggression as an aid to survival. Perhaps the leadership role presents these females with a role conflict which they are endeavouring to resolve. Or maybe, because there are so few female Heads of Department in physical education, the 'few' are epitomised as examples of female leadership, and therefore remain highly visible and bear the brunt of the criticism. The abundance of males in the position on the other hand, serves as an effective camouflage for the minority who may be incompetent or have inadequacies.

It is also possible that the denigration of the qualities perceived as necessary to gain promotion by the female teachers who do not aspire to career advancement, serves as a mechanism of justification to placate their own feelings of inadequacy in this regard. The stereotype of the submissive female has undoubtedly had a profound impact on such perceptions.

### **The male model of leadership**

The perception of the male model of leadership in physical education is closely linked to both gender-role stereotyping and the patriarchal nature of the education system.

The traditional male dominance of decision-making positions and the emergent male model of leadership has resulted in a tendency to measure aspiring women against the male criteria, and find them deficient.

Almost half of the respondents commented on the way in which male Heads of Department operated in their leadership roles. The perceived leadership style is exemplified in the following statements:

A couple of years ago I was Student Services Co-ordinator, and I came into the school management committee meetings, and on the school management there were all the HODs, all male, and there was the school psych, the deputy principal female, and myself. And I sat... sometimes I felt like I was sitting back away from the meeting, listening to this male-oriented view of how the school should be run. ...We had a couple of HODs who are very open-minded to anything, but most of them just had this male view of how things should be run... It was really quite amazing... and how everybody else was just going to run around after them and do all these things. (F5)

I think if it's a male HOD overseeing the job, then you have to do an exceptional job. In one instance I was the HE co-ordinator, but the office staff used to put all the mail into the HOD's pigeon hole, and it was addressed to HE co-ordinator. But instead of automatically giving me the unopened envelope as HE co-ordinator, he would open it, read it, and then think "Well, I don't need to do anything about that, that's for the HE person to do", and then pass it on. Even though he had in a sense given me the power of being HE co-ordinator, I could do all the organisation and that sort of thing, I still don't think he gave me complete control, because he opened the mail. (F4)

According to Bryson (1987), the style of management currently operating in many schools tends to be one that women generally do not find attractive, and many of the informal requirements for senior positions are difficult for women to meet. A number of the women interviewed suggested that some females may be deterred from applying for promotion because of a perceived expectation that they must 'fit' the male model of leadership.

Part of the problem might be that females think they have to behave like the male HODs in order to be in charge of the department. The guy who was in charge before I came here, had been here for about 20 years, so of course the ideas of how things ran and that sort of thing were fairly well entrenched, and then for a female to come in... But if someone came and took my place, after I'd been here, I'm sure people would be more accepting, because a female has already been in the role, and the staff have worked with someone and know how a female operates... perhaps in subtly different ways to what a male does. The kids have seen it, the whole staff have seen it, so I think if you step into a male's job as such,

maybe the expectation is that you have to behave that way, but in reality you don't. (F4)

I mean obviously there will be some females out there who will have those qualities and they will fit the role beautifully. But I also think there are some females who will try really hard to fit that expected male role, of them... They will play the role they think they are expected to play, because they have seen a male in that position... and that would be a shame. (F1)

The fact that there are so few females in leadership positions to demonstrate alternative skills and qualities, virtually guarantees the continuation of the male model, and limits the recognition of female leadership as perhaps different, but equally effective.

In summary, the roles that individuals 'play' are guided by specific social contexts, by their own expectations of themselves, and by others' expectations for appropriate behaviour in a given situation. Participants in this study identified a number of assumptions or expectations that they perceived as delimiting the promotional opportunities and aspirations of women. These included the assumption of male leadership; a short-term career for women; family responsibilities; lack of ambition; stereotypical roles and behaviours; and the male model of leadership that pervades the subject area. Unfortunately, expectations about individuals are not based solely on their capabilities and personality traits as people. Over and above such considerations is an overlay of expectations based on their sex, and these are backed by sanctions expressing approval or disapproval of particular behaviours and attitudes. The specific rewards and sanctions experienced by female physical educators will be explored in the section to follow.

## HOW EXPECTATIONS ARE EXPRESSED

People in Western society have internalised a host of attitudes about the relative capabilities of women and men. Female teachers constantly receive strong messages from colleagues, administrators, students and their parents which function to foster

doubts regarding the appropriateness of leadership roles as a career option for women, and serve as likely deterrents to the pursuit of promotional opportunities. Female physical educators in this study identified seven ways in which they perceived that the expectations of significant others regarding female Heads of Department were expressed in the school context. The 'messages' included discrimination; chauvinism; exclusion; the lower status accorded females in Physical Education Departments; lack of encouragement; lack of role models; and the fact that the leadership role is more difficult for a woman.

### **Discrimination**

Education Department policies and regulations have in the past had a significant bearing on women's promotional opportunities. Married women have been particularly disadvantaged by requirements for their resignation and relegation to temporary staff, the lack of provision for accouchement leave, and the impact of restricted geographical mobility on their gaining permanent status. Despite the removal of these discriminatory structural barriers, the promulgation of equal opportunity initiatives, and the implementation of merit promotion, women continue to perceive discrimination as a constraint on their career advancement. As was intimated by Burton (1987), "The attempt to dismantle discriminatory rules as if they are a relic from the past, as if their elimination will effectively eliminate the problem of discrimination, is to deny that their presence has continued to structure the interests and perceptions of current organisational participants... the mobilisation of masculine bias does not disappear with the elimination of discriminatory rules" (p. 432).

More than half of the female physical educators interviewed expressed concern at the degree of discrimination that still exists within schools and in the education system itself. A number questioned the 'objectivity' and 'impartiality' of the merit selection process. The doubts of the respondents are reflected in comments like:

I think that with this merit promotion... when you go for your interview, the selection panel, even though there is at least one female and two males, or the other way around, I still think that even though it's supposed to be objective, a lot of those males who sit on the panel, still have their perceptions that it's a male's job. (F5)

Because schools have traditionally been shaped and fashioned by men, masculinity is embedded in the procedures, assumptions, and processes of the organisation. Unfortunately, it is likely that women pursuing promotion will be confronted by such bias and indirect discrimination. Although the respondents presented no evidence to substantiate their feelings, their belief that males are advantaged in promotion reflects the impact of the patriarchal nature of the system, and may dampen the promotional aspirations of women.

On a more personal level, four of the respondents related instances of discrimination which they experienced while seeking acting Head of Department positions.

They just move men through the system, they really do. I think women still come out of Uni and think they don't need to be four year trained. I know that's how I felt. And then last year when the acting position came up, they said to me "...and the boys are four year trained", and I said "No, no, I've rung personnel and they told me that if I can prove I can do the job equally it doesn't matter." But they came back and said they could get the boys in on their qualifications... they were prepared to bury me on any technical point to make sure a guy got the position. So I'm just not going to give them that opportunity, I'm going flat out to finish my B Ed. I am tempted to bypass it all- I could be a Deputy before I'm 30, but I've got no show of being HOD in PE. (F6)

I have no doubt I was disadvantaged by being a female. And if I'd have thought quick enough, I should have said to him "Look, you know, you can't say that". But I think I was a bit distraught then. It just didn't click. When I got home I thought "Shit, he shouldn't have said that." ...that is discrimination. You can't say to someone you can't have that job because you are a female and that is exactly what he (the Head of Department) said. (F19)

I've had several other opportunities to be HOD. On one occasion it should have been given to me, but it was given to a male, which was really annoying. And it was before you had all the grievance committees and all that sort of thing, so I really couldn't do a lot about it. The other girl that was working with me was absolutely rotable about the fact that I didn't get the position... she was more angry than I was. (F5)

The position wasn't given to me because I was female... I really do think that, because the guy hadn't been teaching as long as me, and he hadn't had the same experience with a lot of things, but he got the job. (F13)



Assuming such comments, depicting blatant discrimination against women on the basis of their sex, are accurate descriptions of what is occurring in secondary schools, they indicate the extent of the underlying attitudes and expectations of educational institutions that continue to impact on teachers' perceptions.

### **Chauvinism**

Despite a measure of optimism with regard to the changing attitudes of men expressed by three of the respondents, the majority of the women interviewed believed that chauvinism was "very much alive and well in physical education". They highlighted instances of blatant demeaning comments, sexual harassment, and the assigning of lesser roles to females, as examples which clearly expressed the expectations of men regarding the 'appropriate' status of women in physical education.

Some of the teachers suggested that the very nature of the subject area, and its traditional links with sport, heightened men's feelings of superiority, and their relegation of women to a subordinate role. Their comments included:

Most PE teachers are sporty people and play sport, and for the male Phys Eds, a large proportion of those are the macho sports that have bred chauvinism. Therefore, some of them think a male is more important than a female. In a lot of male sports, that chauvinism is part of the sport. I don't know whether they would respect a female, or do what the female HOD said. I can just think of a couple of the male Phys Eds I have worked with, and they have no regard for women... all brawn no brain. That is how they have been brought up, and that is their sport, and that's part of how they are... (F1)

My view of male Phys Eds is that most of them are very egotistical. A lot of them are 'jocks'... a lot of them are still doing PE for that reason. (F20)

Males not doing a good job would be accepted more readily than females not doing a good job, because they say "Oh she is just a woman" chauvinistically. I think it would happen. (F2)

One respondent related her experiences as a young teacher taking up her first appointment:

I think male Phys Eds categorise females into the 'barbie doll' and then the 'butch' Phys Ed. I personally have been treated like a barbie doll

for a period of time when I was younger. Because I had blonde hair and I was fit and healthy and all the rest of it, whereas working with other women, they haven't had that sort of image. They haven't been accepted as easily, and it was purely because they thought I was more attractive, or that I was more to their liking than the other females... When I first came out teaching, there was a woman in the department who was in the Army Reserve, and I was young, and it was so different between the way they treated her and the way they treated me. It was like they were begging on the floor in front of me, and they just didn't want to know her. It was a real shock! (F3)

Other teachers expressed their reservations about applying for promotion due to their uncertainty with regard to the reception they were likely to receive from the males within the department:

I think some males in the department with a female HOD would resent her having that position. In this school I don't think they would. The two other males that are here I think are professional enough, and if it went to the best person for the job, then there wouldn't be any squabbles at all. I think they would both be very supportive. I still wouldn't like to do it but I think they would be fine. It's a bit of a risk. (F2)

If I became a HOD, and there was some old timer male Phys Eders in the department, I don't know that they would accept it. (F20)

Further evidence of chauvinism is inherent in the allocation of roles and the assigning of tasks within Physical Education Departments. Two respondents related their experiences:

Females apply and they get less preference for the job, the guys get the job straight off. And they quite quickly give us HE - PE is their domain and we're to have health. There's a lot of chauvinism there, and that just says it all. I think chauvinism is very much alive! (F6)

There are a lot of chauvinistic men at the top too... some of them I've had experiences with have been very chauvinistic in terms of what I've had to do. I've had the situation where I've walked into a department and been told "You're a girl, your job is to answer the phone and do the paperwork". (F3)

Not only does such treatment convey messages regarding men's expectations of female physical educators, but it also robs the women of opportunities to demonstrate their skills, and to gain experience in leadership roles.

Additional examples of chauvinistic treatment of female physical educators by males are provided in the following comments:

Sexism and chauvinism in PE is alive and well, more so than in any other department, because of the physical nature of the subject, the clothes that you wear. It's not that I want to go back to neck-to-knees... But it is obvious in how other people perceive Phys Eders in the school. We've got one guy from another department who's 60, and he said "Here's the girl with the legs... have you got your really short shorts on today?" And last year when I had added responsibilities, he'd say "You know you should be wearing longer shorts now because you're more responsible"... You're up against it as Phys Eders all the time. (F6)

At one school I worked in a department with these egotistical males which tend to dominate PE departments. I have found a lot of male Phys Eders, I think more so than other departments, seem to think they are god's gift to the world. One of the other ladies got the acting HOD position, and she got a really hard time from the guys in our department. It just wasn't fair, and really after that I didn't think about it any more. I just thought no, there is no need for anybody, male or female to put up with what she had to put up with. (F2)

We had a first year out Phys Eder who came into the department when the male HOD went on leave... I was acting HOD. And he was a real ego male Phys Eder and he didn't like me as HOD. He never asked me anything, or for any help, but he would talk to the other guys. I don't know if that was an ego thing or what. But everyone else was fine on staff. (F20)

While discussing the nature of physical education and messages of superiority imparted by the males, a number of the respondents raised the issue of sexual harassment. The women perceived this as a greater problem in physical education compared with other subject areas, due to the clothing worn by females and the 'macho' image of the men. One of the female teachers, already frustrated by her unsuccessful bid to gain the acting Head of Department position, and the fact that she subsequently had to assume the majority of responsibilities that the position entailed due to the male incumbent's ineptitude, spoke of how she was required to deal with sexism within the department:

We have it in our office all the time, to the point where last year I had to actually reprimand and stand up to it, because that was my job- the one I wasn't getting paid for - to reprimand the boys for their comments. They were making comments about us physically all the time. It was becoming a real slinging match in the office. One of the girls is really, really well endowed, huge, and they would really have a go at her, and to the rest of us - it was like "You've got nothing" or "You've put on a bit of weight in the last week, you shouldn't be eating that hamburger. There's 565 calories in that" and more and more it really got to one girl... the continual harassment... (F6)

When asked whether such a stance had gained her the respect of the males involved, she replied:

Two of them do. One just keeps going with it until you turn around and say "Enough"! He knows there's a line he can go to. So I think I have their respect, but I don't think you should have to go through that type of thing. (F6)

Her concerns were shared by another respondent, who felt that women "just can't win". She commented.

A lot of guys, even when you do stick up for yourself, it's like "That girl's got balls". It's not because you're a human being and you've just had enough of it, it's because you've got too much testosterone in your body, so they demean you that way. (F3)

However, five of the respondents suggested that perhaps it was the females' reaction to chauvinism which fuelled the men's attitudes and behaviour. They believed that if women persisted in refusing to be treated in a sexist way, then eventually the "guys will get the message". Their comments included:

If more people threw it back in the guys' faces, they probably wouldn't bother to make the comments. But because they still get the reaction they're looking for from the majority of females, the guys persist with it. (F13)

Perhaps such an approach accounts for the reason why one of the women interviewed expressed surprise at the negative experiences encountered by other female physical educators. Her comment was:

I find that really hard to relate to because I've taught for 15 years in government schools and have never really come up against any sexual harassment or chauvinism at all. In fact I don't ever feel that I've been disadvantaged for being a female... It's interesting for me to hear that it really does happen because you read in the literature that it's a major reason given for women's reluctance to push themselves forward... because they just get kicked and knocked back all the time. But I've never actually experienced it. (F13)

However, it should be noted that although this teacher had assumed extensive responsibilities within the department, she had no aspirations to become a Head of Department.

Three respondents dismissed much of the chauvinism exhibited by male physical educators as occurring "in jest", and were optimistic that attitudes and behaviours were changing. These women believed that many of the men's comments were in fact made to fulfil others' expectations of them as 'macho' and 'superior', and that this often disguised their genuine respect for the skills and competence of women.

Working in a male-dominated department, guts, macho attitude, putting down the girls, throw like a girl, run like a girl, all that type of thing, I think that is changing. A slow process, but it is changing, and I think a lot of men are changing their attitude to it as well. They are under pressure to do so. The guys at this school, even though I'd say one of them in particular is a typical male chauvinist, take netball. He will make fun of the way a girl throws a ball or runs or something like that, but he's not putting them down, it's just in jest that he does that. It is perceived as being a male dominated area, but it is changing. (F2)

I admit it is often in jest. That message has come through loud and clear, and often it is in jest. You know "your place is in the kitchen", and where ever else it is, but I think deep down there is some underlying respect. I don't think they would underestimate the value of some of the women in the position. I really think they could cope. A lot of the time it is just fitting their role and playing the role we think they should. (F10)

One of the teachers went on to emphasise the importance of women's recognition of the changes that are occurring, and the need to "stand up and be counted":

Australia is a male-dominated society. It is changing, and thankfully now, if you do stand up and say "Right, I'm going to be counted as a female" you don't get put down as much as you used to. They used to put you down something awful as a feminist, saying "Oh, you burnt your bras this week, did you?" But now males are suddenly realising that females do have brains and that they can organise things, and I think a lot of administration people realise that females are extremely good organisers. I think now, for a lot of women, it's their own fault if they don't go for it. (F5)

She believed that the opportunities were now available to women, and that they themselves were to blame if those opportunities were not taken. Further, although there may be initial resistance from some males, she saw this as a temporary inconvenience, easily overcome by a determined and capable female.

An interesting aspect common to the majority of respondents' comments, was the spirit in which they were made. Although most of the women recognised the chauvinism that persisted in physical education, and expressed disgust and anger

over its existence, they did not seem to be overwhelmed nor greatly intimidated by it. Perhaps the women were not prepared to admit to their sensitivity, seeing it as a further sign of their submissiveness; or perhaps women are becoming more assertive in their dealings with men, and increasingly aware of their rights and capabilities.

## **Exclusion**

The influence of the 'old boys' network' can not be underestimated. Thornton (1989) argued that homogeneity is a central value of organisational culture in Australia. Senior men are more comfortable with each other rather than having women as peers or superiors, and so give patronage to youthful images of themselves. This operates in their making informal recommendations on recruitment, discussing promotional procedures and opportunities, and providing advice and support.

All of the respondents who had attended either Heads of Department meetings within their school, or district meetings of Heads of physical education, expressed feelings of being "alone", or "intimidated", or "excluded", or "not part of the gang", or "just the female sitting in the corner". Their comments included:

Going to the district meetings - it's like the boys' club, and you have to work damn hard to break into it. But I don't know how you can really get in and change it - it's like saying how can you change the Mafia. They've had such a strong hold for such a long time now, it's just so hard to infiltrate. (F6)

The men nurse each other along in terms of "if you go to my school, I'll transfer"... they keep their position... that's how it's done and there's no room for a female to come in. (F3)

When I went to meetings etc I thought I might not be well received... I felt like I wouldn't be accepted... the girl down the corner sort of thing. I know they (the male HODs) are nice, but they are all sort of older. (F20)

One of the women who had assumed an acting Head of Department position for a semester, spoke of how she overcame the exclusion imposed by the "old boys' club":

Within the district at the network meetings it's hard for a female. I went to those meetings for six months last year, and it would be like "come on boys, let's talk about..." and I'd say "Excuse me...". And for the

first two meetings whenever I said anything, they really didn't listen and they didn't pay any attention. And then they had a boys' night out, and I thought "Well I'm going to go along", and I went, and we had a wonderful time. After that they'd sit and they'd listen when I had something to say. We had a huge meeting at the end of the year and they respected me.. They actually asked me if I wanted to comment. But I had to work at that. It wasn't just that I could do it as well, I actually had to work at it. The guys are just naturally accepted, and the females have to prove themselves. I had to get out there and show I was a good beer drinker. (F6)

The fact that men have dominated physical education for so long obviously influences their formal and informal communications, their assumptions and their focus. It also functions to preclude their recognition of the female perspective and the possibility of female leadership. Perhaps it is only when a woman fits the 'male mould' that she is accepted into the 'club', and acknowledged as a worthwhile contributor. If this is the expectation, then it is hardly surprising that so few women aspire to the Head of Department position.

#### **The lower status accorded females in Physical Education Departments**

According to Hargreaves (1990), because the social processes of physical education centre on performance and the display of physical ability, relations and differences between individuals are accentuated and become more apparent than in other subject areas. Physical education is closely linked with sport, which has traditionally been seen as a site for the construction and maintenance of male dominance and superiority. Sporting prowess is positively valued and associated with social acclaim and economic benefits. Men, by implication, can be seen as more capable and skilful than women, at least in activities of importance. This is readily translated into power and status, and is still strongly reflected in some Physical Education Departments at the secondary school level. In specific instances where women are accorded lower status, clear messages are conveyed with regard to what is expected of these women in terms of their appropriate roles and behaviours.

When the women were asked whether they thought that females and males held equal status within the Physical Education Department, opinions were divided. Just over

one half of the respondents had experienced some form of status inequity in terms of the distribution of resources, facilities, or classes; or with regard to their impact in decision-making. Their comments included:

Because most of the HODs are obviously male, sometimes there can become a bit of a cliquey group within a department with the males, and females can be excluded a little bit, perhaps on decision-making, or feel that they have equal input, but whether they do or not when the crunch comes, may be different. So therefore they don't feel that they've got the same footing within that department as perhaps a male does... they perhaps don't see it as their role or their job, and it probably depends on the personality of the female. If they do want to have that input, or have an impact on decision-making, even if that means going against what the males think, or other people in the department think, they should stand up for what they believe in. (F4)

As far as the classes go and the distribution of upper school, I was quite angry when I walked in and saw that the two males had all the Year 11 and 12 classes. They had no lower school classes what so ever. That really angered me and I mentioned to our HOD and I said "I don't think that is fair". They are going to finish by the start of term 4 and will be sitting around doing nothing, while the rest of us are still on the lower school grid. (F19)

Use of equipment and facilities are always fair, in all the schools I have been in. But the classes have not always been allocated fairly. I have been in one school where the males got the pick. With facilities I don't think they do that, because that is something concrete that could be found. Also quite often the subtle things are what a lot of females find more difficult. You know the subtle comments, the sledges. (F1)

A number of teachers commented on the fact that although they had not actually encountered such inequities, they perceived the potential for males to dominate the department in all these aspects, if they so desired.

One respondent went as far as to suggest that the situation may have been more equitable in the past, when many Physical Education Departments were split, with a woman in charge of girls' physical education, and a male in charge of boys' physical education.

Perhaps the system worked better as it used to be with a female in charge of girls' PE and a male in charge of boys' PE. In many ways, the women had more power in that sort of a situation than they have now, where the department has been combined and a male is in charge of the whole lot. And it depends very much on what the HOD is like in terms of whether the girls get a good PE program or not. (F13)



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In more recent times, the focus of the female/male split appears to have shifted to a health education/physical education dichotomy, as was pointed out by a number of teachers in comments like:

Females have got much more to do with the Health Ed side of it. Maybe they are getting set roles, the boys do PE and the girls do Health Ed, I don't know. That is stereotyping though... But it comes through, when we do timetabling, one of the males says "We know that so and so, a female, likes to do Health Ed". (F20)

Unfortunately, in many physical education circles, this is viewed as a relegation to an even lesser curriculum area, one involving more paper work and programming, and one that is not considered substantial enough to interest the males. It fails to meet the 'physicality' criteria inherent in the traditional image of physical education.

On the other hand, five of the respondents believed that females and males held equal status in the department. They identified such equalisers as "democratic decision-making", and "the girls and the guys running their own shows" in comments like:

I think males and females do hold equal status. Mostly, in the 13 years that I have taught, the females do their thing and the males do their thing. In sport it's always been that we make the decision about girls' PE and the boys make the decisions about boys' PE. Classes are normally dished out pretty fairly. (F1)

One female teacher adamantly stated that in her department, the women held the higher status.

At this school, us girls hold the power. The boys are bloody hopeless. Possibly in other schools males do hold the power. But from what I have seen in the schools I have taught at, a lot of the decisions are arrived at by mutual discussion, letting people have their say. But here, there is not a great deal of decision-making that happens, or many meetings that happen either. So not many decisions are made. So a lot of it is off your own bat. (F19)

Perhaps due to the "hopelessness" or lack of interest of the male physical educators, the females in this department have been able to 'take the reins', by default.

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## **Lack of encouragement**

One of the most fundamental ways in which career expectations are conveyed to women is through a lack of encouragement by their peers and/or superordinates. The differential encouragement provided to females and males by significant others confirms the social perception that leadership and decision-making in administration is more appropriate for males (Acker, 1983; Davies, 1990; De Lyon & Migniuolo, 1989; Sadker, Sadker & Klein, 1991; Sampson, 1986).

The female physical educators interviewed differed in their perceptions of the level of encouragement and support provided to women with regard to their career advancement. Half of the respondents were of the opinion that women were not encouraged to the same extent as men, and that an increase in the degree of support for women would have a positive impact on their promotional aspirations.

People are not really supportive of females going for promotion, not on an equal basis to males. Especially in PE. There is still a lot of bitterness, and I have heard them (the men) speak about women who have picked up special promotion... it is not always complimentary. (F1)

Women just need someone else, or some direction and help so they will go for promotion. I mean it is expected of the males in our society, that that is where they move to. But it is not expected of the females. So it is alright to say "You can go ahead and go and get that job", but someone still needs to push you. You still need some help to get there. (F20)

Women have not been pushed. People have never said to them "Hey you are really good at that" or "Gee you have got really good communication skills, have you ever thought of going for promotion?.." For some of them, it has never crossed their mind. (F19)

These comments highlight the lack of expectation regarding female leadership in physical education, and how this has been reflected in the lack of encouragement and support given to women in their assumption of that role. The fact that there have been so few female Heads of Department to demonstrate the possibilities for women in the subject area establishes a particular need for the mentoring of female teachers. In many instances, the participants believed that women need that extra

"push", in order to make them aware of their promotional opportunities, and the fact that they are 'expected' to apply.

A further aspect of the lack of encouragement provided to women was raised by three respondents who commented on the serious disadvantage to women of their unequal access to informal organisational socialisation. One comment follows:

In the past , the males have had what I call the "boys' group", and they do all their talking and gas bagging over a few beers and things like that. A lot of the women don't hang around for that because they have other commitments or family, and things like that. And I think that is where they have missed out a lot. They need to somehow get in on that "boys' group" and have a few drinks, though they shouldn't be forced to do that to get information and support. But that is where a lot of the information and encouragement is passed. (F19)

Three other teachers spoke of their personal experiences with respect to an absence of mentoring, and of the difference that encouragement from their significant others may have made to their promotional aspirations. Comments included:

I think it would have made a difference if, in the past, someone had encouraged me. Not now, not situation current, but definitely in the past, yes. Also, if there were other people of similar circumstances and obviously female who were being recognised in those positions or gaining those positions, that would have been a bit more encouraging. But males are definitely being approached and it is being suggested to them. I think I would have applied, had I been approached. (F10)

No, not one. Not one HOD have I worked with, has suggested to me "Why don't you try for promotion?". I can't think of anyone at all. Whereas a guy at school at the moment, of similar age, has been encouraged, and it has been suggested to him on many occasions. Maybe it is because it is where they think I am going and they think... marriage, children, end of career path. But no, never, never been suggested. (F13)

The other half of the women interviewed did not believe that females were disadvantaged in terms of the support provided to them. Many respondents related their positive 'mentored' experiences, and commented on the way in which they had been encouraged to apply for promotion by Heads of Department, administrators and family. Their remarks included:

A number of people have encouraged me. Last year, when I was in the country, the deputy encouraged me to go for it... A female, and she had recently been through promotion. My husband obviously, I have had good support there and encouragement all the way. He sort of backed off a bit when he found it was the country HOD position. That was a bit difficult

to take. But we talked about that and overcame that. My parents. Really big... Both Mum and Dad really push me to go ahead. Since I have been at this school, my female HOD has been right behind me and pushing me and saying "Make sure you have got the application in and go for it". And I suppose I also have internal motivation because I feel that I could do a really good job. Of course the two HODs in WASSA have been a very big force and pushing me saying "Look go for it, you have got the skills". (F19)

When I took on the acting HOD position the male HOD helped me with the application. He suggested that I go for it... He came up and said "I hope you do it". I'm not sure whether I would have done it if he had not said anything. There were three of us that could have, I suppose. It sort of entered my mind for a while but then he actually said it first. And I said "Oh yeah, I was sort of thinking about it" and between the two of us I was encouraged to do it. (F20)

I had no encouragement initially to take up the acting position. I suppose I sort of fell into it first up, because I was the only remaining staff member at that school. But after that I suppose there was a bit of encouragement, not necessarily encouragement, but just asking me whether I was applying for HOD positions... A couple of the staff did actually come up to me and said "Are you applying for it?" and "Well I think you should, because you're good at organising, you get on well with most people, you communicate well, and you should"... That was a bit of a positive, that people thought you are doing the job well, and it wasn't necessarily from just within the department. (F4)

I'm quite lucky I've had a few people around like our male deputy who pushed and said "You should be going on and doing this" and I know he did the same with our female HOD, and he always likes working with females more than males. So he pushed all the females into HODs. So he was a good role model. (F25)

Being helped and guided along by older staff members, whatever sex they are, and your HOD at the time is crucial. It's also important to find a mentor, someone that you can go to and ask "Should I write this? Would it be a good idea for me to go into this particular thing?" I am talking about extra things like committees. "What can I do that is going to promote me, not only me or PE, but female PE?" I used my first male HOD as my mentor. And he has said to me, that one day he would like me in there doing his current job in the Education Department. He sort of said "Now you need to go through these sorts of channels and it would be a good idea if you tried this, or you did this." (F19)

It is worth noting that each of the comments relating experiences of encouragement and support were made by female physical educators who were either in an acting Head of Department position, or who were applying for promotion to Head of Department. This in itself is an indication of the significant impact which mentoring can have on the perceptions of women regarding the appropriateness of the leadership role, and the possibilities for their advancement. The fact that non-

mentored teachers did not wish to apply for the Head of Department position, and that a number of respondents alluded to the difference that encouragement and support would have made to their promotional aspirations, further demonstrates the crucial nature of mentoring for women. Female teachers often do not see themselves in a Head of Department role, and therefore require a great deal of encouragement to prompt them to take the initial step towards promotion, and considerable on-going support to facilitate positive leadership experiences. Encouragement and support towards promotion communicates the expectation of success in achieving and executing the leadership role.

### **Lack of role models**

Closely linked to the communication of expectations to women regarding leadership in physical education through a lack of encouragement and support, is the lack of role models to demonstrate the career possibilities for female physical educators. All of the women interviewed commented on the expectation of male leadership in physical education by virtue of men's traditional dominance of the position, and on the positive impact that increased numbers of female role models would have on changing this expectation, thereby strengthening women's promotional aspirations. Examples of the responses included:

Yes it's an individual thing and I suppose because it has been a male-dominated job, there hasn't been all the role models. You don't see female HODs, so your expectations are that it is a male. (F25)

Great for females, great for giving them more incentive to stay in that career path, because the incentives are there... "Look you know, you can be in those positions, hang in there, follow your career path". From that perspective, and in terms of being a role model for the kids and that sort of thing. (F10)

One respondent, in an acting role at the time of the interview, spoke of her changed perceptions regarding the leadership position after working with a female Head of Department:

I suppose earlier I would have said there is no way would I do it (HOD job) because all the role models were males. So you only saw that. And then everyone always said at one of my schools because of its ethnic base,

that the boys won't respect a female and won't do anything... and then a female HOD came here. So then I saw the other side of it. And she did a fantastic job. So for that side of it then, I saw that it was possible for a female to do the job as well as a male. (F25)

A number of other women highlighted the potential positive impact of role models on not only female teachers, but also female students with regard to demonstrating the career possibilities for women.

I think you have your female role models,. A fit, physically active leader, female, fantastic. Fantastic for the girls. Look what is happening to the girls in schools now, with sport. It is terrible, absolutely disgraceful. Maybe there is a real need for it. For the girls it would be fantastic. Maybe we would have more girls going into choosing PE and them thinking "Well I had a female HOD. That could be me". Quite a few kids in the school do pick PE and pursue it later, often because of the role model that they had. (F10)

As far as, like roles for the girls, yes. And there are men at the top and the girls look at that and think "I can't do that. I am a girl." And I guess, like one of the other females here said, "He should be there, he is a man", so it would help if we had more women there. To be seen doing a good job. (F20)

Other respondents believed that increasing the number of female Heads of Department would send a clear message in terms of the acceptability of women in the leadership role, and that this would encourage a greater number of females to apply for the position. Their comments included:

I think once it (female HODs) starts to happen that it will snowball. It will become very accepted. More female HODs will give other people encouragement to do the job. I just think people are wary about the labelling that may go on. If we were to snap our fingers and there were 15 female HODs in WA, I think the situation would be right. Then it would be the norm. Everyone applying for a promotion and getting it if they were good enough, whereas at the moment, really fantastic females aren't doing it for whatever reason. (F1)

Teachers perceived role models to be important for a number of reasons. These included: to increase the respect given by male staff and students to both female teachers and girls, and to increase awareness and acceptance of their capabilities; to demonstrate to girls the prominence that can be achieved by female physical educators, thereby devaluing the 'maleness' of the subject area, and encouraging the increased participation of girls in physical education; to encourage girls to strive



for achievement, and other female staff to aspire to promotion by demonstrating that leadership is within the bounds of female career opportunities, and that it can be attained; and as a general mechanism or socialisation to indicate that females are not necessarily confined to subservient roles.

The consensus from the women's responses seems to be that a greater visibility of females in the Head of Department role would encourage more women to aspire to the position by demonstrating the achievability of such status, and by assisting to break down the expectation of male leadership in physical education.

### **The leadership role is more difficult for women**

The respondents' concerns regarding a female Head of Department, tended to focus on the way in which male staff in particular might perceive the inadequacies of females in the leadership role, and the pressures this may bring to bear on a woman who chooses to assume such a role. The Head of Department position, by its nature, entails a certain amount of negotiating with other Heads of Department and school administrators. More than one half of the women interviewed said they felt intimidated by the politics associated with the Head of Department position; the power struggles which inevitably eventuated; and the need to continually prove themselves to others.

Many of the respondents expressed concern at the potential difficulties they perceived for female Heads of Department in their dealings with both physical education staff, in particular the 'older' males, and the school management structure.

They made comments like:

The HOD role is easier for a male but that's only because a lot of them are male, and if you have to deal with other male PE HODs... it's just easier for them. (F5)

If you go to the senior staff meeting and there are not too many females sitting there voting on issues and that sort of thing... I think there would be a lot of brick walls... It is going to take a long time to break those attitudes. (F10)

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I think that females would feel quite intimidated, possibly threatened... I think it is just a difficult one for females to balance if they are going to go into that role, as HOD. (F10)

I think a lot of women are scared that... "Oh I am not going to apply for HOD, because I don't want a lot of people back stabbing me.". That is in PE quite often how we have been bought up in our sport... sledging, you know, the old cricket sledging, and footy... the old put down. It is our way of life. A lot of females just don't want that. They don't want to be the person having a 100 knives in their back. It is not worth it. A couple of thousand dollars for that! A lot of females don't want that pressure, the put downs, which can be very cruel. (F1)

As a result of the traditional male dominance of promotional positions, females entering these roles are having to prove themselves above and beyond what is expected of their male counterparts. Blame for failure tends to become gender-related, and women have to work harder to earn the respect of their significant others. The common perception among women of the need to 'prove' themselves is highlighted in the following remarks:

Women seem to have to prove themselves... they would have to perform at a higher level because there have been very few females in those positions. They would be under the microscope in particular by the males or the school.... they would definitely have their work cut out for them in that role. The gender, the role, the expectation... (F10)

I still think that it's male-dominated, and that for a female to be in charge it's the exception, so they probably stand out more, and it's much easier for people to see them slipping up or making mistakes. Also a lot of the male HODs are perhaps the older Phys Eders, and their style of teaching is certainly different from some of the others, and if they don't do their job, well it's just the 'old Phys Eder' syndrome. (F4)

Probably I would be less accepting of a female not doing an effective job because if she's got the chance to be HOD, I'd want her to show that she could do it right, and I think I'd probably be less accepting of that... (F5)

A number of the teachers interviewed related witnessed incidents and personal experiences of the difficulties encountered by women assuming the leadership role:

Maybe she wasn't as confident... I don't know if confidence is the right word. She did her job well. Maybe she didn't do it as well as somebody who was experienced, but surely they would have understood that. I just don't think they gave her the chance. They hassled her right from the beginning. I thought she was fair and maybe they didn't like her, because it was such a male-dominated department. (F2)

I thought she was really fair. There wasn't any favouritism. There were four or five of us in the department at that time. I thought she was good,

very good organisational skills. Maybe lacked a little in the communication, but I think that was partly confidence. Every time she tried to do something, she was shot down in flames. (F5)

I think it makes a difference, when people tell you you're doing a good job. In the PE department, we've got one male staff member who I think finds it very difficult to work with females in general, but particularly with one in charge. At meetings a lot of the comments that come up are "Why didn't you do this?" or "Why didn't we have input into this?" It's sort of negative, negative, and so I just feel like "What's going to be wrong this week?" But then after that it's nice that the females say "Well, don't worry, that's never happened before" or "It's OK what you're doing". So I think positives do help, yeah. You don't always get a lot though. (F4)

When I was at one school I worked in a department with these egotistical males which tend to dominate PE departments. Not all of them. But I have found a lot of male Phys Eders, I think more so than other departments, seem to be god's gift to the world. And when I was at another school the position became vacant. It was open to any of us to apply. I didn't. One of the other ladies did and she got the position, and she got a really hard time from the guys in our department. It just wasn't fair and really after that I didn't think about it any more. I just thought no, there is no need for anybody, male or female to put up with what she had to put up with. (F1)

When female teachers have ignored expectations regarding male dominance in physical education, and have overstepped the boundary of their traditional role by taking on a leadership position, they have in many cases been perceived rather negatively. Several of the respondents commented on the labels attached to becoming a female Head of Department with reference to the uncharacteristic qualities and behaviours these females exhibit:

It is difficult for a female. Quite often I have stood up and fought for what I think is morally right. You will either get labelled aggressive, or this or that. Yet if a male did the equivalent he is not. But a really good female HOD would have to be prepared for that... The labelling and whatever... rather than, "Oh yeah, she is prepared to fight for what she thinks is right" or "She is certainly assertive", or "She is not prepared to put up with any bullshit". (F1)

The potential of being labelled as "aggressive", "butch", "pushy", "bitchy" or as "having balls", functions to deter many women in their promotional aspirations.

A number of the women who had assumed acting Head of Department positions commented on the added difficulties posed by the nature of the 'acting' role:

I think it's different being an acting HOD, because I feel that you really are only a caretaker, you're just looking after someone's job until they come back. So a lot of the time you can't make, or you don't feel as if you can make some of the decisions which need to be made, because the following year you may have to work with those staff. If you do something which is totally against their wishes, or that sort of thing... so it's sort of different when you're only acting. You sort of just go through the day to day things, but it becomes difficult to plan long-term, or make some real changes, unless you have the support of the whole department. I think it's actually more difficult to be an acting HOD than a HOD. Once you are HOD, then you've already proved yourself, that you're one of the best people around for that job, and therefore you can make those decisions. It doesn't mean you don't have to take into account what people on your staff think, but sometimes when you're acting, you don't have that extra clout. (F4)

I suppose sometimes you have to sort of prove yourself- I don't know whether that comes down to being female, or what, but in my first year as acting HOD, the incoming staff were all new, so when they got to the school, they didn't really know how things operated, so I don't think they were really too concerned about who was HOD, as long as they had some sort of direction. And also being in the country, most of the new ones were young, so I don't think they had really preconceived ideas as well, so I certainly found that quite easy. In my next job as acting HOD, I came to a school where the staff had been there from five to 15 years, and I was younger than the majority of them, so I think that coming in to a place where things had been operating for so long... and it was first year in a school, acting HOD, I think a lot of the initial reaction was- "Well, what do you know, and who do you think you are telling us what to do in your first year here... we've been doing it this way for so long". So I think that was initially quite hard. (F6)

I've had problems with some of the staff, because I was female... and it didn't just come from the male staff, I think it came from the females as well... I think it's the older Phys Eder. I think the younger Phys Eder, male and female are more accepting. They just look to the person who's in charge, and see that they're the boss, or they're the ones doing the job. I think that over time, once you prove yourself, then that's OK. But the younger ones are more accepting. (F13)

It is an unfortunate reality that in order to gain the necessary leadership experience to become a Head of Department, the acting position becomes a crucial facilitator in the development of desirable skills, but that due to negative episodes in the role, many women are deterred from applying for the substantive position.

However, not all respondents believed that the leadership role would be more difficult for a female. A number of women claimed that if a female was competent in her Head of Department role, she would be accepted and respected just like her male counterpart.

...Admin now are recognising the people who work, and quite often they recognise that it isn't the HOD. So in that way, I don't think it would be hard, because you'd get the respect. Although there are those in the school that go by the old book. But I think admin and Principals especially, because they're on the cutting edge a lot more, sort of recognise who are the hard workers. So in that respect, if the person's got the skills, I don't necessarily think it would be harder for women. I think the hardest part would be in the department itself. (F3)

As was pointed out by another teacher:

You can allow the guys to make it more difficult for you. You can allow the guys to put you down. I know there are times when I've allowed that to happen, and I've got really angry with them because of it... but in actual fact when I've sat down and thought about it, it was the way I reacted and what I did that caused it. I think there's no reason why you can't do all the things that are necessary for a HOD, and if you can organise, if you can keep things going well, if you can make sure that assessment's done, that people are doing the right thing, then why should it be more difficult for a female? (F5)

Although this respondent did not think the position was a more difficult role for a female, by her own admission, there still exists the expectation that the Head of Department will be male, and doubt concerning a female's competence in leadership.

Another interviewee described only positive experiences during her time as acting Head of Department. She perceived no difficulties in dealing with her all-male physical education staff, or the administrators at the school. She commented:

I've never been given a hard time in the school and I am the only female on our department. There's me and three males and then the female on Special Dance, so she is not down in our section. And they're all accepting of me. They don't give me a hard time. HOD meetings within the school and things like that are fine. It probably comes back to communication and trying to work out what someone's thinking, or is going to say, or do, before it all happens. So you anticipate that there may be a hassle and solve it before it becomes a confrontation... I couldn't stand having confrontations and screaming matches and all the hassles. (F25)

It is apparent that the teachers' views regarding the attitudes of their peers and the school administrators is the direct result of their personal experiences in a variety of school settings. The respondents expressing concerns and feelings of intimidation, had encountered traditional, male-dominated and chauvinistic contexts, while those working in more positive and accepting environments, perceived no such difficulties.

Perhaps the Head of Department position in physical education is a particularly difficult leadership role because all the 'usual' disadvantages of being a female-in-charge are accentuated by the low status accorded physical education in many schools. Being the female leader of a traditionally male-dominated and lower status subject area becomes a double disadvantage, thereby magnifying the negative expectations of significant others.

In summary, the expectations of significant others regarding female Heads of Department, communicated by means of discrimination; chauvinism; exclusion; by according females in Physical Education Departments a lower status; through a lack of encouragement and support in terms of career advancement; the lack of female role models to demonstrate the possibility of leadership opportunities for women; and the fact that the leadership role is in many cases made more difficult for women by their colleagues and superordinates, are perceived by female physical educators as a deterrent to their promotional aspirations. Not all of the women interviewed had been recipients of these 'messages', but all admitted that they were aware of instances in which such treatment of female teachers had occurred.

It appears that although women are perceived to possess the essential skills and qualities required by the Head of Department role, the traditional male dominance in physical education lends rise to concerns regarding the perceived acceptance of women in leadership by those with whom they work, and in the need to continually prove themselves to justify their occupation of promotional positions.

## **INTERPRETATION OF EXPECTATIONS**

From conversations with the government school female physical educators, it became evident that a dichotomy existed in both the positive versus negative contexts in

which the women had worked, and in the reactions of the women to the expectations expressed by their significant others. Firstly, in terms of context, the experiences of teachers within specific school environments had an impact on their perceptions of the Head of Department position. Those working in encouraging and supportive contexts would presumably be more likely to perceive the potential for career advancement, while those who encounter a patriarchal system characterised by male dominance and chauvinism, may be deterred in their own promotional aspirations, and may also influence others against advancement by relating negative experiences and perceptions. Secondly, with regard to their reactions, women seemed to vary in their interpretation of their experiences and the assumptions made regarding their leadership capabilities by their colleagues and superordinates, in accordance with their personal characteristics and life circumstances. Confidence, ambition and determination, together with freedom from family responsibilities, or a supportive home environment, were characteristics common to those women who aspired to be Heads of Department.

The discussion in this section will focus on the nature of the respondents' interpretations of their teaching and/or leadership experiences in the light of their personal characteristics and life circumstances. While the negative expectations of significant others are manifest for some women in the form of a lack of confidence in their own abilities and sensitivity to the opinions of their colleagues, other female physical educators express determination to succeed despite these expectations, and tend to blame women's failure to succeed on their weaknesses. When asked why there appeared to be such a difference between females who came up against barriers and said "Forget it... it's not worth the hassles" and those who continued to persist in striving for advancement, one respondent answered:

Well you're looking at two different groups of people - those who are interested and want to move ahead, and others who just want to make a career out of what they are doing. Whatever anybody says to me wouldn't put me off, because basically I know what I want to do. (F3)



Another teacher, who was herself striving for promotion, added:

I think personality has a lot to do with it, and just career ambitions. I've always been pretty ambitious in whatever I've done... A comment made to me by a Principal was that women who apply for positions have one or two knock backs and they take it to heart, whereas men don't take it to heart and they progress. She told me not to let it upset me even if I get 10 or 12 knock backs, because it was the same for men... that I was not getting them just because I'm a woman... it happens to everyone. The difference is that women stop after the first couple of attempts because they take it to heart. And I did... I got to the stage where I thought I must be a moron, there must be something wrong with me. Now I've gone the other way. But it has a lot to do with personality, ambition and drive. (F6)

### **Women's interpretation of expectations leading to sensitivity and a lack of confidence**

One of the ways in which female physical educators interpret the expectations expressed by their significant others regarding the leadership role, is to doubt their own abilities, and to resign themselves to the fact that the battle to overcome such expectations is too difficult. Many of the female teachers interviewed believed that a large number of women were deterred from aspiring to the Head of Department position in physical education as a result of their feelings of inadequacy and a lack of self-confidence, and their concerns about what others thought of them. The respondents' comments, which were not necessarily made with reference to their personal reactions, but rather related their perceptions of other female teachers, included:

Feelings of inadequacy is a big thing... Thinking "Oh I couldn't control three or four guys on my staff. If I was in charge I couldn't control that." I know it sounds awful, but the stereotype of "I am just a female, and hey they wouldn't listen to me, and they would just do their own male thing and..." (F19)

Some women aren't strong enough individuals... they think they couldn't control the department... control isn't the right word... They think that they wouldn't be a good leader and have everyone loyal to them. (F1).

Females tend to worry more about what other people are thinking about them, or if they are making the right decision or not, that males do. They are more sensitive. (F13)

Females probably consider not so much their feelings, but what others think about them being there, and doing the HOD job, maybe more than men. The men tend to accept that this is the way it is meant to be... The women would probably be a bit more sensitive. (F20)

A number of the teachers went on to highlight the differences between the attitudes and behaviours of female and male physical educators, perceiving these as contributing to the development and confirmation of negative expectations regarding the leadership capabilities of women.

Females don't want to be concerned with conflict in the department. I have the impression that a male... if there's something happening or not happening, they seem to be more up front,... they just say "What the hell do you think you're doing?". Whereas a female thinks more diplomatically, because I think we're more concerned about how a person will react to you afterwards... whether you're going to hurt their feelings. Women just tread very carefully, rather than being forceful. (F4)

I think women are a little more inclined to show that they are not happy with something or admit "This is the pits, I'm out of here", whereas a guy's ego says "I'm going to stick at this". I think that might apply to a lot of people. Men don't like to be seen as quitting or admitting that they made a mistake. (F2)

The men seem to have this image of a female being weaker, and of not being as capable of taking on the HOD role... Maybe the majority of women haven't been assertive enough and stood up at staff meetings and said what they think and feel. It always seems to be the males... When you look around any staff meeting, it always seems to be males who stand up and push some issue... women don't tend to stand up, and say "I am here and I can do it just as well as you". (F25)

Not a lot of females have gone ahead and shown that they are capable. They have hidden their light under a bushel and just got on with their own little patch of thing and that is it. Whereas the males have been more loud and "I can do this and I have organised this and I have done this." And therefore they have got ahead. (F19)

The latter remark depicts a scenario typical of many Physical Education Departments. The high profile leader is a male, and the 'behind the scenes' workers holding the department together, are the females.

Some of the respondents reflected on their personal experiences, and their feelings concerning the situation as it existed in their specific school contexts. Two female teachers explained why they had not considered applying for promotion:

The HOD went into a Deputy's position and I was asked to be the acting HOD. I said I didn't want to be in charge of the men. The nature of the men in this department... They just wouldn't do as I asked. I didn't feel I wanted the hassle of being in charge of people like that. (F14)

No, I wouldn't go for HOD. Not in that department. I am the junior out of everybody. I am not young, but I just wouldn't, not with the personalities we have. I like our department, but there are personalities there I would rather not be the one to question. Not that it happens very often. I think if I was to be in a school which was small and maybe even a country school, then maybe I would. Or even if there were only two or three of you it would be fine. (F2)

Another teacher, who was in an acting Head of Department capacity at the time of the interview, said that despite the fact that she had been in the leadership role for three years, she remained sensitive to the opinions of others, and their possible reactions to her decisions.

Yeah, you don't know whether sometimes it's your imagination, or it really is happening. It's hard to distinguish whether it's a female problem or whether it's a male one, but certainly I'm concerned about what people think about my decisions or what I say to them... if they're going to take it personally and that sort of thing, rather than thinking "It's my job to tell them as HOD". Sometimes you have to say some things which are hard, but have to be said. (F4)

She was uncertain as to whether her caution regarding others' reactions was the product of her own imagination, or whether in fact her colleagues were monitoring her every move in an endeavour to find fault. Perhaps in many cases, the greater portion of such concerns may be attributable to feelings of self-doubt on the part of the female, rather than the actions of significant others. Unfortunately however, this often unfounded lack of confidence and sensitivity can be interpreted by colleagues, particularly males, as a weakness, thereby leading to a cyclical confirmation of negative expectations.

Suggestions to assist women in overcoming their feelings of inadequacy were offered by a number of the women interviewed. Their advice is exemplified in comments such as:

I think females have got to have a bit of a sense of pride in themselves. They are very good at the things they do... They are capable. They shouldn't just sit back and say "Look it is only a male's domain to apply for HOD." And really believe in themselves and what they can do, their

skills and abilities. I don't know how we are going to solve that. I mean maybe a bit more positive reinforcement telling them they are good. Maybe even in assembly, having the HOD give accolades for work that they have done, behind the scenes. (F19)

I just think being higher profile and having your say at meetings. I have noticed in some of the schools I have worked at that females tend to shrink in the background and let the males go rah-rah, and I think females have just as good ideas as men. They need to stand up for those ideas, and if they really believe in something, go for it. (F13)

Confidence is important, and the feeling that "Someone else has done it, so I can do it too". I don't think in the preparation and studies side of things, you are prepared for promotion at all. It is basically not discussed. Probably men go into it with a little more confidence because it's expected of them. No one comes out to you in your final year of study and says to you that you would make a good HOD... try this, this and this. (F2)

Such remarks reinforce the need to provide women with positive messages regarding expectations for female leadership. Recognition for achievement, encouragement and support in their endeavours, the importance of having role models, and just being told that the Head of Department position is one for which they should strive, are all crucial aspects in the communication of expectations to women.

### **Women's interpretation of expectations resulting in a determination to succeed**

While some female physical educators' interpretations of the perceived negative expectations of colleagues deter their promotional aspirations, others do not feel constrained by these barriers, and take up the challenge to demonstrate their leadership capabilities. Three of the women interviewed in phase 2 of the study, and all of the women participating in phase 5 of the study possessed such ambitions. In some cases, these respondents had encountered little opposition to their career plans from their colleagues, and had received considerable encouragement and support in their endeavours, while others spoke of overcoming their negative experiences and the stereotypical expectations regarding leadership in physical education to achieve their goals.

Some of the aspiring respondents were sympathetic to the plight of women in physical education, but spoke of how the deterrents can be subdued:

I can see the guys giving some women a hard time... for sure. But I think it is how you approach it. If you turn around and give as good as you get, and let them know that you are not going to be bullied, and that you are in charge... And you say, "Come on fellas, this is the way"... that is how I operate. I don't get intimidated by males. Whereas I can see that some females would, they really would. (F3)

There are lots of obstacles but then as the expression goes: "Women can do anything". (F10)

So it really comes down to the person and their skills. I really don't think it is just because you are male or just because you are female. I believe, if you show that you are capable, you are going to get a good go. OK, you are going to muck up, and you are going to strike people who are 'nonbelievers' and that sort of thing... You just have to wear that, because that is out in society. Get past those people. They aren't really worth worrying about. Work on the people that are behind you and with you and show that you are capable, and get on with the job. (F19)

Others failed to acknowledge the difficulties that female leaders in the subject area may encounter.

I think it comes down to a personality thing. I'm quite happy to go to a HOD meeting where a lot of them are male, and I feel that I can hold my own there, and I'm not aggressive. I can give my opinion, or my department's opinion in an assertive way and argue for and against different things, and I don't feel threatened in that situation. (F4)

I suppose it all depends on what the female wants to do. If she's capable and she wants to do the HOD job, then she's got all the support now... If a female just wants to do PE and then move out and have a family and whatever, then that's her choice. But I do feel that with all the information that we have now, and the help you get on how to apply for promotion and what to do, there is much more information now than when I started... it should be easy. When you read through selection criteria, you can see that males and females are eligible for it. So long as there's enough information given to all of the people, whether it's male or female, then there should be no reason why females can't go for it. (F5)

Sometimes I think it's a bit of a soft option... getting a hard time from the guys is just an excuse for not chasing promotion. If they have those skills that are necessary, then there's absolutely no reason why they shouldn't be HOD. (F1)

Well let's face it, you can't get promoted unless you apply. It is as simple as that. So that is the very first step. The promotion system has opened up. I mean anyone can apply for a level 3... Unless you put your hat in the ring, you can't be promoted. So for females to sit back and not even put in that initial expression of interest... They have no one else to blame but themselves. (F13)

I think that these expectations are a perception on the female's part. I think you can make anything work if you really want to. But you are talking to someone who has broken into the footy umpiring circles... I have no trouble speaking to males and speaking to them on their own level... (F19)

The attitude portrayed in these remarks has been presented in the literature as a confounding issue in the investigation of women's career advancement. Many female teachers, particularly those who have achieved success, perceive no evidence of disadvantage or discrimination against themselves or their colleagues (Martin & Smith, 1993; Weiner, 1993). Some believe that the problem lies in the lack of commitment among their female contemporaries, quoting their own experiences as proof of the career possibilities available, if only women persevere. Such perceptions can be detrimental to female teachers, in that the encouragement and support of women who have achieved success is crucial to the development and maintenance of promotional aspirations among other female teachers.

A number of women spoke of their personal aspirations. One respondent who had been teaching for only seven years, and was determined to gain promotion to Head of Department said:

I have got good skills and I want to use them. I want to change the way some kids think and feel and react, and I want to contribute to society and to our sporting kids in general. I think you have got to feel that motivation within yourself. So I think females have got to have a bit more motivation. I also think they have got to have a bit of sense of pride in themselves. The fact that things they do, they are very good at. They are capable. And not just sit back and say "Look it is only a male's domain to apply for HOD." They need to really believe in themselves and what they can do, their skills and abilities. (F19)

A number of other women had been frustrated by the lack of opportunity provided by the promotional system. Interestingly, these teachers appeared to ignore any negative experiences they may have had with regard to lack of acceptance by their colleagues, or discrimination, instead, focusing their comments on ways in which to overcome systemic barriers. One respondent, unable to gain an acting Head of Department position, told of her struggle for leadership experience and recognition within the school:

You've got to fight for it, that's what I've done. For two years I was just the health co-ordinator within the department, but now I'm recognised as the Head of Health Education and I go to all the HOD meetings and things like that. I get the same timetable allowance as a HOD, and I'm an entity unto myself... I had the support for all these things from the Principal last year, and I've got it again this year. I had to bide my time for two years, and then I thought "Our HOD situation is hopeless - we've got people in acting positions all the time", so I bypassed it all and went straight to the Principal and said "I want to be recognised. Here's what I can offer for 1994..." (F6)

Examples of determination and the desire to succeed despite structural barriers and the constraints imposed by perceptions of lack of acceptance of female leadership by significant others, have the potential to lead one to assume that if such action is possible for these women, then those who do not exhibit such ambition are weaker, or in some way deficient. However, it is important to acknowledge the impact of a woman's personality, teaching experiences and specific life circumstances on her career decision-making. It would be inappropriate to assume that all of the female physical educators who do not aspire to Head of Department are yielding to pressures imposed by the system, or accommodating the negative expectations expressed by their significant others. According to the literature there is evidence that highly capable women make a conscious choice not to apply for promotion because it would mean either losing aspects of the job they value, or trying to resolve tensions between their beliefs and the administrative practices of the establishment (Al-Khalifa, 1989; Pavan & Robinson, 1991; Sampson, 1986; Sharpe, 1993). Women's choice in this regard can be seen as a passive way of rejecting or protesting against a particular male version of career.

## CASE STUDIES

The chapter concludes with the presentation of two 'case studies' which illustrate the nature of some of the deterrents encountered by aspiring female physical educators, and the feelings and perceptions that have emerged from their experiences. The retelling of these women's experiences is done in their own words in an endeavour to

convey the spirit in which the stories were told, and to maintain the integrity of the responses.

### Case study 'A'

'A' was single, aged 30, and had been teaching physical education in government secondary schools for nine years. Three of those years had been spent in a country centre. She was a state level coach, and heavily involved in the administrative aspects of her sport. At the time of the interview, 'A' was an acting Head of Department at a metropolitan secondary school. She had been awarded the acting position the previous year, her first at the school. 'A' spoke of her disappointment at failing to gain promotion on two successive occasions, of how she perceived her situation to have changed over the past three years, and of the impact this may have on her future career in physical education. She is obviously a capable and confident woman, and is well respected in her leadership role.

I've applied for two years. The first year I got an interview, and didn't get the job. But I got back my ratings, and then felt... well, if I want to apply again I'll need to improve in these areas. So the following year I was an acting HOD and tried to improve in those specific areas. That year I applied again... there were three jobs going at this stage. But I didn't get an interview. Obviously there's a different pool of people, but when I got back my ratings, they were exactly the same rating as the year before, and areas I had really tried to improve upon, actually went down on the rating. So I found that really frustrating, to get an overall rating that was the same, after I'd been in the job for a year, and had made special efforts to improve... That was pretty disappointing.

Both of those years I was in the country, so I wasn't settled in Perth. Now I've come back to Perth and bought a house and that sort of thing. I'm currently acting HOD. Last year I expressed my interest, and I think the jobs were in the country and I was prepared to go there. This year I've expressed my interest for HOD again, and I'll just wait and see what comes up. It may be that I will go to the country, but I think it will depend on what's available. I also check the papers every weekend for other jobs. Ideally I'd perhaps like to be involved in sports administration, because I think that I am quite a good administrator, and well organised. (F4)

Since the time of the interview, 'A' has resigned from the Education Department to take up a position in sports administration. It appears that yet another aspiring female physical educator is added to the list of women who, frustrated by the



promotion system and the lack of opportunities it affords, have sought alternate avenues to exercise their talents.

### **Case study B**

'B' is married, aged 28 and had been teaching for seven years in government secondary schools at the time of the interview. She had completed two years of country service in the position of 'teacher-in-charge'. 'B's diversity of skills and interests is demonstrated by her involvement in activities ranging from umpiring, to managing teams for the Pan Pacific Games. She is on the executive council of a number of sporting organisations. 'B' holds the dubious honour of being the first physical educator to have been promoted to Head of Department, only to have lost the position on appeal, under the merit promotion system. However, her disappointments did not end there. She was subsequently refused an acting Head of Department position in a metropolitan school because she was female. She related her experiences as follows:

I applied for HOD, and managed to make the top nine. Actually, I only applied for practice. I thought I would just give it a go, and managed to get through the written stage. I had a fair bit of help there from a few people that had gone through promotion recently and they showed me what they had written... They told me, that my application was pretty good. And I got through that down to the last nine. They called me in for an interview and I was absolutely packing death. Then, from the interview they phoned all of my referees and I managed to get the position... On paper they appointed me to HOD in the country.

It then went through the appeal process. The appeal wasn't against me, it was against the process. Apparently there was a big stuff up with the committee that was involved, and they should have in fact promoted this other guy and not me. So they upheld his appeal and I was given the big flick. It was not very pleasant... the way it was done was shocking. It was pretty shoddy. There was no thought given to my feelings... one minute I had been on top of the heap, and all of a sudden I was at the bottom. Because of all the other promotions, and because the appeal was done so late, on the very last day of school I was informed that I hadn't in fact got the job... It was just by phone call saying "You haven't got it, too bad, tough". By then a lot of the other jobs left by normal Phys Eders had already been filled. They would have been in place because supposedly level 3's were set. Mine was the first appeal that ever went through and had ever been successful. So they said "Aren't you lucky" and I said "What ever you reckon". So it was very poorly done, and to find out on the very last day was pretty shocking. And then I was told "Well there are no schools left, and we are going to place you wherever

something comes up". It was very poorly done by the Education Department.

When I got that phone call, I felt like my whole world had fallen apart. And just to be told "Look, we'll shove you at any old school". At the time I really thought "I'm out of this system, I'm going to head private" or "Blow you, I am not going to try again". It really did kick me in the teeth, and it has taken me a good three to four months to get over that and say "OK I am not going to lay down, I am going to keep fighting. I reckon I should be there, and I should be there above a few people that are already there." I am going to re-apply.

When I didn't get the HOD position, I came back to Perth... I said to the Ministry "Look I have been there, I have got so far, I've obviously got the skills, I want an acting job" And I went along to the guy that was in charge of staffing in PE, and he said "Oh yes, there is an acting job at one school."... I said "Fine. Put me in. I really want to do that, I need this experience to add to my CV"... A male HOD had transferred into the Department for a couple of months, so that created the acting position. Unbeknown to me, that guy had said "I don't want a female doing my job." And the bloke that was in charge of placing Phys Eders said "Oh no, I have spoken to the HOD and it has to be a male." I said "I beg your pardon, it is an acting job. He said "Well the HOD said you would be teaching all boys PE and therefore there would be problems with the change rooms." I said "I don't wear that. I have taught male PE and co-ed PE the whole time, so that doesn't wash with me..." But they wouldn't budge. So I could not get an acting job. The joke is that here I am teaching all boys' PE. I don't have one girls' PE class.

Now that has been a real negative for me, because without that, you can't say you have been in charge and that you have the skills to handle a HOD job. Not being able to get an acting position has been really frustrating. I had another situation where a male HOD who had transferred down to a city school, wanted me under his wing to give me the skills to put on my CV, knowing that in fact he wasn't going to spend a year there. He was taking a year off to do something else. There was no one at the school that wanted to do the acting job. There was a temporary staff member there, and staffing wouldn't oust her to put in a permanent staff member (me). Apparently they had to virtually force someone to take on the HOD job, nobody wanted to do it.. But they wouldn't give it to me... I suppose it is the luck of the draw.

Obviously I'd like to do a HOD job. I did have a teacher-in-charge job in the country, where I sort of got the taste of a HOD job and thought I'd enjoy it, and yes I have re-applied this year for promotion. A lot of it is going to depend on which schools come up. For me, having a husband as well, it makes it more complicated... He has also applied for level 3. I'd ideally like to get a HOD position in a school which is two or three hours from Perth. If it is any further than that, it almost becomes unrealistic because of the marriage. I dare say that probably in the future I am aspiring to become Deputy and then perhaps Principal... (F19)

Since the time of the interview, 'B' has continued to strive for a Head of Department position. There is little doubt that she will eventually be successful, but at what cost?

## **SUMMARY**

The chapter began by outlining the perceptions of government school female physical educators regarding the Head of Department role; its skill requirements, the ability of women to assume the role, possible differences inherent in female leadership of physical education, preferences for female or male leaders in the subject area, and the image associated with the Head of Department position.

The remaining systemic barriers to promotion, as perceived by the female physical educators were then considered. The women who expressed aspirations for the leadership role identified three aspects of the government education system which hindered their advancement. These were the lack of opportunity to advance, the implicit expectation of country service, and the requirement for experience in order to compete for promotional positions.

This was followed by a discussion of the women's perceptions regarding the expectations of significant others concerning female leadership, and an investigation of the nature in which these expectations are expressed. The perceived assumptions of colleagues in terms of assumed male leadership; a short-term career for women; family responsibilities; lack of ambition; stereotypical roles and behaviours; and the male model of leadership were highlighted as deterrents to the promotional aspirations of many women. The teachers interviewed believed that discrimination; chauvinism; exclusion; the lower status accorded females in physical education departments; the lack of encouragement and support given to women; the lack of role models to demonstrate the possibilities of female leadership; and the fact that the leadership role is more difficult for a female, were all aspects of the school context which conveyed messages regarding the negative expectations of their significant others.

The possible ways in which female physical educators may interpret these expectations, and their resultant career aspirations, or lack of interest in promotion

were then explored. Figure 3 presents a summary of the perceived expectations of significant others; the various ways in which these expectations are conveyed to female teachers; the women's interpretation of the expectations on the basis of their teaching experiences, life circumstances and personal characteristics; and their resultant career aspirations, or lack of interest in promotion. These career choices serve to either confirm or question their colleagues' expectations. The chapter concluded with two case studies which highlighted a number of the difficulties and deterrents encountered by aspiring teachers.

Chapter 8 will investigate the expectations held by male physical educators, and their perceptions regarding female leadership in physical education.

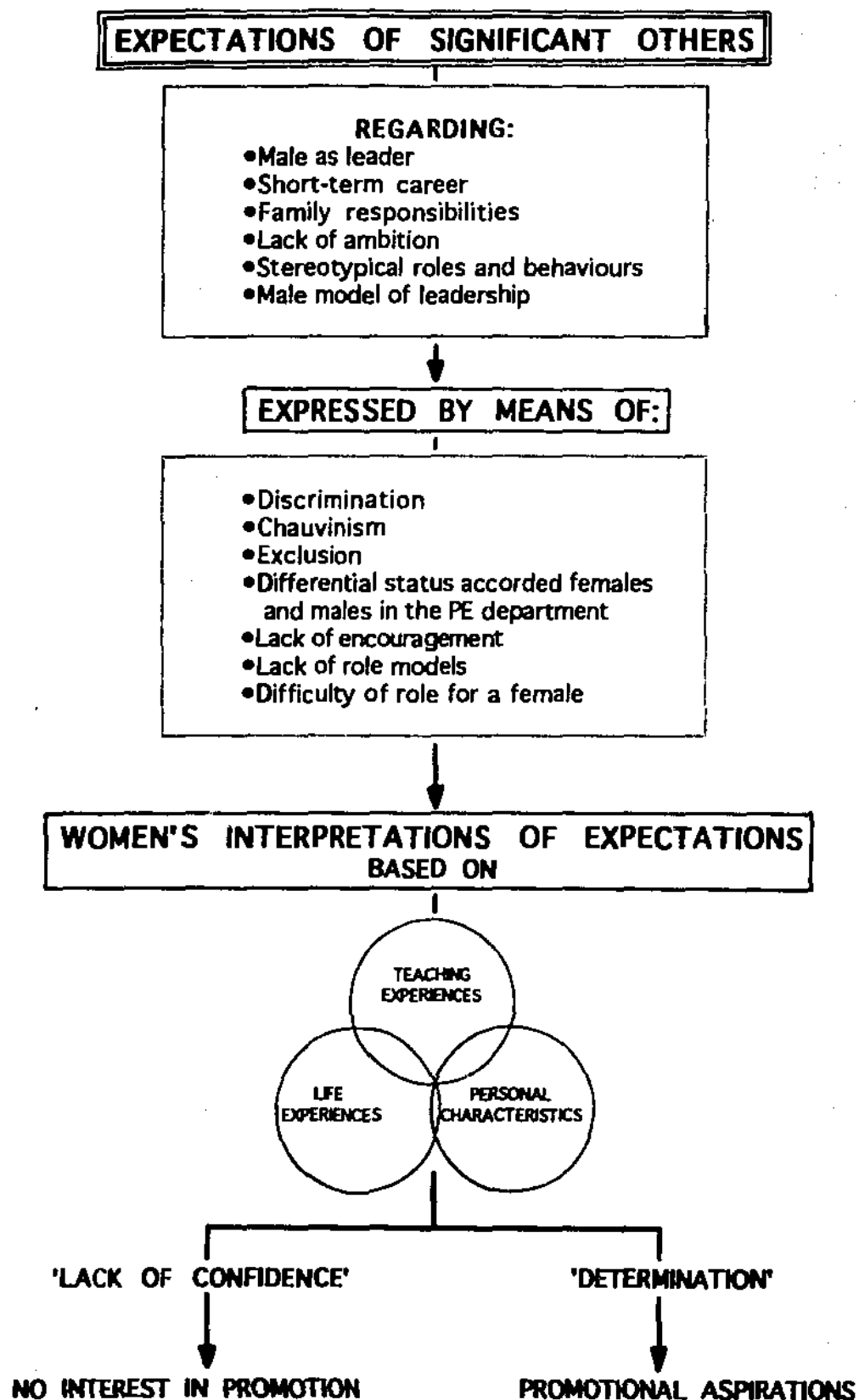


Figure 3: Government school female physical educators' perceptions regarding the expectations of significant others, and their impact on promotional aspirations.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOL MALE PHYSICAL EDUCATORS REGARDING FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

This chapter outlines the findings of interviews conducted with male physical education teachers and Heads of Department from government schools during phase 2 of the study. The interview data is presented in four interrelated sections.

Discussion begins with an examination of male perceptions regarding the Head of Department role. This is followed by a consideration of the barriers to promotion that continue to exist for female physical educators. The reasons given by the men for the apparent reluctance of women to apply for the Head of Department position are then addressed. The chapter concludes with an investigation of men's expectations regarding female leadership in physical education, and reasons underlying the men's ultimate attribution of women's lack of promotional aspirations to deficiencies within the women.

Because many of the concepts addressed in this chapter have to some degree been considered previously, background discussion will be limited to avoid repetition, although some comparative comments may be included. An in-depth comparison, between the expectations of significant others as perceived by the female physical educators, and the expectations as expressed by the male physical educators, will be presented in Chapter 9.

Prior to commencing the discussion, it should be stated that I am aware of the fact that the comments made by participants may in some instances reflect their perceptions of the 'correct' response, rather than reality. It was anticipated that male physical educators, required to scrutinise and expose their attitudes and

behaviours, would be reluctant to admit for example, to such negatively viewed actions as chauvinism and discrimination. Therefore, statements made will not necessarily be taken at face value. One of the men interviewed actually cautioned me in this regard with the comment:

I don't know who you have interviewed, but it might be interesting to interview some of the real old chauvinist blokes... But I guess that some of those fellows wouldn't admit to doing that sort of thing. That is the difficult thing. Even if they were guilty, they wouldn't admit to that, I am sure. (M21)

## **THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT ROLE**

This section outlines the men's perceptions regarding aspects of the Head of Department role in physical education, and addresses the same components covered in the previous chapter on women's perceptions regarding the position and its incumbents. Discussion focuses on the Head of Department role; its skill requirements; the perceived ability of women to assume the role; possible differences inherent in female leadership of physical education; preferences for female or male leaders; and the image associated with the Head of Department position.

### **Necessary skills for a Head of Department in Physical Education**

Male physical educators' perceptions of the essential skills and qualities for a Head of Department in Physical Education were outlined in Chapter 6. The quotations to follow serve to elaborate on the exact nature and application of the most crucial of those attributes. Aspects highlighted included interpersonal skills; good communication, both within the department and at a whole school level; the need to be well organised and an effective planner; efficient management of time resources and staff; and the need to promote physical education within the school.

Interpersonal skills, dealing with people, staff, students, a wide variety of parents. And along with those communication skills, being in a position where you are always going to state your case. The school is a

curriculum monster, and the only way a faculty can survive in a school is to be better at it than anybody else. So you need good communication skills, good interpersonal skills. ...You must be extremely well organised... A good planner. For PE, not just your own staff but the whole school has to see you in this way... I am wary of saying "high profile", but you have to have a high profile. If you don't, it is just so much harder to win the battles with admin, and win the kids over. (M11)

Being able to do administration properly. You have timetable, budgets, staff timetables, equipment, unforeseen problems with timetables, rooming, specialist areas. They all need to be looked after. The administration of all those things needs to be on time and spot on to keep the troops happy. (M12)

Organisation, leadership, communication, motivation. Leadership in an administrative sense, and leadership in a program/curriculum sense. You also have to make every staff member feel important and that they are making a worthwhile contribution... You have to be a good role model, so the teachers can aspire to achieve that level. (M13)

General organisational skills, being able to organise their own day, organise their own department. Good communication skills so they can communicate effectively with their department and with the rest of the school, and promote the PE department. And that is linked in with communication. Third, enthusiasm, and I suppose that's not something you can package up and give someone... And I suppose another one is the ability to delegate and delegate effectively. You can't do everything yourself. Even though some of us try to do it, you can't do it. You need to employ the rest of your staff members to help you. (M24)

I think team-building is the number one. If you can get people working with you, then you're well on the way. (M6)

Leadership I think, leading by example and drawing everybody together. An ability to get on with people obviously. Public relations are pretty important with the PE staff and with the general staff in the school, the administration, and that is related to leadership I guess... Being able to negotiate and be a bit hard headed, be assertive. There is a requirement there to be able to negotiate, particularly with PE, and to be assertive, otherwise you won't achieve anything, or get your slice. (M9)

One of the male Heads of Department interviewed made a point of differentiating between the attributes necessary for 'adequate' leadership, and those required to 'excel' in the position.

I would break them (necessary attributes) into categories. There are probably things that make you adequate and things that make you excel. And the things that make you adequate are: to do your job, your attention to detail, and you have to be a good organiser. You have to manage resources. You have to manage the staff. I think the things that would really make you excel are certainly in the area of interpersonal skills. Creating an atmosphere where people can work together and enjoy the process of working, and feel that they can do something worthwhile and make a difference. (M7)



Another Head of Department provided a detailed account of the demands of the leadership role based on his experiences.

I would say you definitely have to be a good manager. I mean you have got to manage your time, and other people's time, and you have to manage and give direction when it is required. You have got to do all the paperwork. If you don't do all the paperwork, there are things that crop up time and time again, and you lose respect if you are a weak link in the system... You have to be strong. I think you also have to have ideas. You have to be a person who can visualise... Ideas that will change, not for change's sake, but for the betterment of all your staff and students that you teach, and for yourself... You have to be a consummate politician, especially in PE, because we are usually the most down trodden department within any school. So you have got to be constantly on your toes to make sure you are not being shafted by some particular decision that goes on. You have got to have your fingers in every pie of the school. You have got to be involved in the timetable because otherwise, suddenly decisions are made where subjects are lost and it is so hard to get subjects back... You have to be tenacious. You can't give up. You have to constantly keep the pressure on. You may make yourself a lot of... not so much a lot of enemies. People will get sick of you knocking on their door constantly about various issues. You also have to be able to get a real focus on the bigger picture of the school, because that is where a lot of the other departments have insulated themselves in their own department. Because they have either existed through their own good fortune of being Maths, Science, Social Studies or English. You have to keep a very big picture of how each part fits together and that way you can say that you are integral to the whole running of the school and the development of the whole student, not just the bit which is Maths or PE.... You have got to get involved in your pastoral care or have members of your staff jump into those side systems. You have got to make sure that you are there for the Post Compulsory decisions and all of that. And all of that sort of adds up to a respect that is built through, I suppose educational leadership, but from a point of view that you are not just head of your own department, but a person who knows what is going on. (M19)

Although the perceptions of the male physical educators regarding the necessary skills for a Head of Department matched those of the female physical educators interviewed, in many instances, the depth of understanding of the requirements of the leadership role appeared considerably greater among the male respondents. This is probably attributable to the experience the majority of men had gained through either acting and/or substantive leadership positions.

#### **The ability of females to assume the Head of Department role**

When asked whether, based on the identified skills and qualities required, they thought women were capable of assuming the Head of Department role, all but three

of the 20 male physical educators interviewed gave positive responses. Their comments included:

There is definitely a place for women in the HOD position. Women are proving all the time that they have the capabilities to run a tight ship and do things extremely efficiently. Sometimes their management skills and administration show guys up quite badly in some areas. (M12)

Because managing people is sort of a science, or a process, it doesn't matter if a male is handling a male, or a male is handling a female, or visa versa. It is just making business decisions really, and professional decisions. And the rank and file underneath has to understand that the decisions are coming down maybe from the principal, maybe through the ranks, or by consensus in the faculty. It doesn't matter who you have as a manager, whether it is a male, or female. It is the processes that determine direction. (M17)

I have come across, during my time in teaching, so many females who would make excellent HODs. I don't think there are any disadvantages of a female being the HOD. I don't think there are any qualities that a female has that would make their job harder as a HOD. ... I think there are a dozen females in PE that I have come across in the last 10 or 12 years who could have been, and should have been HODs, if they wanted to. I don't see it as a hindrance at all to performance. (M19)

I think there are a lot of females that are capable... I've got a couple on my staff, that I give a hell of a lot of support to, and I would love to see them do something similar themselves. They would be excellent leaders. (M21)

I have the utmost respect for women, and I would encourage them to get involved... I certainly wouldn't be one of those people who would be making it difficult for them to make their decisions, or run their departments, because I think they can do it equally well as we (the men) can. (M23)

Women in managerial positions in the corporate world, consult and negotiate... they seem to be skills that women are very strong in anyway. There is no reason why a woman couldn't do the job equally as well as a man. Particularly in teaching, because most teachers are fairly enlightened to women's capabilities, and male teachers don't feel really threatened by having a woman in charge. (M22)

Any of my staff here could run the department standing on their heads. Two of the female Phys Eders have been tremendously competent. The thing that restricts them is lack of qualifications, actually not in one case. In her case it was that she wanted to specialise in Dance and not seek that direction. With the other female, not having a degree has hampered her, because she would be an ideal HOD, really with her organisational skills. There was another female Phys Eder I worked with here, could have run the department easily. So there are highly competent women I would enjoy working under. I would enjoy working under either of my staff here. (M18)

The latter comment is an interesting one, particularly when considered in the light of the lack of acceptance of female leadership perceived by many female physical educators. A number of the women interviewed believed that males within Physical Education Departments would indeed feel threatened at the prospect of a female Head of Department.

A common thread running through many of the men's responses was the perceived requirement for the women taking on the Head of Department role to be "strong", "assertive", "able to stand up for themselves", and "not to be pushed around".

I think the number one criteria, is whether they can do the job or not. If they are very strong characters and don't stand for any mucking about, and they had the ability to really stand up for themselves and not to be pushed around or swayed, it's fine. I think if you are positive about your own department and there is any pushing and shoving at senior staff level about timetable and the time allocation, you need someone who is going to get in there and do the job. And I don't think it matters whether it is male or female, as long as they do the job. (M14)

I have seen some very capable female Phys Eders and I don't think they would have any trouble doing the job. Sometimes females, and this goes back to the stereotype, don't see themselves as being as tough, and when the going gets tough, they have got a tendency maybe to react emotionally or whatever. We have all seen that sort of thing. But no, providing they are capable people and develop their assertiveness, there is no reason why they wouldn't fit in. (M9)

As alluded to by the teacher who made the latter comment, the female stereotype of subordination, submissiveness and weakness continues to pervade the thoughts and expectations of many physical educators, and results in the perception that for a woman to function effectively in the leadership role, she must step outside the bounds of her female stereotype. On the other hand, males, by virtue of their stereotype, are assumed to possess the required levels of strength and assertiveness to succeed as Heads of Department.

A number of the respondents related their positive experiences with female leaders.

Everything ran like clockwork. But her personality was very strong and forthright and I didn't know anybody who would want to cross her. But she was really a strong character and I think she had been there for quite a while when I came to the school. The organisation was superb... But later on a male became acting senior master while she went on maternity leave. Things changed and not for the better. The school ran

far better when she was in charge. He was more laissez-faire, things would just happen, cruise along, which wasn't what the school needed. (M15)

Yeah. As I said I have been fortunate enough to work under a number of females. One as a HOD in another school and she was a very competent person, reasonably well organised. She had to be, she had a young family as well. Yeah she was a hard worker, put in the effort and I had no qualms. She was a person that you could sit down and discuss things with and come up with a decision. She may have disagreed with what I came up with but she would sit down and say "Let's look at some alternatives". (M24)

When I was the deputy in 1990 for the full year she did the HOD job and she was very capable, just no problems slotting in there. It operates as normal because she is a capable person. As far as the 'battles' go, I suppose there is a little bit of a network amongst the HODs, but I don't think that is insurmountable for a female. She carried it off extra well, because she was a capable person and she just got in there and was as tough as the rest of them, no problems. (M9)

I have had contact with several women in charge of PE. One lady in particular, used to ring me up quite often asking me how I did things. How I did this, how I did that, what do you do here, what advice would you give me over this issue? And I was pretty much aware that she struggled a lot. I also have a colleague that works with her. Things haven't changed. Completely bloody disorganised, hasn't got a clue what is going on. But that is not because she is a woman. It is nothing to do with the fact she is a woman. It has got to do with her organisational skills and her personality. I know blokes like that too. I know men who have the same problems running their PE departments because they have the same kind of personal characteristics. The fact that she asked for the help is a good point in her favour. Perhaps a lot of male HODs may not be prepared to admit their inadequacies and do that. (M23)

It is worthy of note that in 20 lengthy conversations with male physical educators, the latter comment was the only direct reference made to the possibility that some males are inadequate in the leadership role.

Some of the men went as far as to say that in many respects, women had the potential to be better leaders than men. They highlighted women's superior communication skills, interpersonal skills, and organisational ability as the basis for their judgements.

The way women do things I think is in a lot of ways better than the way men do things. For example, the way they communicate in groups... There is no fragmentation going on. (M14)

I think most females have better people skills than a lot of the males... Organisationally, I think they are just as capable. In fact in a lot of regards, I think they would be better as far as dealing with people and I

think that would be a big plus. They relate better to people than a lot of the guys. (M21)

Certainly, I've met some excellent women in my time, I really have and I'm surprised that none of them have become HODs. They have been capable of doing it without a doubt. In fact, usually they were more organised than the male they were under... their organisational skills are tops. Males tend to be "We'll be all right, we'll get through it". That is their attitude. A female feels the need to be organised, she needs to know that she is organised, she needs to know that everything is OK and nothing is going to go wrong... (M3)

This latter comment, although intended to commend the superior organisational skills of women, may in fact serve to highlight the lengths to which women must go in order to feel they are in 'control' of a situation. Perhaps because a female leader does not feel natural in the dominant role, she endeavours to account for all contingencies in order to reduce the chances for failure. Perhaps she needs to know that "nothing is going to go wrong" in order to alleviate her concerns about being perceived as incompetent.

Further to their remarks regarding the leadership capabilities of women, four of the respondents acknowledged the different qualities that women can bring to the Head of Department position. Their comments included:

I don't see the divisiveness of who could do it or who couldn't do it as being male or female. I think it is an individual thing. Individuals have different skills, and I would never see a male or a female being better or worse. Management is a mixture of people... and I think females bring some wonderful things to a group that maybe a lot of males would lack... sensitivity is one... (M7)

In essence, whether it is male or female, people have different strengths... In the case of females, they bring maybe a more caring aspect to listening. They are better listeners than a lot of males are. I would be the first to admit it. Males in PE, a lot of us tend to be fairly egotistical. We are not necessarily aggressive, but can certainly be very assertive. (M8)

Unfortunately, because these teachers had never actually worked with a female Head of Department, it is likely that their comments were prompted by a desire for 'political correctness', rather than being based on their positive experiences of female leadership.

One respondent, while acknowledging the capabilities of women, believed that the role may be more difficult for them. He stated:

I really see it as a people thing rather than a gender-based thing. I have no doubt females have excelled and succeeded in those roles... Maybe they've had to fight harder... I am sure they have had to make many breakthroughs... there is a lot of tradition tied to many things... But on a personal level, there is no reason why they all haven't got the ability to succeed. If they are just good at the job and have the skills required. (M7)

Although not making outright statements denying the ability of women to succeed as Heads of Department, three of the male physical educators voiced concerns over the problems that women may encounter as leaders in physical education. They focused on the potential difficulties of dealing with males in the department, and of the need for "strength" and "assertiveness" in order to promote physical education within the school.

It would depend on the individual. I could see some women having problems, yes. A lot of this is determined by the staff members she has. If she is not a very strong person and she's got some strong willed males on staff that were sexist, I'd say she would have quite a hard time. Though that is not an excuse to not have a go. I could see that there could be a situation that a female could have problems if she had males to deal with. (M12)

I think women would be very successful in certain schools without a doubt. In a school like this a woman could be very successful, because it is different. It does not have traditional expectations where you do athletics, swimming and everything else. You don't have this tradition behind you that the school has done this for so long and therefore you have to continue it, like Rossmoyne and Churchlands. I think they would be very hard schools for women... They would have to be outstanding women. In the last 25 years I have met perhaps half a dozen who could possibly become HOD. (M3)

Some of the work you get tied up in dealing with is the interschool sport teams. Some of the women may not have the feeling for those. But I think that tends to be an important part of the role. Sometimes the interschool sporting teams can be a way by which the department is judged, because people see them in action and parents see them in action and people in the school see them in action. If things are going wrong there, like scrappy and ragged performance, then it can reflect back on the department. Now some women may not be completely in tune with that aspect of the position. (M9)

Such remarks illustrate the stereotypical notions that persist in the minds of some male physical educators regarding the nature of women, and their incongruence with

the traditionally masculine domain of sport. It is hardly surprising that such perceptions result in expectations which limit the capacities of women.

One respondent amplified his remarks by highlighting the example of what he perceived as an ineffective female Head of Department, and the impact this had on general perceptions regarding women taking on the role.

I can't see any reason why a female would not do a job as well as a male. Except perhaps the way in which current female HODs are seen... bad feedback comes perhaps because the type of female that has been selected in the position hasn't really been a true leader, or a true visionary. She hasn't really had a mission. That is not to be critical of anyone, but I think being selected on seniority or credentials is not the way to go... You probably have to look at the type of person you are putting in the position. I can think of one particular female HOD beating her head up against a brick wall at one school. I like her very much and I admired her for the energy and work she put into that school. But she didn't really function well there, because the direction she was heading in was not the way her staff wanted to go, and therefore she just ran into brick walls. (M18)

Regrettably, because there have been so few female Heads of Department in physical education, the 'few' are epitomised as examples of female leadership. Their high visibility means that they bear the brunt of the criticism. The abundance of males in the position on the other hand, serves to camouflage any inadequacies of individuals.

### **Differences inherent in female leadership in physical education**

Within the literature, opinion is divided with regard to the existence of distinct female and male leadership styles. The female physical educators interviewed for this study also varied in their perceptions of possible differences which may be the result of having a female Head of Department. One third of the women believed that a female in-charge may institute changes with regard to the creation of a more open, flexible and inclusive environment; the increased level of efficiency and precision with which tasks would be completed; and the provision of more equitable opportunities for girls in physical education. The remainder of the women did not believe that a female leader would run the department any differently.

When the male respondents were asked whether they believed that a woman would lead the Physical Education Department differently, the majority were of the opinion that some changes would be evident. One suggested area of difference was a "softer", "more caring" and "more concerned" approach, as indicated by comments such as:

From my experience, they run things on a more personal level. They are people-people. They care more for the feelings of their staff and things like that. Whereas the blokes I have known, and myself included, we are... "Let's do this, do that ...", more regimented, "Let's just get on with the job" sort of thing. (M13)

In some cases I think they would probably look for a different direction and wonder whether that would be a more humanistic way... I really think that their people skills are better for the position in a lot of cases. I think they would be concerned about how the departments are being run and wonder whether the changes they would like to institute or what ever would be positively received by their peers. (M21)

Maybe the only thing I'd see is that I think females are better listeners. They listen very carefully to what is said and they may bring a more caring approach to things. In today's world that could be seen as an advantage. Whereas in yesterday's world that may have been seen as a big disadvantage, when you had caring for example. I have a fairly autocratic style as far as discipline goes. I think I am pretty fair, but when I have had enough, it is enough, and the student will be told that. Females, from what I have seen, tend to listen with perhaps a little more patience. (M8)

A second aspect, that the respondents believed may be different, related to the greater degree of thought incorporated in the decision-making process. Men tend to "act now and think later", while women consider all the possible outcomes and consequences prior to making their decision.

A man probably goes in and speaks his mind, and then worries about the consequences later. In one respect the job gets done quickly, but may have lots of rough edges... The female would perhaps have taken care of those contingencies initially. So the job would have been done a bit slower, but it would have been done a bit smoother. I think men in general, act first and think second. A lot of women really think about what they are saying and are very sensitive to words and are very sensitive to language. They really think it through before they say anything. So a man will make a comment which gets the job done, but leaves a feeling that he's been insensitive. A woman will get the job done, taking perhaps a bit longer to do it, but there won't be that feeling... there will be more a feeling of caring and concern. Therefore, in the long run, the woman possibly does it better. (M18)

Although the male teachers attributed this difference to the greater sensitivity of women and their caring natures, the tendency for women to explore all



contingencies, as mentioned previously, may in fact be a function of their apprehensions regarding their visibility as leaders, and a perceived need to prove their worthiness.

The third suggested difference focused on the priorities set by women. Three male respondents believed that women's greater attention to detail may in fact be a disadvantage to their overall proficiency as Heads of Department. The comments included:

Certainly their styles of administration I think would be different. Women are neater and tidier and quite organised. But they spend so much time doing that, and have no time for doing anything else. My decision on the job would be that a lot of paper work gets thrown out the window and you make sure all jobs are covered. (M12)

The women I have worked with, as in-charge of the department, may get the priorities a little different to what I would... They give attention to little things, whereas they don't perhaps see the whole picture, and put the things that are more pressing up front. They might go into more detail than is necessary on issues. (M22)

Three of the male physical educators interviewed perceived no differences in the functioning of the department with a female leader.

I have seen men and women operate in the same manner, and it is more an individual thing than it is male or female. (M15)

PE staff, male and female, think very much alike. They usually have the same goals, and usually work as a team because of their sporting background. (M3)

One of the respondents qualified his statement by acknowledging the fact that in the past, there may have existed a dichotomy between the leadership styles of male Heads of Department and a female assuming the role. However, he believed that in more recent times, the general move away from a 'dictatorial' mentality to more democratic and inclusive management styles, has resulted in a narrowing of the gap.

I would hope that I run the department as a HOD, not as a male or female. I like to do a lot of participative decision-making, or we do things together. There are times when I'd stand up and say "I am the leader", that's the intrinsic reward. There are times when you can do that. That doesn't mean vetoing anybody, but it just means you can control the direction things go. Whether females would do things differently compared with the dinosaurs that we have, yes they probably would.

Would they do anything differently to a modern day manager, which is essentially what we are, probably no, they wouldn't. (M11)

If this statement is an accurate reflection of trends in physical education, then given time to witness the reality of such shifts in leadership style, and the evidence to alter the established image of the Head of Department role as perceived by many women, female physical educators may begin looking to the leadership role as a career possibility.

### **Preferences for a female/male Head of Department**

When asked to indicate their preference for a female or male Head of Department, the majority of respondents intimated that it was the capacity of individuals to fulfil the leadership role that mattered, rather than their sex. Comments included:

I have worked under a female HOD and I don't have a problem with that... And I think males of our generation may be a bit different to probably a generation gone by. We are quite happy to take directions from a female leader as compared to a male. It is not as important to have the hierarchy, and I think we are a young department and we don't have that problem. I've found that when I have been under a female senior mistress, she's been excellent. (M15)

To me it doesn't matter whether a person is male or female. It is just a purely managerial position, but it is surprising that there are so few females. I didn't know that until you told me. Half the clients are female, so logic would say that half of the middle managers should be females. Or as a co-position... (M17)

I don't think it is important, myself. Providing, that whoever is in charge, male or female, runs an equitable program. And that is the key. Whoever is in charge, doesn't really impact on kids, providing they are fair and equitable in resources, in the style of program, and that they are aware that girls have needs and boys have needs. (M18)

I think providing the women had a mixture of that assertive and that consultative approach, I don't know too many male teachers who would have a problem with that. (M22)

I would be quite happy working under a woman and I have the upmost regard for the qualities and leadership skills that a lot of girls have. But I think it is a misconception now, because I honestly feel that the table has turned and males basically, if any of them have got any sense anyway, can see the qualities that all women have... I think anyone that is qualified in PE and obviously is a good teacher, has got good organisational skills and ability to do it just as well as anyone. (M21)

To me it doesn't matter who is HOD as long as they do the job that is expected of them... The fact that males tend to be stronger is a myth. It

really is and always has been. One that we have jealously guarded I suppose. (M13)

I don't care who it is. I think of the person, or their professionalism and efficiency they bring to the job, rather than their sex... Male or female who cares. To me it is not a problem, but maybe for some people it would be, I don't know. (M8)

One male Head of Department went as far as to suggest that a Physical Education Department would be able to function effectively without a Head of Department, stating:

Who cares. I mean if I am away, everything runs full bore. This one takes over, or that one takes over, who cares. So that is the way we are operating. The only thing... the only major role I play now, is in support... So as a HOD, I guess I just support teachers' initiatives, but really we could do without a HOD. (M18)

He believed that the diversity of program offerings which exists in many departments today, necessitates the assumption of greater ownership and responsibility by teachers for various aspects of the program, thereby relegating the Head of Department to a support role. While there is little doubt regarding the extent of physical education programs, support for this respondent's conclusions by other Heads of Department would be questionable.

Three of the men expressed doubts regarding the acceptance of a female leader. One teacher, while himself indicating no preference for the sex of the incumbent, highlighted the potential problems a female may encounter from the "older males":

It gets back to old... some males being a little bit inflexible. They see a female coming in... some males are threatened by, possibly a younger, what they deemed inexperienced female, telling them what to do. (M24)

Two other respondents, having been Heads of Department for 20 and 22 years respectively, admitted to feeling "uncomfortable" about being "told what to do by a female". They commented:

I think that most people would now-days think it would be the best person for the job, whoever that may be. But if there was a woman in charge of the department... It would be difficult for me and people of my era, but the current crop of kids coming out, I can't see them having any bias one way or the other regarding who's in charge. (M6)

People of my era would probably find it difficult to work under a young woman HOD. (M8)

It is likely that a female Head of Department, placed in-charge of such males, would feel equally 'uncomfortable' in making decisions on their behalf.

#### Image of the Head of Department position

The negative 'jock' image of physical education, together with a perception of the 'slack' nature of many Heads of Department in the subject area, contributed to the disenchantment of the female physical educators interviewed. The male respondents also highlighted aspects of the position's image and characteristics, as being possible deterrents to women's aspirations towards leadership.

The current incumbents of the role were acknowledged by a number of the male teachers as "poor role models" and as one of the aspects contributing to the position's negative image. Their comments included:

Maybe it is our system. The fact that we are carrying a huge weight of administrators and HODs that have been there for 25 years. Not that they have been there for 25 years is the problem per se, but the fact that they have not grown as individuals, and as managers, and as facilitators, and as educators. And if they are stuck, then that is a paradigm, and that paradigm carries all those poor role models as gender role models, then that is the problem with our system. (M8)

There are a lot of individuals that are stifling everybody's growth. Just no possibilities for the individual to grow in the role. And I always remember a quote from a particular male HOD when I was in an acting role... We discussed this in a meeting when they were trying to get volleyball as one of the sports, and this guy encapsulated what a lot of the others I am sure were thinking. "Here we go again. I told you two years ago we are not having frigging volleyball!" The problem there is that, for that individual, the job can not be satisfying and they are just turning the wheels or just looking for a way out... They are then not drawing much job satisfaction and neither are the people around them. (M17)

PE has a problem, but there are a number of people who are not proactive and they are getting fairly old now. There are some out there who are in retirement mode. They can't go up, they have got to stay somewhere, so they just sit back and let things go on the way they always have. (M11)

A lot of HODs PE are very autocratic, don't involve their staff in decision-making, don't involve the staff in the direction the faculty goes. There is a bit of matesmanship that goes on... That wouldn't appeal to women. (M14)

One respondent noted the limited number of female role models, and the impact this factor may have on women's promotional aspirations.

...It is a problem at the moment that there are only a couple of female HODs, and the women look at those couple and think "I don't really want to be like that, therefore I am not going to apply for the position". Or they see a male doing the job and think "I can't do that".. (M12)

Another male Head of Department endeavoured to account for the fact that the negative image did not seem to deter male teachers from applying for the position, to the same extent as the women. He believed that the nature of men's sporting experiences functioned to 'condition' them to the dictatorial approach they encountered in some Physical Education Departments.

I think some men aren't sensitive to what's going on, they couldn't care less. Again it is the old timers. I can think of the HODs around the place that are younger... I would say they are generally far better. The ones where I know there have been greater problems is where they have been power hungry... very, very... domineering and in control. They treat their staff like primary school kids. There is a group out there that do that. I treat the staff like professionals. ... That very stand up "I am the supreme ruler"-type could be a real put off for people. It could be a real put off for men, but men are prepared to wear it a little bit more. They play footy and this is standard approach. The footballers' type. You know, discipline is good for heart. I think men are more prepared to accept that. To be told what to do. "Do this, do that. I want to see that. I want to do that." Men are more willing to accept that. Usually that gets a nonsupportive reaction from women. (M11)

In addition to the negative image associated with the 'older' male incumbents of the Head of Department position, the unattractive nature of the job was perceived to be a further deterrent to female physical educators. The remarks of two male leaders illustrated this view:

If you examine the job of HOD PE in a school, it is completely different to any other HOD's job. My considered opinion is that it is the most difficult HOD job in the school in terms of organisation. If you don't get it right, you have got a grand stuff up on your hands and it is very obvious. So it is an extremely difficult job. I look at the task that I do and the continuous organisation, day after day after day of organisation that I do and I think why the hell do I do it. (M23)

The trouble with the HOD job is it is probably the worst, or on a par with the worst promotional position. The amount of work that you do.... The job is not one that attracts. It is not like "This is a good job, this is what I want to do". It is more of a case of "Yes well, this is a lousy job, but I am prepared to do it because it has a couple of rewards". And it is a lousy job. (M11)

A number of other respondents focused on aspects of the job which they believed would not appeal to women. Reference was made to the "politicking" required in order to promote physical education within the school; the "disciplinary role" required; and the "manual tasks" necessary in order to maintain physical education equipment and facilities.

Maybe the skills that are required to be the HOD aren't really appealing skills, from a woman's perspective. So why chase something that doesn't appeal to you. Doing a lot of the tasks of HOD are very mundane, repetitive things. That is not appealing to me. Perhaps women feel the same way. (M22)

In some respects that may be a reason why some people are not applying for HOD's jobs, because they then have to turn around and get into the politics within the school and spend most of their time fighting for things for their department. (M24)

Well, traditionally I suppose there's a disciplinary role that's played as a HOD, and that's easier for a male. Dealing with 15 year old boys who step out of line is easier for them. ...So I suppose that the women weren't seen as being as capable of carrying out that particular function. But now we're dealing with different clientele, the rules have changed... dealing with the rights of the individual and all that sort of thing... the discipline part of the role had dropped away, but still you have to deal with it, and I suppose the males are more aggressive if they need to be when dealing with that situation. (M6)

I have got a hunch too that there is another reason why women don't take it on and that is teaching PE in high schools, involves dealing with adolescent boys who are sometimes fairly difficult around Year 9 and 10, and I really don't think that is a pleasant experience for a lot of them. Unless women have a lot of training, or are assertive, that natural or learned assertiveness, then it can be a very difficult situation to have to deal with adolescent boys... There are also some manual tasks that fall to the male HODs, that women haven't traditionally developed the skill to do. Repairing stuff, tennis court winders, organising marking machines, mixing paint, playing around with chemicals, organising jumping pits to be repaired, all of those practical things. I don't think women traditionally in Australia have the skills. So I think that is probably not an attractive thing for women to be involved in. (M23)

With the exception of "politicking", the components of the Head of Department role that were highlighted as being unattractive to women, reflect a traditional view of

what the leadership role entails and a stereotypical perception of women's capacities. These remarks were all made by 'older' male Heads of Department. A comparison with the perceptions of many of the other respondents regarding the managerial nature of the leadership role, tends to confirm the dichotomy which appears to exist between the "old guard" and the younger leaders in the subject area.

Five of the male physical educators interviewed were of the opinion that the nature of the Head of Department role was changing, and expressed optimism with regard to how these modifications may be advantageous to women. They highlighted the managerial aspects of the role, the trend towards democratic decision-making, and the emphasis on establishing a positive working environment, as features more congruous with women's values.

People are starting to realise that the job is changing. It is a management thing. So HODs have to realise that the days of them making all the decisions, doing everything, have gone. It is now a group process and all you do is manage the process. I don't think enough HODs manage. In fact a number "run". There are times when you have to run. Management is cumbersome at times. It is slow and things don't get done quickly. There is a fine line between "This is something I have to do myself" and "This is something we all should do together." Now that is a skill of management. I think that in itself helps, because then females realise they don't have to be this highbrow, this very powerful, high profile person who just has everybody scared to death in their faculties, and the kids scared to death. Instead they become the person who just manages the department and creates a very positive air, keeps people happy in their work. I think that is a good skill, a skill that women do have. Women are probably more sensitive to other people's feelings and more aware of how people are feeling. Sometimes they are a little too sensitive. You have to know how people in the faculty are feeling. I think that is a skill that women have. Probably better than most men. Some men are just blinkered. (M11)

Telling people what to do is no longer a problem because you don't have to confront people any more. Everyone has got a job description. Everyone has got student outcomes that they have to adhere to. So you really administrate that is all you do. So it has got nothing to do with being a disciplinarian in the system. That is not the issue. It is organisation and communication and relationships. That is really what you are dealing with. So if you are thinking that being a HOD is dealing with discipline and being an autocrat, then you have the wrong model. (M18)

In most management situations these days you have to be democratic. That is coming through the schools with participative decision-making, so it should be coming through to departments. The staff would expect to be participating. A dictator may still get away with it, but I would say that generally most of them, most guys would be operating reasonably

democratically. Women may have to be a little more shrewd and subtle, I guess. But really things are moving towards participation. This should make it easier for females to do the job. (M9)

In summary, the perceptions of the male physical educators matched those of the female teachers with regard to the essential skills and qualities required for the Head of Department position in physical education. The majority of the men interviewed thought that women were capable of assuming the leadership role, and some even alluded to women's superior skills in the areas of interpersonal relationships, communication and organisation. Few of the respondents voiced a preference for either female or male leadership, intimating that the crucial criteria was the capacity of the individual. However, most of the men agreed that aspects of the role's image functioned to deter female aspirants to the position, and some suggested that female Heads of Department may encounter problems of acceptance by the 'older' males on their staff.

Worthy of note is that there appeared to be a shared underlying assumption amongst the male physical educators that in order for a woman to succeed as a Head of Department, she must be exceptional. While a number of the men explicitly stated this assumption, many others confirmed their expectations by implication.

## **REMAINING STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TO PROMOTION**

Like the female physical educators, the men identified both the lack of opportunities for promotion in the government education system, and the implicit expectation of country service, as hindering the advancement of women.

### **The system**

Almost all of the male respondents perceived the stagnant nature of the system, and the consequent reality of a limited number of promotional positions, as significant barriers to increasing the number of female Heads of Department, in spite of any



advantages to women offered by equal opportunity policies and merit promotion.

Their comments included:

The jobs don't come up in great number now, because there are people of my era who are there, and are still there. When you go to a HOD show... the last one I went to I walked in and thought I was in the sun lounge at Sunset old men's home. So we haven't had this progression through, opening up jobs for people... all the good jobs- the plum city ones- have been held for a long, long time. The Deputies' jobs aren't available to us, and therefore we have to sit here, and it just doesn't allow that wide choice of schools. (M6)

To become a HOD is extremely hard and with the merit promotion system, the way you have to write out your CV and go through all of that, what is the point if you don't have a chance. If there is two vacancies out of 90, there is little point. That is part of the problem. (M3)

A number of the 'younger' Heads of Department suggested the need to introduce a contractual system in order to "free up the system" and "get rid of some of the dead wood".

The situation is unlikely to change while you have got permanency of tenure in substantive level 3 positions. It would take more than 10 years with every position going to females to get up to 50/50. (M12)

The system is clogged up and the only way out is to contract people to the schools for five year terms, or three to five year terms or whatever it is. Performance appraisal is the only way out. Ultimately the system is going to change, and I think that would be a good thing because people who put the work in, end up rewarded. I believe in contracting for all the positions, including recruiting of staff. (M17)

Similar solutions were proposed by a number of the aspiring female physical educators who were feeling frustrated by the lack of opportunities afforded them by the government school system. The issue of contracts will be addressed in a later chapter dealing with strategies to increase women's representation at Head of Department level.

### **Country service**

The implicit requirement for geographic mobility, even under the merit promotion system, was identified by all the male physical educators as a major constraint on female teachers due to family commitments and the isolation of many country centres.

I think that with the change in the equal opportunity that they will have it easier to achieve whatever it is they want to achieve. Women are stymied now because they can not get a HOD job in the city. You have to go to the country to get one now. Women don't want to do that. How many women at 28, 32... 30 years of age, which is when you are going to be lining up for a HOD job at the earliest, are in a position to go the country. Not many. (M23)

One of the problems with the Education Department, in respect to your promotion, is that you sometimes take a retrograde step because you've got to go from being setup in your own house, to suddenly going to a country town where you don't know anyone. You have to start from scratch. Females may be in a marriage situation where they have to make a decision in conjunction with their spouse. Are they going to spend three years in a country town? Is the spouse or husband able to join them? If not are you going to travel down there and come back weekends? Do you have family? Or if you are single, do you feel comfortable about uprooting yourself from where you are and re-establishing yourself in a country centre? It's much more difficult for a female. (M24)

The real live facts are, that there are not that many vacancies for HOD. Vacancies are much more frequent in the country. Now if a female puts in for that and they are accepted, they face things like, isolation. They may be put into a housing area which is a little bit, in some ways, hostile, shall I say... Where they might need some protection etc. There are some pretty rough sorts of people around. There is not much incentive for them to leave what they have got, to go and then try and get back. ...And if they have got a family, their husbands may have a job or if they are a single mother. You have to consider all this as well. (M17)

I think the country run blocks them. I've got to be careful here I suppose, but it's generally probably the second job, because the female will go and have kids etc. If the husband's got a job, she's not going to relocate, and she won't relocate on her own, and if he's not a teacher, then it's a difficult move. However, if I wanted to go, then my wife's job in Perth would be secondary to us moving... I think that's been women's greatest problem. If it's not going to be given to them in town, then forget it, it's too difficult. (M6)

Although remarks such as these reflect stereotypical assumptions regarding the role of women, they nevertheless acknowledge country service as being of significant disadvantage to women.

### **Redressing the imbalances**

While admitting the need for the removal of past discriminatory policies and regulations and the implementation of equal opportunity legislation, none of the male physical educators responded favourably to affirmative action in order to encourage

the promotion of females. They viewed such attempts at positive discrimination as unfair to deserving males, and disadvantageous to women, who were likely to be perceived as having been "given the position rather than earning it". Their comments included:

I think that positive discrimination causes dissension, and that doesn't help the females. I know the reasons that they have done these things, but it creates a division. A number of male staff for instance are of the opinion "Well if I can do the job just as good as she can, why can't I apply for the job?". Same argument but going the other way, and I see that causing division and making the whole monster worse than it really is. Lots of males for instance see that females actually have an easier road to promotion through the deputy pathway, than males. That causes a bit of discontent and that probably doesn't serve the whole process very well. (M11)

I don't think we should have female HODs just for the sake of having them to match a statistic. People say we should have even numbers, when we know there are not even numbers that want to do the job. There might not be even numbers capable of doing the job. It is like deputy principals, to say each school has a deputy principal female and a deputy principal male, so the numbers are even. Now in terms of people applying for those positions who have the prerequisites for that job, there would probably be far less females than males. Which means that to get that promotion, it is weighted towards females, because there is less of them that apply for the same number of jobs. You know just for the sake of it, I don't think that is a fair thing. You should get your promotion on merit. (M13)

I see one of the keys is the threat, the perceived threat to a male... that needs to be alleviated. Females don't want to be put in that position either, because it just creates a lot of animosity between people. So to say we are going to be forced to have 50% of females in HOD positions would be extremely damaging to females, because males would view that with absolute suspicion and disdain. (M8)

I think a lot of the women jumped straight to Deputy Principal and they bypassed the HOD. And so a lot of very competent women took that path, whereas a lot of men were having to apply for the position of HOD. So if that promotional system wasn't in place, you might have had an extra 10 women or 15 women sitting in HOD's positions today, if they hadn't tried to equalise the position of Deputy Principal. What was that called... affirmative action wasn't it? So it was those affirmative action policies that tried to get as many women in administrative positions as men. I think that affected the balance. (M18)

I don't think it matters that there are no female HODs, and I don't think you should fiddle with what's happening naturally. If people are willing to change their environment to pick up a job, then fine, and I don't think the women who are bleating should be given an easier road to the job. Everyone should get the easier road if there was one, but certainly not because they're women and don't want to apply. (M6)

It is interesting that the female physical educators interviewed shared similar negative perceptions regarding affirmative action. In fact, not one of the teachers, female or male, believed that compensatory measures for women with regard to promotional opportunity were either desirable, or justifiable.

Many of the respondents pointed to the merit promotion system as the "obvious answer", because "the best person is chosen for the job". While a number of the women interviewed expressed some reservations regarding the advantages to females that the policy purported to offer, the male physical educators focused on the ways in which the policy granted automatic and recognisable status to successful female applicants. They suggested that a female Head of Department's selection on her merits, which were recognised by all staff within the school context, would minimise problems of acceptance and doubts concerning her ability to function effectively in the leadership role. Supposedly, her appointment would be perceived as more credible.

I think there is pretty good equity in the schools I have seen. Women are respected and get on the school councils, they get onto committees. It should be said that their contribution is respected. Most of the female principals are doing a capable job, district superintendents. I think sometimes the guys used to react, "She got there because she was a woman". That sometimes is why there is a bit of flack flying around. But that doesn't happen now, I mean it has to be equal, it has to be on merit. So if you get the job, you have earned it. (M9)

The person should get the job, based on their performance. Now that perception should be fairly much across the board by all staff members and acknowledged by all staff members. Therefore, the person who has got that job will automatically gain better recognition than they would have in the past, without this merit selection situation. I think there is a good stepping stone for them to operate in a credible position. And I think they would be given a lot of respect for that and there is a lot of congratulatory response to someone to get a position of that nature in a school. And it is recognised and the expectation is there, that they will do the job well. So therefore they slot straight in. (M19)

Although agreeing in principle with the merit promotion policy, one of the men pointed out that the effectiveness of the policy's implementation with regard to providing equity in the promotional opportunities of women, will continue to be questionable while there remains the implicit requirement for country service.

Within merit promotion, it seems that anybody can apply for any school, so I would say it makes it fairer, but the fact of the matter is that more males are prepared to uproot and take their family with them, and they have the ability to do that. A lot of females don't, particularly if the husband has a career and they are family-orientated. The family is the catch. So the whole promotion system although addressing seniority, still results in more males getting the jobs. They are the ones who are prepared to uproot and go country. If you want to get ahead quickly, that is the only way you can do it. The schools in the metropolitan area are the ones most heavily contested. Some of those people contesting them have been around for a while and have done many things to satisfy the criteria. They are going to be the ones to be advantaged. I don't think the selection process is biased. What is biased is that more males have the opportunity. (M11)

#### **REASONS GIVEN BY THE MALES FOR THE RELUCTANCE OF FEMALE PHYSICAL EDUCATORS TO APPLY FOR PROMOTION**

In addition to the remaining systemic barriers identified, the male physical educators interviewed suggested a host of reasons for the reluctance of female physical education teachers to apply for promotion. For the purposes of discussion, these will be categorised into two sections, the first comprising reasons external to the women, those over which they have minimal control; and the second comprising a number of personal characteristics which are perceived to inhibit the women's aspirations. The section to follow will deal with the first category of reasons which includes: stereotyping of women's roles and behaviours; family responsibilities; the short-term nature of women's careers; the perceived male image of physical education; the male model of leadership in the subject area; the expectation that the Head of Department will be male; the fact that it is more difficult for a female to assume the leadership role; chauvinism; the lack of encouragement given to women; the lack of female role models; and the fact that the women tend to take on alternative responsibilities within the departments and schools. Reasons relating to the personal characteristics of the women will be addressed in a later section.

## **Stereotyping of women's roles and behaviours**

Perhaps one of the greatest barriers inhibiting women developing their full potential and choosing from the full range of occupational and life alternatives is the prevalence of social and occupational stereotypes that reflect underlying sexist attitudes and expectations. Women are traditionally seen as submissive, subordinate and dependent, while the male role continues to be confirmed as involving strength, dominance and leadership.

About one third of the male physical educators interviewed believed that sex-role stereotyping was responsible for women's perceptions of their capabilities and their appropriate role in society. They focused on the home environment and primary school education as key elements in the socialisation process, in comments like:

I think it basically has to be their own choice as to whether they perceive they can do the job and meet the requirements. But not enough of them see that. Not enough of them have that perception of themselves. I don't think there are barriers any more, but I think kids are still being stereotyped from a very young age, which is reflected in how they approach their occupations later on. I think that is probably still the problem. (M5)

If girls were treated differently in primary schools... I think that's the key. The absolute key to what happens in sport and PE is that you have to change the way women are brought up. Mind you when I say that, I am not saying that that is good. Maybe I am wrong, maybe it is better that women are brought up the way they are because look at all the bloody problems that men create in the world. They fill the jails, they are responsible for the wars. I think the world would be a totally better place if it was run by women in many respects. Women are less aggressive. They are more prepared to negotiate. They are more prepared to go round the problem. They are more prepared to be compassionate. So I am not saying that what I am saying is correct, I am just saying the situation won't change until the way we bring up girls changes. Maybe that is not desirable anyway. I don't think it is easy to do it. I have a daughter that I have been strongly trying to not sex stereotype in any way, and it is a constant battle. Her hormones have got a totally different control over her than what I want to achieve. (M9)

Some of those manual skills that fall on the shoulders of the HOD PE... females possibly don't have the confidence in those areas. I think most women are brought up in a submissive type role, and they see their fathers or men as more dominant and in charge and the solver of crises. It is a fortunate girl that is brought up in a house where she is told and encouraged that she can do anything that she wants to do. I still don't think society encourages girls to think like that. I think mothers, women are their own worst enemy in that regard. They bring their

daughters up to be more submissive, less assertive, less aggressive. They think aggression is more a masculine trait. In certain circumstances in this job, you have to be fairly aggressive to get what you want, because PE is often down the bottom of the chain in terms of the importance that the administration attaches to it. (M23)

The latter remark implies that due to sex-role socialisation, many girls are not given the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to lead a Physical Education Department. Being shaped as submissive caring dependents, does not equip females with the assertiveness required for the position.

Two of the men were quite pessimistic regarding any change to the present situation, highlighting the need for modified societal attitudes to the raising and education of girls. The male teacher just quoted continued:

I don't think things are going to change. I think all those reasons that we gave are still in existence, and I don't think society has changed. I don't think women's perceptions of sport and PE have changed. I think they are still brought up by their mothers to be ballet dancers and gymnasts, and not enough of them are put into athletics and basketball and volleyball and hockey, and those other fairly aggressive games, and taught by competent people, to become extremely competent themselves. And I think until that happens, I think until society changes and the way we bring girls up changes, then I don't think female HODs are going to come into existence in PE. (M23)

A number of other respondents spoke of the way in which many boys, particularly those from European backgrounds, show a total disrespect for women, both within their families and at school. As a result of their upbringing, these boys consider female teachers to be of a lower status, and do not acknowledge their authority.

...Here you have to be assertive. The community here have a very one sided male-biased view about the household and the running of the household. I say in this community there is a definite bias towards the male being the aggressive, assertive, dominant character in the family. (M8)

If they got one of those working class schools like one I was at... the students up there wouldn't even listen to a female teacher. Because it had a huge Italian, Greek and Yugoslav population... the kids come to school and say "Mum did this, Mum did that". They ring up and demand "Mum come and get me." They talk to their mothers like that. What hope has a female teacher got? (M14)

Such attitudes amongst the students were seen as a further source of problems for female teachers, and even more so for female Heads of Department. Further, the degree of assertiveness required to cope with these students, is not included in the stereotyped attributes of women.

By contrast, one of the male teachers who was acting Head of Department at the time of the interview said he would be quite happy to relinquish his role as "provider", preferring to take on the home and child-rearing duties.

What we are saying is that our role is the age old thing of being the provider... the provider for 30 years. And I have said to my wife "Look I will stay home and look after our son, and you go to work full time". No way, she won't have a bar of that. I am looking forward to going half time, so my wife and I work half time each. (M13)

Unfortunately, it appears that his wife was not prepared to partake in the role reversal.

### **Family responsibilities**

One of the major stereotyped roles for women is that of the family. Just as all of the women interviewed mentioned family orientation or commitment as an 'obvious' barrier to the career advancement of females, so all of the male physical educators participating in the study identified family responsibility as a major constraint. Time prioritisation, geographic mobility, and the perception of the husband as the breadwinner were three of the inhibiting aspects highlighted.

This job that I do, I take home with me every day. I wake up at three and four o'clock in the morning and I am already organising things. I don't think that is very appealing to anyone. And I really don't think it is appealing to women to take those kinds of problems home, because I think women already have those kinds of organisational tasks at home. They have to go home... they have to organise the meals, they have to look after the kids, they have to organise getting the kids to sport. They have those kinds of responsibilities in homes. A lot of men escape those kinds of responsibilities because they work to 6 or 7 at night, they come home and tea is ready, the kids off to sport. They may take on some financial responsibilities, but women shoulder a lot of that burden in homes. So why take on this kind of job, when they really just want to come along, get a nice wage, do a job, and not take it home. Women seem to want that flexibility... One of the female Phys Eders here, takes on the role fairly willingly, and does an excellent job. But she doesn't have children to organise, and at the present time she is separated from her husband. So



she has that time available to devote to the organisational tasks, outside of school hours. But a lot of women, I believe, don't want that kind of responsibility. (M23)

I guess there is still some carry over from traditional role models. They probably have the conflict of whether they should be wives and mothers, or have a career. If they do get married and plan to have children, it is more difficult. Even now you have to go to the country. That is still a bit of a physical barrier. If you get a promotion and you have to take your husband with you to the country, that could obviously wipe out a number of people. The husband would be earning more money and not be prepared to change his situation. However, we have seen one female HOD do remarkably well with so many children. I don't know whether she will come back after this one. She is having her fourth now. That shows it can be done, although she was lucky enough to be appointed in the city. But some of those traditional obstacles are still there. And it has to be tied up with conflict over the role I guess. (M9)

Two of the male respondents offered examples of the choices faced by members on their staff to illustrate the dilemma of a dual career confronting many women.

One of the women on my staff thought of applying for HOD, but she got pregnant. She would have applied for it no doubt. She had the qualifications. It is now a merit promotion system. Her CV would have been excellent. She was acting deputy here, and she was also student activities coordinator... just excellent organisational skills and even leadership. She took no nonsense. She knew what was right. (M3)

One of my girls (female staff) wants to be a mum... I don't know whether she perceives her direction as staying at home or whatever. But I guess that might be in the minds of some of the girls... It's just nature, I suppose. That is not a derogatory comment. I can't see why they shouldn't have a family and then come back. That is certainly something they could look at. I have another member of staff who has had a family, and is probably looking in that direction now, which is excellent. (M21)

A number of other men spoke of the need to break down the stereotypical assignment of family and career roles in order for any significant change in the number of women applying for promotion to occur.

You get a lot of females who are very good organisers, good communicators, who would make very good HODs but they are not becoming HODs because they can't go country. A lot of the applications are open so you've got to put your name in the hat, and you've got to take what comes up. And because we are in a supposedly male-dominated society, where the male's role within the family is the bread winner, until we break down that barrier, I don't think we will get too many females taking on HOD jobs. (M24)

Maybe the female is still taking on a bigger portion of the family role. If she takes the responsibility for that, then maybe the male is relieved of some of the burden and is a little freer to follow his career ambitions.

So maybe if the home role was biased the other way, and it wouldn't be as challenging for the female, then she would look for that challenge in other areas of her life, perhaps in her career. (M7)

From conversations with both the women and the men it became clear that such a shift in role allocation must occur at a societal level. Unfortunately, the redistribution of caregiver and career roles within isolated families can be perceived by others as inappropriate and problematic. A case in point exists within physical education circles, and was referred to by a number of the respondents. One young female physical educator has gained Head of Department status in spite of being married with four children. Although she has earned the admiration of many teachers, is well respected for her leadership qualities, and is often presented as an example of the career possibilities for women, two female and three male respondents expressed doubts concerning the desirability of working with such a person. They attributed their lack of acceptance to the perceived potential instability and inconsistency resulting from a Head of Department who takes frequent leave.

There is one woman on leave at the moment. In fact this is her third, no fourth child, so it has been going on for a long time now. I don't know how good that is for a school, but I could imagine if I was a teacher there and that was happening, I would not want to be there. How can I say you shouldn't have kids, it's wrong for me to say that. At the same time as a HOD you are there for a particular purpose. To try and marry the two, I don't know... (M3)

I have met so many good females who would make excellent HODs. They really would, given the chance, and if they decided that is what they wanted to do. Again I must emphasise that if you become a HOD then you have made a decision about a career. If you suddenly decide as a HOD that you now are going to go off and have a baby and then come back, I can imagine in that case it could prove very hard to work in that situation. It would be very disruptive for the students and staff. Continuous change of leadership... I could see that may not work. (M6)

Unfortunately, despite this woman's obvious desire for career advancement, her aspirations are at risk of not being taken seriously by her significant others because of the breaks in service necessitated by her family. The expectation appears to be that one must make a career choice, and that this commitment should preclude all others.

## **The short-term nature of women's careers**

The assumption that women perceive physical education teaching as a short-term career is closely linked to both stereotypical notions regarding appropriate roles for women and men, and the expectation that female teachers' careers will be curtailed by marriage and family. The male physical educators interviewed were unanimous in their support of this assumption. They spoke of the dichotomy which exists between the men who "are in it for the long haul" and the women who are looking for "kids, family and even a change or work", or "a bit of extra money". The comments included:

I am in it because I am in it for the long haul. I will be doing this probably for the rest of my life, unless something wonderful comes up. It probably won't. Because I am in it for the rest of my life, I have to think ahead. A lot of women aren't there for the rest of their lives. (M11)

Society the way it is, most males are in it for the long haul. They will be teachers for the rest of their lives. They will have to. A lot of females are not in that same position. Some are, but the majority aren't, and they are looking to kids, family, and even a change of work. A number of them have other ideas of where to go. Given that the job itself is just hard work, and the rewards aren't that great, a lot of them just aren't interested. A lot of women I don't think are motivated to stay a teacher all their lives, let alone become a HOD. (M13)

A number of the men endeavoured to justify their perceptions by presenting examples of women's lack of career saliency. This is illustrated in comments like:

They look at it as a great way of making an extra income, not long term. Have a look at our staff. We had two ladies who were part time and were just quite happy. They get a couple of hundred dollars a week... and those ladies are ladies who have been PE teachers for a long time. I think they are just quite happy doing that. (M15)

... a couple of female teachers spring to mind, that are assertive and they are very organised and incredibly professional and would do the job very well. The only reason they don't go for it is it just doesn't fit their lifestyle. What they are looking for is a way out of teaching. They just don't see the HOD as somewhere to go. (M11)

Other respondents highlighted women's transience and apparent lack of career planning as evidence of the fact that they did not perceive physical education teaching as a long-term prospect, nor something to which they wished to commit their lives.

I think the other point I have noticed is the high turnover of females in a department. No one sticks around long enough. ...Some on maternity leave, transfers, none of them really stayed there long enough to get an interest in the department. Whereas males tend to get into a school and stay there to a certain degree. (M13)

The end product in the back of women's minds that they are going to have a family and retire. So there is no real aspiration to go for senior mastership, and then go into deputy and then into principal. They are not looking that far ahead. They are looking at tenure, teaching, get a bit of money behind them, get married. I know it sounds horrible, but that is it. (M14)

The actual career aspect is important, because I feel that if you really do go for HOD, you are more or less saying it is going to be your career. You are going down this line, this avenue and saying "I'm in it for the long run". Obviously women are worried about making that decision. (M3)

It is noteworthy that the male physical educators did not mention age as a factor contributing to the short-term physical education careers of women. This was an aspect perceived by many of the female teachers as significantly contributing to their desire to curtail their teaching, or to move into alternate subject areas, due to the negative image of the "aging phys eder".

Nevertheless, overall perceptions regarding the short-term careers of female physical educators, by both the male respondents and the female teachers themselves, undoubtedly have a delimiting impact on the career aspirations of women. It is also unfortunate that expectations in this regard are reinforced by reality, which then serves to perpetuate the expectations.

### **The perceived male image of physical education**

The male image of physical education stems from its ties with sport which is a key medium for conveying messages of gender domination through its association with physical power, where men are perceived as having the natural advantage. This has particular implications for physical education. While some of the male physical educators perceived the male image to be a barrier to the career advancement of women, the majority did not make mention of this factor.

One third of the men interviewed acknowledged the male image of the subject area, and the fact that this may function as a deterrent to the promotional aspirations of female teachers.

Sure there are some women that for whatever reason are put off by the male image that PE has, and I think that PE does have a male image. It is certainly something we have tried to do away with, and we are dealing with just how the girls in this school perceive PE. I think there would definitely be many women who would be put off by the fact that it has been seen as a male area. You go to network meetings and they will all be males, and some of the males in the PE faculties may be older men. (M11)

A number of other respondents believed that the perception of a 'male image' is superficial. They pointed out that, although most of the Heads of Department may be male, the fact that half of the teachers and half of the clients in the subject area are female, means it is naive to assume that the program could be male-dominated.

Well just because there are so many males in it, the females I guess feel as though they have to fall in line. They don't see many of their peers up there, therefore they probably don't give it a second thought. They may well feel that it is really a male domain. But what people have to remember is that apart from it being male-dominated at this point in time, that half the clients are female. So therefore I could argue, from a male point of view as HOD, I am always conscious about the females, the program, and what the girls are going to get out of it. (M17)

Many of the male Heads of Department went to great lengths to describe the democratic way in which their departments functioned, and the equitable nature of their physical education programs.

Three of the men were of the opinion that the male image of physical education is partly attributable to the reluctance of women to "have a say" and "become involved", both within the department and on a whole school basis. Their comments included:

PE is male-dominated... In terms of being HOD it is male-dominated. In terms of what goes on in the school, the nontangible atmosphere, the male-dominated atmosphere, it probably is, by virtue that they are there. They tend to be more involved in what happens in the school. Again I think women can blame themselves a fair bit too. They don't show an interest or desire, in many cases to get involved in those other things that go on in the school. (M11)

## **The male model of leadership**

The perception of a male model of leadership in physical education is linked to the male image of the subject, and a consequence of the fact that there have only ever been seven female Heads of Department. Less than one third of the male respondents identified the male model of leadership as a reason for women's reluctance to apply for promotion. Those who did, focused on the legacy of the "male paradigm" which tends to govern the workings of Physical Education Departments, and the resultant unattractive proposition of promotion to Head of Department for women. This view is summed up in the comment:

If we categorise most males as being of the group that have a set paradigm of how the world works, and what things are, and how the school works, and as being resistant to change, or fearful of change, then I would say that is going to be a very frustrating area for a female to work in. A lot of that paradigm carries with it a lot of the "machoness", or egotism, or self-centredness, or bigotry and bias that goes with a lot of the old male role models. It is not an attractive proposition for females. (M7)

Interestingly, the recognition of the deterring nature of this factor, was limited to the 'younger' male Heads of Department, who added that they themselves had been "put off" by the style of leadership existing in some schools. A number of the men went on to suggest that due to the lack of female role models, women's perceptions of the leadership position and its requirements may leave them feeling "intimidated" on the one hand, and "unwilling to compromise themselves to fit the undesirable mould", on the other. Comments included:

I guess it is a difficult problem, because you have got a male dominant position at the moment in that the males hold 98% of the HOD positions. Maybe females are intimidated.. Many females would look at a male that has been in the position for a long time and think that's the way a department has to be run, and that they couldn't do it that way. They don't have any role models, and therefore don't apply. (M8)

If a woman takes over from a male, she is not going to fit that mould. Females will have different styles of leadership. And that could represent a problem... someone may be a totalitarian, dominating sort of a person, and the female is more about sharing, delegating, and believes in consensus. It might not work. (M17)

I think the way the system is, it is a male system they are coming into, and they have to operate perhaps in a male way. I can understand a

woman saying "Don't get a woman up there, trying to behave like a man, or trying to operate in a male system". They may not want to compromise themselves. But I think if women can operate the way they naturally do, I am sure they could do a really good job. (M14)

One 'older' Head of Department's very simple solution to the dilemma was: "All that has to happen is women have got to become more like men" (M9). Although this comment was made 'tongue-in-cheek', there is little doubt that it accurately reflects the opinions of a number of male physical educators.

A more thoughtful suggestion was proposed by a recently appointed Head of Department, who highlighted the need to look to the future and change.

Most of our role models have been male and so most of the things we do and the processes we undergo have been generated by a male administration. Maybe that in itself makes me look very carefully at everything I do. So rather than just perpetuating the past, we need to look to the future. I am talking about the management structure, the management processes, as well as what management is trying to achieve. (M7)

It is evident from these remarks that the male model of leadership is a reality in physical education, as has been recognised by male leaders who have resisted adopting it. It is also evident that those responsible for perpetuating this model are reluctant to acknowledge its existence.

**The expectation that the Head of Department will be male**

As a result of the historical male dominance in physical education, and the well entrenched male model of leadership in the subject area, there is an associated expectation that the Head of Department will be male. The majority of the men interviewed concurred with this perception, making comments like:

I think there is still some of the old guard there. And some of the older guys, I am sure, might feel threatened, or for some reason feel that because it has traditionally been a male-dominated administrative sort of hierarchy, that's the way things should stay. (M21)

One of the male teachers related his experiences in a country school to illustrate the expectations of the school administration regarding leadership:

I think if you look back on say, stereotypes, and ideals of society, I think they point towards a career for males. I know at my last school, my wife and I both worked there and were supposedly employed as equals. Neither of us were senior masters or acting, but all the questions and inquiries came to me. There was no particular reason why that should have happened. It was the admin that came to me. She didn't mind because it meant that she didn't have the hassles. All the responsibilities and problems were thrown on my plate. (M15)

Another respondent made the point that it is not so much the perceptions of who should, or should not be Head of Department which deters a female from applying for the position, but rather her experiences within departments, with regard to the responsibilities she has been given and the value that has been placed on her contribution.

There is a perception that the HOD PE is a male. That is because only two of them are females. Most schools have only ever had males, and parents and kids have only ever seen a male HOD. So it is a perception. Does that make it any more difficult to get a HOD job? No it doesn't. Does it make it any more difficult to work or function in a HOD position? No it doesn't at all. It comes down to the personal skills of that person. Probably the experiences that person has had in schools with the HOD who is male, would have a bigger impact than any of those perceptions. If the HOD has been somebody who is not prepared, gives or delegates important duties to the males, and gives the females boring duties like organising the morning tea or those sorts of things... if they do that then there is an underlying perception that women should be seen as "the tea lady or the person that fixes the uniforms, but when it comes down to doing something quite important it is not me". Some of the more traditional older HODs would do that. (M11)

Once again there appears to be an attempt on the part of the 'younger' leaders, who claim to have adopted a more managerial and inclusive model, to distance themselves from the traditional attitudes and leadership style of the 'older' Heads of Department.

A number of the men were optimistic that such assumptions regarding leadership were changing, as women are given more opportunities to take on additional responsibilities within departments.

I think it will be a gradual thing, because of some of those traditional things like marriage and families and that sort of thing, but I can see equity gradually coming through the schools. It is becoming more visible in PE... It is happening just in the operation of the department... The acceptance that women take on more and more roles. (M9)



An unfortunate aspect of the duty assignment however, is that in many cases the women are given responsibility for tasks which in the eyes of the males do not hold equal status. The most common example of this is the co-ordination of Health Education.

On a further note of optimism, three of the respondents indicated that, based on their experiences, male leadership was not necessarily a perception amongst the students and their parents, making comments like:

The students here, if you turned around and said "Miss So-and-so is HOD" it would not make any difference to them. They would say "All right we've got to see her instead". ...If So-and-so is in charge they are in charge. It doesn't matter if they are a male or a female. I think perhaps some of the parents in the area may lift an eyebrow if you were to say "Miss So-and-so is in charge". But it wouldn't phase them for too long. (M3)

Despite optimism on the part of some males, it is clear that the fact that "there has always been a male Head of Department", creates difficulties for the women who wish to intrude on this male domain. 'What has always been' is a strong determinant of expectations regarding 'what should be'. With a referent of only seven female Heads of Department in physical education, the assumption of male leadership in the subject area continues to be a potent deterrent to female teachers.

**The leadership role is more difficult for a woman**

More than half of the male physical educators interviewed were of the opinion that the Head of Department role would be more difficult for a female than a male. The concerns of the interviewed women in this regard, focused on feelings of intimidation as a result of the politicking and power struggles, the perceived need to prove themselves as capable leaders, and the fear of being labelled as "aggressive" or "butch". The men tended to support the women's perceptions with the exception of the latter issue, and in addition, highlighted the anticipated reactions of the male teachers as a major difficulty to be faced by female leaders.

The perceptions of many of the respondents regarding the "hard time" women in physical education might encounter, are summed up in these remarks:

A lot of male Phys Eders are pretty macho type guys who would find it very difficult to be bossed around... if that is the right word. Being in a department where a woman is in charge, they would tend to be almost derisive and derogatory and aggressive towards women in many situations. And I guess that is fairly acceptable if it is the macho type of PE guy with hair on the backs of his hands... The English teacher for example can live with that, because after all "He is just a gorilla kind of thing and he doesn't know any better". And she can console herself with the fact that "Well he is just a gorilla and he is not as intelligent as I am and I am the English senior master and I have to be tolerant of these lesser beings" type of thing. But if you are in charge of PE and you are a female in the PE department, that is not a refuge for you. I don't think that little escape area is available to you. You have got to be prepared to ditch the dirt with the boys. If you are going to be in the PE area, which is a fairly physical area, then you have got to be prepared to get in there and swing when you need to, so to speak. You have to be aggressive and assertive. You can't get away with not being that way. Whereas I think the HOD in Social Studies and English can get away without being assertive and aggressive, because those kind of macho guys aren't as prevalent in those departments. (M23)

As evident from this statement, physical education tends to exacerbate responses to female leadership, due to its 'physical' nature and the historical dominance of men in the subject area. Further comments supporting such a perception included:

It would depend on her staff. If you have an old established staff, they may look upon a female as a threat to their masculinity. I know it sounds comy, but I know that would be a problem in some situations. So I think a female would definitely encounter a few more problems than what a male would, in establishing herself. They would give a female a harder time, because she is a female and she would have to prove that she is capable of doing the job. However, if she were to obtain a position in a country school, a lot of country schools have younger staff because they get graduates, so she could establish herself and it would be a little bit easier. (M24)

I think you have still got a lot of male chauvinistic Phys Eders that would give a female HOD a hard time, and she would have to prove herself in their eyes and work twice as hard as anyone else. Work twice as hard as a male counterpart to achieve recognition that she is a competent person. (M14)

Other male physical educators focused on the need for a woman to prove herself capable of leading the department before being accepted, in contrast to the unquestioned acceptance of a male assuming the position.

I think women do have it harder, because when a male walks into the HOD job "What's this person going to be like?" is not questioned, it is

taken as granted. If a female walks in there and she has to prove herself. She has to convince them she's the head. I'd say there is an essential difference there. Now in my case, I walked into the school and I was very young compared to the other staff, but there didn't seem to be any problem. I think a female who walks into a PE department where the staff are essentially older, and perhaps have been there a while... yes there would be a period where she would have to prove herself more so than a male. (M11)

A female has not only got to prove herself as a competent HOD, but she has to go that step further, and prove to some of the males on staff, both internal staff and the rest of the staff at the school, that she's a competent person. ... So I suppose it gets back to the person's self-confidence. If they know they are doing a good job, the rest of the world can go and get stuffed. ....But I think the most important reason why females aren't putting in for HOD is having to prove themselves... And I think some females just think "Yeh, why?... The job's hard enough as it is, without having to do that to please them". Some of them who sit back and say "Hey I couldn't give a stuff what they think, I'm going to do it". They're the ones who will take it on. And I don't think there are a lot of females out there who want to do that and buck the system. (M24)

They would accept the woman provided she doesn't make any mistakes or providing she does display some assertive qualities. If she doesn't, then they will use the fact that she is a woman as their excuse or they will point to that fact. "She is only a woman therefore she can't hack the pace." I mean obviously if the woman proves herself, assertive and in control, then they are going to accept her. They wouldn't use that reason with me. If I fouled up, they would give some other excuse. A "dill", or "losing my grip on things", or "getting old". But they wouldn't use my sex as the reason, or say "He can't do the job because he is a man." But they would say that to women. "She can't do the job because she is a woman." I think there are people with that kind of an attitude out there in PE. (M23)

Still others intimated that the need to "fight" for the recognition and status of physical education within the school structure was an aspect of the Head of Department role that women might find more difficult and in fact undesirable, making comments such as:

It is an advantage to have a high profile and it is an advantage to be very strong at times. I have worked in the corporate sector for a while and everybody, all the different departments, all work together. Schools don't always work that way. There is interfaculty fighting and curriculum fighting and you have to be pretty good at that. And part of it is being really well organised and being a good communicator, but the other part is just being very strong. I can see that would put a lot of people off and there would be something there that some women would find undesirable. Those who feel that they are not up to beating off the blokes with the louder voices and so forth. (M11)

There was a suggestion from some of the respondents that "career-minded" females actually move to single sex schools in the private system, because this eliminates many of the difficulties they may encounter in the coeducational government schools.

The private school system... that is where the career-orientated females have gone. Maybe the career-orientated female has gone that way rather than coming into the coed system. Why? Because they look upon that as a long term career. Why in the private system? Because there they can survive. It is easier. It is a female environment. They don't have all the so called politics. They don't have to deal with males teaching underneath them. They are not confronted with that problem. They can get in there, do their job and do it well. (M15)

Such a comment clearly illustrates a perception that it is primarily the male physical educators who pose the problems for aspiring female teachers. To 'eliminate' the males is to 'eliminate' the problem.

However, not all respondents were convinced that the leadership role would be more difficult for a female. The two-mindedness felt by a number of the men is demonstrated in comments like:

Certainly the two regions I have been at, in the network meetings we have had females in those regions. Not a problem. They are very informal those meetings. They are very cooperative, we are all working toward the same thing. There is nobody trying to struggle to get ground on anybody else. Certainly at the network level, not a problem. Even in a school administration structure I think there is not a great problem. HOD's meetings, there are plenty of female HODs. The difficulty is... every HOD has to prove to their staff that they are worth their salt and probably a woman does have to prove herself a little bit more. As I said we have dinosaurs, we have people with very one sided attitudes. PE being what it is, has a male tag on it... the competitiveness and so forth. But does that mean a female can't do the job? (M11)

It may be a legitimate concern because they may be getting a hard time from within their department or within the school itself, from other HODs. I think some of the problems are generated by the women themselves, but some of their concern is legitimate because they have got to establish themselves. I suppose it is just the way you go about it. (M24)

While recognising the possibility that female leaders may have to strive harder in order to gain acceptance by the 'older' male physical educators, in particular, these men also believed that not all women's leadership experiences were negative, and

that in some cases, the difficulties female leaders encountered may be in part attributable to their own attitudes and actions.

Further comments expressing the view that women make it harder for themselves include:

I think it is a fact that women who do get into leadership type positions, tend to work three times harder to make sure the job is actually perfect, and that there is no repercussion on their ability or their organisation. But I think that attitude is unnecessary. I think that is just something that they have perceived as necessary, but is not necessarily necessary. So in other words, I don't see that as important. I think a woman should take up a position and handle it in her own way without having to worry about what people perceive she should be doing to prove herself. I have talked to a lot of women who say "Why should we have to do it 10 times better to make it look like we're doing it as well?" But the answer to that is, I don't think that anyone is really caring, as long as the job is done well. So in other words, it is just their fault if they want to do it 10 times better, if it only needs one tenth of the work to get the job done. (M18)

It is an intimidation thing... they don't feel as though they would like to speak up, perhaps in fear of maybe being played down... That worries me, because I think they should be able to come into meetings and feel equal. Certainly there are a couple of girls on my staff who speak their mind and I think most people appreciate them doing that and respect them for doing that too. (M21)

These remarks reflect the thought shared by a number of men that the women's perceived need to prove themselves is an internally-generated phenomenon, rather than an externally-imposed expectation. The men attribute the women's perceptions to a lack of self-confidence and a desire to achieve "perfection" in order to avoid "blame for failure".

Five of the respondents clearly indicated that they did not believe the leadership role was more difficult for a woman. Justification for their opinions was given in terms of the fact that :

Competency is not gender-bound.. If you are competent, whether you are male or female, you will do a good job and you will get the support, if you are willing to put in the work. If you are incompetent, as I say, it doesn't matter whether you are male or female, you are still going to find yourself with problems. (M24);

that much of the "banter" which occurs in Physical Education Departments is for "fun", and should not be taken seriously by the women:

Sometimes the hard time dished out by the guys is just bluff. It's the old way people carry on or whatever... they laugh and joke. But I see that capable women have been treated with equal respect. I have seen some tremendous female deputies who have had the respect because they have been hard working, capable people. I think that in PE that would be the case, they would be accepted just the same. (M9);

and that the attitudes of male physical educators are changing, and they are becoming increasingly more accepting of female leadership:

I think females are their own worst enemy in lots of ways, I really do. I think the jobs are there for the taking. If they want to do it then take the plunge and have a go. I think things are changing in regards to males out there, and I know myself, I haven't got any problem with having a female HOD and that wouldn't be a problem with regards to any aspects of the job. I have worked under one and I was quite happy. I think the reason for that is because of my generation and my upbringing and the way I live my life. At home I share everything with my wife, which includes the house, my son, all those things we share. So I think now things are changing and possibly more females do have the opportunity without any problems to come into the HOD position. Whereas in the past, it may have been a problem with the beliefs and attitudes of some of the males that were around. (M13)

Despite the optimism expressed by a few of the respondents, it is evident from the majority of comments that there is a perception amongst male physical educators that the Head of Department role would be more difficult for a female than for a male. It should be pointed out that their remarks are based on speculation rather than witnessed experiences, since only three of the men had ever worked with a female leader. Nevertheless, the men's perceptions are a strong indicator of existing expectations regarding the appropriate incumbent for the Head of Department position in physical education.

### **Chauvinism**

The majority of male physical educators appeared to agree with the perceptions of the women interviewed concerning the chauvinistic atmosphere pervading many Physical Education Departments. Further, they believed this to be a significant

factor deterring women's promotional aspirations. One respondent provided a very succinct philosophical explanation for the problem:

Here in Australia the old macho male is very big and I think that may be part of the problem. The Australian male, the Australian 'ocker', has a lot to prove. He can't do it if there is a woman in charge. (M3)

Many of the men related specific situations in which they had witnessed the impact of chauvinism displayed through blatant disregard for a woman's authority, demands made of women, disrespectful and slanderous comments, abusive language, and "not giving the girls a fair go".

I know of a situation where a person was in an acting position, and she had problems with the older established guys... she was fairly young, in comparison to the others, but the others didn't want to take the job on... they had got into their comfort zone. She found it very difficult and frustrating trying to get them to do those little extra things, or to change slightly in their approach to teaching. So I think they are problems that would be encountered by both sexes, but I think some males may tend to look upon it as a female coming in and trying to tell them what to do. I hate to say it but I think there's some male chauvinist pigs out there, and they may take offence at having a female telling them what to do. ... I think there are still a few male chauvinists out there. (M24)

Well on our staff here, we have one male that is definitely chauvinistic, and we have got two that I would say are very tolerant and caring, and all of our women here are very caring people. And they get upset when they are dictated to or told where to go, and that is being smoothed over all the time. But that is a question of personalities too... (M18)

Oh yes there are lots of chauvinistic staff members... my previous HOD was certainly so far chauvinistic, that it made my perception of it so acute, and me unwilling to make any comment which could ever be perceived as chauvinistic or deleterious to a female within my department. It is so much in my mind, that I make sure that I am very clear that I operate on a merit situation all the time. Comments that he used to make were "Women do this, bloody women..." and all that sort of thing. And whilst you say "I disagree with that" or "I think that is a bit beyond the pale", at the end of it, you know you are not going to change a person who has been around for 30 or 40 years, and their ingrained attitude. And many of those attitudes are just perceived. Whether a person is a weak link and they happen to be a female, I mean that is neither here nor there, because we had a couple of male members on staff who were equally as bad for different reasons, but they were being overlooked... So I vowed that would never occur in my department. (M19)

Our zone is not a young zone. So you have got probably the majority of HODs who are older than me (36). The presence of an acting female HOD there at the moment is viewed more from the polite point of view, in many respects. It is not condescendingly polite, but "Oops I have said something..." type of comment. By the same token, I can be taken aback with the quality of discussion on certain topics which I don't believe

should be bought into those areas at all. But that is me. I try to be a sensitive new age guy or what ever there, but I am fairly sensitive to people getting stuck into changeroom type language and discussion. It doesn't interest me. I am there to do a job. So in that sense, I get a little bit annoyed it occurs within that professional sort of environment. As far as the female HOD goes... I think she did feel slightly intimidated by it, but she has now been there for 18 months and is well accepted. And she was accepted from day one. But now I sense she can communicate her concerns without any problems... it has taken her that long to feel comfortable. And she is a very able manager. (M19)

A number of the 'younger' leaders made the point of differentiating between the "older" males, or the "hopeless" male Heads of Department with their traditional and often chauvinistic approach, and the people like themselves who valued the capabilities of women and had a greater awareness of equity issues.

There are some HODs at the zone level, that I have questions about their abilities. And there are some that are so dogmatic with their own views that I couldn't work with them. So on that side of things I don't think it would matter if I was male, female, black, white, or brindle. They would be straight down the line with what they think, and regardless of what you say, that is exactly what it is going to be like. But the quality HODs that are there, have accepted her as an equal and worked with her and bring her into discussion as I would expect, because they are quality HODs. (M19)

I agree there are some HODs out there, and there are some PE teachers out there who are pretty chauvinistic in attitude. Even subliminal things... maybe they are not even aware of doing them. "The woman gets the job as the tea lady at the carnival" sort of stuff, or the "scorer". But I make a conscious decision every year that the scorer is always male, for that reason. And the female is the starter. So I certainly hope I am not 'typical'. But there are a lot of 'typical' male Phys Eders out there. (M11)

Interestingly, two of the respondents became rather defensive while discussing the issue, and endeavoured to offer excuses for what was perceived by the women as chauvinistic behaviour, making comments like:

...Whether it is male or female, or it is just their ability for doing something, or they are just a clumsy person, or what ever... I think it is healthy for them to laugh at each other and carry on that way. But there is no ingrained feeling that "The girls can't do this"... and you can tell when it is dinkum and it is not. There is nothing in it. (M18)

Yes, there are some forceful guys around. Whether they mean to be chauvinistic is another thing. Men are just louder anyway and they get their point across. They are louder, and a lot of women I meet don't like loud men when they discuss things. (M12)



One respondent claimed that he had not seen any evidence of chauvinism during his time as both teacher and Head of Department. He commented:

In my experience I have not seen it. I must say I haven't seen someone go out of their way and show what is really professional disrespect. I have not seen that. If I have, it's really been in the form of a joke, an aside between a male or a female. (M8)

An underlying assumption shared by many of the respondents was that as the 'older' Heads of Department are replaced by younger leaders with a more open and democratic style of management, much of the chauvinism in Physical Education Departments will disappear. Their comments included:

There are a few older gentlemen I have come across that are happy to have women work with them, but not women to tell them what to do. I think they are a dying breed. I think from now on there is a greater understanding about equal rights. (M12)

Unfortunately, this optimism was not shared by many of the female physical educators, who were of the opinion that the new male graduates were equally "egotistical" and "full of themselves", concluding that "chauvinism was very much alive and well in physical education". An understanding of equal rights does not necessarily equate to an equal respect for, and acceptance of, female and male leadership.

#### **Lack of encouragement and support given to women**

The level of encouragement given to female physical educators by their significant others is a very potent indicator of expectations. Just as the women interviewed differed in their perceptions of the levels of encouragement with regard to career advancement they received, so the male physical educators indicated a diversity of opinions regarding the extent of the mentoring towards promotion provided to female teachers.

A number of the respondents highlighted the importance of encouraging women to consider applying for promotion, and supporting their endeavours, in comments like:

I think the female HODs should be given, not preferential treatment, but given support so they stay in the job and present an image to all of the other Phys Eders to say "Hey look it can be done". Present an image to other Phys Eders both male and female, to illustrate that "Hey look females can do just as good a job as males if not better"... We need to target females who would perform in the job. I would have no qualms about putting my name down as a referee for quite a number of female Phys Eders who I think would make excellent HODs. (M24)

I know some outstanding female Phys Eders who would be ideally suited to the HOD position, because of their wide experience and their energy and their managerial skills. But they really haven't been given any encouragement, and there isn't much incentive there anyway. (M17)

Some of the men suggested the need for Heads of Department and/or Education Officers to take on the responsibility of approaching potential candidates for promotion and letting them know that their application is 'expected'.

Give them the information. Get someone from the Ministry to go out and say "Hey look have you thought about promotion", and because we are trying to develop the female role, and encourage females to get into it. So it gives young aspiring females, both students and other Phys Eders, something to base and role themselves on. I don't think competency is gender-bound and if they are competent, well you've just got to try and encourage those people by identifying them and targeting them. (M24)

I think that the HODs and people in the schools that see these capable women operating should take on some of the responsibility. The one thing that makes you feel good is when someone comes up to you and says "I think you would go well. Have a go." So I see it as a responsibility and a way to help people. But the women themselves have got to take every opportunity to go for acting positions to give themselves a taste of the job... (M9)

Many of the Heads of Department cited examples of encouragement they had provided to female teachers who they perceived to be capable of assuming the leadership role.

...It is something that is enjoyable and something to aspire to. And I am encouraging my staff. A couple of them are very experienced teachers, and I can see good qualities in them as far as leadership goes, and would encourage them to make application and would help them do that. (M8)

I have got a couple of capable females on my staff, that I give a hell of a lot of support to, and I would love to see them do something similar themselves. They would be excellent leaders. (M21)

I certainly encourage my staff. One woman I am thinking of actually became deputy here, through my pushing and saying "Go for it, you are qualified and you can do the job". For six months she was the deputy here and did an excellent job... She would have gone for a HOD job if she hadn't fallen pregnant. (M3)

Alternatively, other Heads of Department explained the reason for their sometimes differing levels of encouragement offered to female as compared to male teachers. They focused on the criteria of "an expression of interest" in order to receive support, in statements like:

If anybody shows interest in promotion, they get my support. If people don't show interest, then it is not something that is discussed. So if it is males that show more interest, then they are probably the ones who are going to get more support, whether from a HOD, the admin or anybody else. The way the promotion setup is, it is very open now and it is made very clear that it is on merit basis and that anybody can apply. I think the system probably is, though cumbersome, probably is fair for both sexes. So yes, if there is an interest, males certainly don't get more support than women. Maybe the women don't show the interest as much as the males. (M11)

I think it is difficult to say that people aren't given encouragement. You give encouragement when you know that the response to the encouragement will be, not so much positive, but at least it will engender some thought. I spend a lot of time talking to my staff, so I know where they are going and what they are going to do. ...So I offer encouragement appropriate to the stage each person is at. (M19)

These men were obviously of the opinion that women do not express an interest in applying for the Head of Department position to the same extent as men. Unfortunately, such an approach leads to a somewhat cyclical argument, in that the women are not encouraged because they show no interest, and they show no interest because a lack of encouragement communicates expectations which deter their aspirations for the position.

An alternative explanation was offered by one Head of Department who intimated that it was men's fear of being displaced as leaders, in order to facilitate a "balancing of the ledger", which dissuades them from encouraging females who may in fact be destined to replace them.

Maybe people for all sorts of reasons as HODs are too proud, or they don't think it's their business or whatever to support and encourage females to apply for promotion. I think if you took away the thought in a lot of males' minds that the job is going to be taken away from them because overnight someone is going to say that 25 men have to go because there are 25 females coming to take their jobs. If that fear was taken away, then maybe they would be more supportive of people getting the job. (M8)

From extensive conversations with a number of 'older' Heads of Department, there is little doubt that these men are feeling increasingly vulnerable with regard to the permanency of their positions, due to the cumulative impact of the changing nature of the leadership role's requirements, the threat of affirmative action, the devaluing of seniority implied by the merit system of promotion, and speculation regarding the institution of performance appraisals and contractual-based employment.

### **Lack of female role models**

Men's traditional dominance of the Head of Department position in physical education has resulted in few female role models to demonstrate the career possibilities for women in the subject area. Such an imbalance in leadership, together with the lack of encouragement and support provided to female physical educators, effectively functions to deter many women from applying for promotion.

The importance attached to the provision of role models by the female teachers interviewed, was reinforced by the majority of male respondents. Some men focused on the need for women to see "their likeness" in the position as a "demonstration of its achievability", with comments like:

Because there are so many male HODs, the females I guess feel as though it's not for them. They don't see many of their peers up there, therefore they probably don't give it a second thought. They may well feel that it is really a male domain. (M17)

Maybe young talented females have a look at some of the poor male role models and say "Well there is no way I am going to do that". You know... "Macho stuff, bringing boys into line, and berating them and this sort of thing". Maybe if that's where most of our role models are, then they make terrible role models for anybody, and doubly frustrating for most aspiring females. (M7)

It is difficult for them because they would not have had many role models to look at. If you have only had a role model of two people statewide, no wonder the women in those positions feel a bit threatened. They may have to get aggressive, because there are very few that are in that position. (M8)

It is perception... you are a female and therefore you have to prove yourself. To me we have a lot to be blamed for. Even in college and university you don't get too many female lecturers, so you have the male domination going through a fairly important part of women's careers... the initial three or four years at college. If they keep seeing a male

there telling people what to do and how to do PE then that perception is likely to carry over. (M3)

Other male physical educators highlighted the potential impact of female role models for students, in statements such as:

I think we should have more female HODs, so that kids at school can aspire to HOD and can see that females can occupy that position and perform it just as effectively and efficiently as what a male can. Because I have got kids that are going through PE Studies that would make sensational PE teachers and perhaps good HODs because of their skills. (M24)

The general perception of women's PE, is that they are not as involved in sporting activities. The guys are more actively involved in sport. There is still a little bit of that through the school. If there were more women in charge it would have a positive effect on the participation. Obviously in the long term, it should have an influence for the future, in that they aspire and see it as more of a pathway. (M9)

One respondent went so far as to suggest that failure to address the imbalanced provision of role models to students, will result in a perpetuation of stereotyped social attitudes and expectations regarding appropriate roles for women and men.

I really think that in a school, as in real life, it is critical that kids see or have role models that are both male and female. Otherwise we are going to perpetuate the past as a society. So it is absolutely critical that we have females at all levels, at a principal level, a deputy level, at HOD level, so that we overcome any and all cultural biases or societal biases that we have. (M7)

A differing opinion was expressed by three of the male Heads of Department, one of whom had earlier described himself as a "sensitive new age guy". They did not believe that it is really necessary for the students to see women in the leadership role, as long as they are provided with a physical education program that is balanced and equitable.

I perceive that it would be better for the base on which we build, to have the perception that the person we have in charge understands exactly where I am coming from. And I think that would be a big advantage. It is achievable without that person being a female. It is achievable through strong, consistent female staff, if they happen to be teaching females... As long as the program is kept very general, there is no emphasis towards male outcomes, I think you can achieve and get equal numbers of females going through the course without the perception that they are in a male environment. (M19)

Do you need to have equal men and women in jobs... what is that going to do for PE? You might say that it provides female role models, but I say who cares. In this school, kids see the female Phys Eder as the leader of Dance. She is the top person. They don't come and ask me a question about Dance. I don't get any questions about Dance. They go and see her. If there is a question on Health, everyone consults the female Phys Eder. She is the expert in Health. No one talks to me about it, not even the administration. ... So I think both of those women have probably satisfied their leadership needs without having to be a HOD, because they are in fact in control of their own destinies. (M18)

We have a pretty good relationship with the women on staff here, and one female is in charge of Health, one female is in charge of Dance. If we want any advice, we go to them and we get it. They come to us for PE and other things they don't cope with. (M12)

This latter comment, while intended to explain why there is really no need for more female leaders to serve as role models, unwittingly conveys a stereotypical view of the status of women in physical education. As was pointed out by one Head of department:

...The female position is accepted very quickly, and I do it myself. We have a female health coordinator here for example. It seems to me that in a lot of schools, and maybe to some extent here, the health tends to be the gambit of the female. Maybe that reinforces the fact that the physical is the male domain, and the caring, the understanding of the general side of life, belongs to the female. ...But from my experience I can say that I have found the females like to do a lot of the Health Ed things and the males don't. (M8)

By relegating female physical education teachers to areas such as Dance and Health, two components of physical education often perceived as 'female', both women and students are being sent clear messages regarding the proper place for women within the department. The control of physical education remains in the hands of the men, while the women are allocated duties, in a pseudo-leadership capacity, with which few of the men wish to bother.

### **Females take on alternative responsibilities**

The final reason suggested by some of the male physical educators for women's reluctance to apply for promotion to Head of Department, was the fact that numbers of women demonstrate an interest in alternative duties and roles, both within the physical education department, and at a whole school level.

As explained previously, within the Physical Education Department, many women take on the added responsibilities of Dance co-ordinator and Health Education co-ordinator. This was also the case at two schools which are the focus of the following remarks:

Certainly there is a problem there. Many girls have qualified in PE, and then they want some specific recognition and progression within that career that they have selected. Maybe some other positions could be created too. For instance... one female PE teacher is doing the Health Ed coordination in the school, and I make sure that she is under load so she can coordinate that, and I encourage her to do that. Maybe there could be more positions like that one.... (M21)

Well what happens here might be of some use, in that all of us have got a role that we play, and we agreed on between ourselves. One of the female Phys Eders has total responsibility of Health Education. She controls Health, the program, and the design of the program, and the community links and the links with the school support services. She sits on the committee and she controls everything that happens there and she has a budget of \$3,000 a year. ... The female Phys Eder in charge of Dance operates the same way in Dance. She controls the whole Dance program, she promotes it, she runs it, she has the support staff that she operates with. She controls the Dance budget and has full responsibility for that. Another female Phys Eder is in charge of an area we have called "women in sport", or "women in activity" and she promotes girls' sport within the school. ... Then on the men's side I look after Outdoor Ed and PE, another male looks after Interschool Sport. He has his own budget of about \$6,000 or \$7,000. Another male Phys Eder looks after promotion of the department... So what we have generated are areas of responsibility which have given everyone a need to be here. That has worked out really well. Our department could actually run without a HOD... we don't really need a HOD here. (M18)

It is interesting to note that while the women in the department are assigned responsibility for the dance and health, the men co-ordinate areas such as outdoor education, physical education, interschool sport, and the promotion of the department in the school. It would be difficult to fabricate a more stereotypic departmental structure which accords differential status to its female and male staff members. The women take responsibility for the 'female' components of physical education, while the men co-ordinate the physical, substantive aspects of the subject. Nevertheless, the perception exists amongst many male physical educators that such a model is exemplary.

An aspect of the aforementioned scenario which should not be overlooked, is that despite the stereotypic nature of its structure, such a department does provide female teachers with some degree of responsibility and ownership, and hence a degree of experience in aspects of leadership. Its potential was illustrated by one of the female teachers interviewed, who had maximised her opportunities as Health co-ordinator by demanding recognition of her status by the administration. That particular teacher now holds the same status within the school as the Head of Department of physical education.

In terms of alternative responsibilities at the whole school level, the program co-ordinator's role was highlighted by a number of Heads of Department as an attractive and viable option for women.

And maybe HOD is not the direction women want to go, and maybe there are other jobs, other than Head of PE, that they would like to do within school, program coordinators and all that sort of thing. Maybe we should get them more involved in those sorts of things. (M21)

...The female teachers... maybe this school for example, the female teachers have got incredible role models and a lot of opportunities other than just HOD in their own faculty, and maybe that in itself is a healthy thing. There are level 3s now of program coordinator, and a lot of them are female... they are good organisers with great attention to detail, they work well with people and are not abrasive. And because they are not tied to seniority or anything, then maybe that is the future for them to aspire to. (M7)

In fact, many women have themselves indicated preference for promotion to this type of role, rather than Head of Department.

A question worth asking is whether women's reluctance to apply for promotion to Head of Department is a result of their alternative interests, or whether the assumption of these other duties occurs because they do not perceive the leadership position in physical education as a realistic option. Perhaps the expectations of their significant others clearly lead them down this alternative path.

In summary, the stereotyping of women's roles and behaviours; family responsibilities; the short-term nature of women's careers; the perceived male



image of physical education; the male model of leadership and the resultant expectation that the Head of Department will be male; the fact that the leadership role is more difficult for a woman due to chauvinism, the lack of encouragement and support given to women, and the lack of female role models; and the fact that many women tend to assume alternative responsibilities within departments and schools, were all suggested by the men interviewed, as factors contributing to the apparent reluctance of female physical educators to apply for promotion to Head of Department.

However, despite the men's varying degrees of acknowledgment of the impact of these factors, there was an underlying suggestion common to nearly all conversations, that ultimately the decision to apply, or not to apply for promotion, rests with the women, and that they only have themselves to blame if they do not make the most of the opportunities with which they are presented through the merit promotion system. These perceptions will be discussed in the section to follow.

#### **ULTIMATELY THE BLAME RESTS WITH THE WOMEN**

The second category of reasons contributing to the reluctance of female physical education teachers to apply for promotion to Head of Department comprises factors relating to the personal characteristics of the women themselves. The male respondents intimated that over and above the nature of the leadership role, and the attitudes and responses expressed by colleagues, were elements including their personality traits such as a lack of confidence and assertiveness, and oversensitivity to others' opinions; their lack of ambition; and the fact that women are weaker disciplinarians and teachers, which resulted in women's failure to apply for promotion. The male physical educators implied that underrepresentation of women at Head of Department level was the "women's own fault".

## Personality traits

The majority of male physical educators, at some stage during their conversations, made mention of the personality traits they perceived as peculiar to women, which impacted on their interpretation and handling of a variety of situations. Specific aspects highlighted included women's dislike for conflict, confrontation and aggression:

A lot of women don't like confronting aggression from males. And even on my staff here, I know if any unhappiness does occur, it is because of a domination of one male's ideas over what the female wants. One person wants to handle it in a soft way and another person is handling it in an aggressive way, and so maybe they don't want a confrontation like that. They may prefer to say "Well it is not worth it for the extra couple of dollars". (M18);

their tendency to harbour bad experiences and allow these to shape future perceptions, together with their predisposition to emotional responses:

Women tend to carry with them past bad experiences of guys who may have given them a hard time, and hence worry about males that they may have to work with in the future. And they don't know which school they will get. (M15)

I don't think women want emotional trauma. And I think women are more emotional than men. I don't know if that is physiologically true or what ever, but I think it is the case. And they hurt more and they feel more. I suppose that is the mothering instincts or what ever... feminine instincts. But I do think that the females do hurt more. I think also females remember things more than males, so that when something bad happens, a male brushes it off and it is gone, but a female will hold that for a long time. So when you get a conflict or when you get a disagreement, a female will tend to mull that over in their minds for a long period of time. Whereas the male sets it aside and gets on with the next problem. But that insensitivity if you like, on the part of a male, can be an advantage, because they can shut that out and say "That doesn't matter, it has happened, it is over and done with". But the female rethinks that over and over again. (M18);

their sensitivity to the opinions of others:

The fact that women say that nobody expects them to be an active influence, because a male has always been there and they don't feel it is worth all the hassles that they would have to go through in order to get the position, I think is an incorrect perception. I really do. It is looking at the outside and not on what they have to provide... They are looking out for what other people think about them, they are concerned about how everyone else thinks they are, rather than how they think they are. When I applied, the first things I thought about were "What good is it

going to do me?" and "What can I do for the job?". I didn't think about anything else. I didn't think "What hassles could I have, what things are going to step in my way, how is this going to go?". I didn't consider any of that. It was a job like any other, just get in and do it. And that is how I saw it too. It was put to me and I thought "Can I do this?... Yes"... (M12)

and their tendency to concern themselves with, and focus on, interpersonal relationships:

Women look at the politics of the power plays within an office, and I think it drains their energy a lot. They put a lot of energy into who is getting on with who, and all that sort of stuff, and it completely goes over my head. I don't know what they are talking about. They put a lot of energy into that which is great, but the down side is being in charge of all that must be an awesome sort of a prospect. I remember talking to one female Phys Eder about it, and she said that she had been senior master or HOD, and that she would never ever go back to it again. She said the politics were just outrageous. I reckon the politics of this place are outrageous if you are going to get into it. Don't get into it... I think a certain amount of that is the female sort of... where they tune into that sort of power struggle, the politics of an office, of a school, of the whole staff. If you are going to get involved in that it can be very dangerous. (M13)

One Head of Department illustrated his perceptions in this regard through an example of an incident which had recently taken place in his department:

I think women are very emotional people, generally speaking. Obviously there are those who aren't. But I think of the incident we had at the beach the other day... We had two female staff members who finished up not talking to each other over 12 hoops... the decision about who was going to use them and who wasn't. Now for me, if it is a trivial thing like that... I make a decision, and that's it, end of the matter. I didn't lose any sleep over it. But the two staff members aren't talking to each other. Now if either of those two were in charge, the emotional energy that they would expend thinking about "Who am I going to upset if I say it this way? Better make sure I say it that way." and stuff like that. Well it is a pain. I can't operate like that. Not all women do that. But I am sure there is a tendency for women to do that more than men. And if that is the case, I can understand how women still find it difficult being boss. When there is all this stuff going on and then an issue of "hoops" comes up, well that would be a nightmare making a decision there. And that is just one of the 50 decisions you have to make in an hour. (M14)

While this remark is tinged with a hint of sarcasm and intended to subtly question, and perhaps even demean the priorities of women, such behaviour by female teachers does little to earn the respect of the men, and in fact functions to reinforce assumptions regarding the unsuitability of women for leadership.

## **Lack of confidence**

From conversations with female physical educators, it was evident that women seemed to vary in their interpretation of their experiences and the expectations regarding their leadership capabilities as expressed by their significant others. Some of the women's interpretations led them to doubt their own abilities and to resign themselves to the fact that the battle to overcome such barriers was too difficult. Many of the male respondents recognised these perceptions of self-doubt amongst female teachers. A few of the men even seemed to understand the possible reasons for the women's lack of confidence, as demonstrated in comments like:

Possibly the upbringing of women to... how would you say... react badly against the aggressive male. Males being the dominant people... loud... They may not like that. Through history women have been put down. It is only now women are getting the rights to be equal, to be counted... equal rights, equal pay for jobs or performance, and it is probably just a little early for women to have the self-confidence to get in and give it a go. (M12)

Further, it was believed that women had the "qualities and the skills" necessary to function as effective leaders and that there was no need for them to lack confidence in their abilities.

I think there is a barrier that a lot of women set up for themselves, that they believe they won't be able to do the job as well... not as a man, but as someone else that they have seen... They have a perception that their abilities don't stack up. It is an innate assessment of themselves as not being good enough. And I think that is probably one of the biggest barriers. ...They have the qualities, they have the ability. They don't have the confidence... they have self-doubt, they don't have that ability to say "Look I want to make it... if I make a mistake, I learn from that mistake." They are just concerned if they make a mistake then that is the end of everything. (M19)

If you look back a few years ago when immigration was high and schools were being built left, right and centre all over the place, lots of guys came out of the PE course and had only been teaching two or three years and they were given HOD jobs. So people with less than three years teaching were HODs. Thrown in at the deep end, there is the job, now let's get on with it. I think they coped, and I think a lot of the ladies would. Perhaps they don't give themselves the credit that they are due. They don't seem to have any confidence in themselves. (M15)

A number of other respondents supported the contention that women's perceptions of how others viewed their capabilities was in many cases misguided and detrimental to their career advancement. Their comments included:

Many women say that they have to prove themselves twice over in order to be accepted as the leader of the department. I just think at times that's probably a perception the ladies have themselves which is not a true account of what is actually happening. Perhaps it is because of their own insecurity that they perceive themselves as that. "Look I am a female, I have got the new job, I've got to make sure I do it well because people are going to be scrutinising me" and really I don't think that is the case. I think the case is that people want someone to jump in and do the job well. (M13)

The fact that many women think that to be successful in the job and earn respect, they would have to be outstanding and prove themselves twice over to command the same respect as a male, I think it shows a lack of self-confidence. I think as soon as they start seeing themselves as equal, and they have a little bit to give and they have the knowledge to give someone, they will realise that they don't have to be totally outstanding. Because there are people who aren't outstanding and they are in the job. A lot of males aren't outstanding and do have HOD jobs. No I don't accept that from girls. I think that it shows a lack of self-confidence. (M12)

Two of the Heads of Department presented examples of the lack of self-confidence exhibited by female teachers on their staff.

A lot of the female teachers I've had are very worried for example about talking in front of a large audience. That is a real hurdle. I would suspect that there are more timid feelings about communication in an open forum amongst females than males, on average. (M3)

I have one staff member who has enough experience now across Years 8-12, in PE and Health and everything else, but she feels that she is not ready and willing at the moment to take on the HOD job. She said "I might one day. I am enjoying my teaching now." When she says "I enjoy my teaching now", that could mean a million things. Whether she is secretly worried, I don't know, but she stated categorically that she was confident to do the job... she just wasn't ready to do it. (M8)

The woman referred to in the latter remark did in fact assume the acting Head of Department role for six months shortly following the time of the interview, having been strongly prompted by this respondent. Apparently, she was very efficient in the leadership role and enjoyed the experience.

While acknowledging the lack of confidence exhibited by many women, most of the male physical educators were of an understanding and supportive nature. However, one 'older' Head of Department was quite derogatory in his remarks:

I think maybe females make up a whole pile of convenient excuses because they are hiding feelings of inadequacy in themselves, or they just don't want to do the job. I have come across a lot of females that don't want to be involved when they see a little bit of negotiating or politicking... they just don't feel confident doing that. (M9)

It appears that he had little respect for, or confidence in, the ability of women to assume the leadership role.

### **Lack of assertiveness**

A lack of assertiveness is not only a stereotypical assumption made regarding women, it was also a personality trait consistently highlighted by the male physical educators as both a factor contributing to the potential difficulties female Heads of Department may encounter, and the reason for many females' reluctance to assume the leadership role.

The need to be "strong and assertive" as a Head of Department in order to "fight for PE", formed an integral part of many of the comments already quoted in this chapter. Further emphasis of this perception is provided by statements like:

Males, because of their loudness and their old testosterone, don't have to act or do anything really different to be assertive, whereas a female does. She has to do something extra. A lot of females don't see that as part of their role. (M3)

PE is often seen as an unnecessary area in the school curriculum which leads to the attitude of "Well if we chop that then the parents won't complain and nobody will notice any difference". So you need to be fairly assertive and aggressive. So women probably want to avoid the situation because of that. They feel that if things start to threaten their department, they aren't strong enough to go and deal with deputy principals, most of whom are males, timetabling, and with principals, most of whom are males, to make the ultimate decisions. (M23)

A number of Heads of Department also made a point of the need for female teachers to demonstrate their assertiveness by assuming the acting leadership role if given the opportunity.

It (more females applying for HOD) will only happen if females assert themselves and know that they can do the job. The broader their experiences in the school system, the better it will be for them to attain their position. (M19)

I think women feel that a male will get it over them. Males will tend to be appointed rather females. I also imagine that they are not keen on having to tell males what to do. (M3)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the acting role is one of the only available avenues through which women can gain experience at the Head of Department level.

## **Sensitivity**

The fact that female physical educators are "oversensitive" to the remarks and actions of others was perceived by the majority of men interviewed as detrimental to their self-image and their decision-making ability. The respondents focused on three interrelated aspects of the phenomenon.

The first aspect highlighted was that women tended to perceive mistakes they made as an indictment on their abilities.

Women seem to take it upon themselves to think they have made a big mistake and that it is going to have an effect on things. That's perhaps where a male may differ. "I've made a mistake, forget it!!!". Where as a female may take too much on board and make it affect her as well. If you make a mistake then wear it. Perhaps females can't. They may feel a bit more responsible because they are so organised that it becomes a reflection upon them that perhaps they weren't organised enough. Whereas a man does not quite have the conscience to do that. He can wear it and talk his way out of it. (M3)

What these respondents failed to take into account is the fact that, because female teachers in the past have been given very little responsibility within Physical Education Departments, those who take on extra duties feel 'highly visible', being perceived as representatives of the capabilities of all women. Further, the reactions of many males to mistakes made by women has been to blame their sex.

The second point raised by the men was that oversensitivity on the part of female physical educators often resulted in a lack of confidence in their own ability to make the right decisions.

I think women tend to be more sensitive to what people around them are thinking. I think that they should be aware of the fact that, if you need to sort something out, then you shouldn't be too worried about what people are going to think. Personally, I'm not. Women tend to think about who they are going to hurt and who is going to get hurt and who is going to suffer, and they weigh up all the pros and cons of it. (M18)

The third observation made by the male respondents was that women tend to "hold on" to their negative experiences, carrying them through to inevitably impact on their future perceptions.

Many women I have spoken to say that they carry those thoughts and feelings from a bad experience through with them and it obviously affects them in the future. I think a lot of women have been hurt by aggression in particular by males. Even things like "I want the gym, you're in it, get out", you know that style of thing, can be very hurtful. "Like why should I always be the one who moves aside. You know I have a right to use the gym as much as you have. Why should I move out?" or "Why does my program move out?" or "Look I need the oval for football, can you go to that corner". "Why should I move off the oval just because boys need more space than girls?" Those sorts of things would probably be ongoing, and a female may be feeling that she always is the one that moves. And again that is an attitude, that is just your own personality and attitude because another female would say "Look I need this space... too bad!" (M8)

Many of the male physical educators expressed concern regarding the fact that oversensitivity tended to be incongruous with the requirements of the Head of Department role. Their belief that the demands of the leadership position leave no room for hurt or indecision is demonstrated in comments like:

I don't think females should feel oversensitive about decisions. ...I am sure, that after a few years in the job, you come to terms with these little mental tussles you have in your mind, like "How do I stand on this one?" You can just not afford to worry about it. You just churn out the system... flowing through. You can't dwell on it. Females tend to do that too much, they are too sensitive. (M17)

Oversensitivity could be a real disadvantage for someone as HOD, because it makes you feel insecure. "Have I made the right decision, have I done the right thing, what is going to be said for or against me in regards to it?" I think anybody as a senior master must make decisions. If they are wrong, then so be it. Everyone is allowed to make a mistake. (M13)

Unfortunately, this becomes yet another perception which reinforces the assumption of many male physical educators, that although women may possess the necessary skills required for the Head of Department role, their very nature would make it



difficult for them to fulfil the requirements of that position, and the fact that the incumbent would have to be an "exceptional woman" in order to succeed.

### **Lack of ambition**

Lack of ambition is frequently cited in the literature as a reason for women's underrepresentation in leadership positions. Some of the female physical educators interviewed supported this notion, with statements illustrating their lack of career orientation, while others voiced their disdain at the assumption that the desire to seek promotion is perceived as the only measure of career saliency.

As far as the male respondents were concerned, more than half believed that female teachers in physical education did not apply for promotion because they lacked motivation and ambition. Their comments included:

The barriers have largely disappeared. So I just sit down and ask myself "Do they want to do it?" Those things in the system have been removed, and the opportunities are coming up, but do they want to do it? And I think the answer in most cases is "No". They are quite happy, with somebody else in charge, and them tagging along and doing their bit. There doesn't seem to be any need for a challenge, or any ambition to move up. (M13)

For some female Phys Eders who are married, their income is a second income and their role in teaching is simply just to provide a second income for that family unit. So they have got no ambition to do anything that may extend them or take them that next step further. (M24)

The latter remark, while intended to illustrate women's lack of ambition, in fact highlights a possible reason for their apparent paucity of motivation to apply for promotion. The stereotypic expectations regarding the role of women may well function to negate any career aspirations.

Some of the respondents intimated that lack of ambition was, in many cases, the result of women's reluctance to "move outside their comfort zone".

Yes. In my experience again, the female staff members that I have been associated with have been comfortable and therefore happy and therefore less motivated to look outside their comfort zone. Whereas males have tended to look outside that zone. Now the underlying reason for that, I think, was that none of those females were looking at it as a career... they were all looking at retiring, or ceasing to teach and then do part

time work. Looking at time sharing and all those sort of avenues rather than go up the ladder and take on more work. The idea of taking on more work, not because they are shy of work, it is just not a life long thing. (M11)

I think some females are very comfortable with where they are and what they are doing. They don't like to upset the apple cart. They don't want to chase and go to where they don't know. They prefer the comfortability of being where they are and with what they do know. (M19)

Alternatively, perhaps it is the threat of intimidation felt as a consequence of stepping outside the stereotypically prescribed role for women into a traditionally male domain, that keeps female teachers confined to their "comfort zone".

A number of male physical educators related their experiences with female teachers who "obviously lacked ambition". The examples included:

I just look at the situation at this school. I have been here seven years and there has been opportunities for females on staff to become HOD, usually in an acting role, but in some cases, for years. There was a situation when we had three female Phys Eders on staff who were probably the most senior people on staff, and none of those three really seriously considered doing the job. Now as for why, I don't know. You would have to ask them, but the opportunity was there. You look at those three teachers, and they would make very good senior masters, or HODs, sorry. I think all three have the characteristics and the ability. ...But they didn't have the ambition to bite the bullet and take the opportunity to step into it. (M14)

The women I've dealt with in the last few years, haven't got that ambition. They don't want to go bush, and don't want to apply because they don't want the responsibility, or anything to do with it. When I went to deputy last year, the senior female didn't want to apply for the job. Another of the females is in a relationship in town and never speaks of it. She's heading off into the health field, hoping that things might open up there, which they may do, but she has never once initiated any conversation which might have led me to believe that she wanted to be a HOD, and she didn't apply when this job was open. (M6)

A very different perspective was provided by two male teachers, who themselves did not aspire to the Head of Department position.

Because I am not interested in being a HOD, and I have got my reasons for it and there are probably lots of women that think the same way that I do. I think my way of thinking is right, and therefore I respect the fact that there are not lots of women hankering for the top job. (M22)

I think there's a lot that do enjoy their role as Phys Eders and some of them are similar in respect to myself where, they're quite happy to do what they are doing. Whether that is lack of motivation or ambition, I don't know... I am going to ask myself that. (M24)

These men appeared to have no difficulty in comprehending the reluctance of women to apply for promotion, because they shared that reluctance. An interesting question arises as to whether the choice of these men to remain as teachers, is perceived as a 'deficiency' to the same extent as that choice made by many women.

One highly motivated and zealous newly appointed Head of Department's answer to the question would have been "yes". This respondent was adamant to point out that if one is "committed to physical education", and has a "vision" for the subject's future, then the only means of asserting an influence is to take on the leadership role.

If you want to really have a say at the "chalk face" so to speak, of what happens to the actual program in the school, if that is really what you want to do and you really care about it, then there is only one way to do that, and that is to become HOD. So if you have a philosophy and you really want to push it, then there is only one way to get there and that is to have a go. If you don't have a go, because you are worried about what might happen, and you don't know what is actually going to happen, then that is an unrealistic perception and you won't succeed anyway, I don't think. I think you have definitely got to go in with some sort of vision.  
(M18)

This remark not only equates a lack of ambition with a lack of commitment, but it also effectively functions to disqualify the ambition demonstrated by female physical educators who assume alternative responsibilities such as program co-ordinator within the school.

### **Females are weaker disciplinarians and teachers**

A somewhat contentious issue raised by the male physical educators was their perception of females as weaker disciplinarians and teachers. A number of the respondents indicated that the lower personal skill levels, poorer teaching practices, and weaker discipline, characteristic of many female physical educators, resulted in both a lack of respect for the women's capacities by their male colleagues, and a lack of self-confidence to assume the leadership role on the part of the female teachers.

Comments regarding the lower skill levels focused on the lack of "quality", "versatility" and "passion" demonstrated by women in the subject area.

Most girls drop out of PE and sport and active involvement, at 16 years of age. By the time they turn 16, they are out of it... 80% are out of it. And so I don't think that the quality and the level of skill, possessed by female PE teachers is as high as it should be, in the main. (M6)

I find a lot of women teachers at the grass roots level, don't feel as passionately about the whole PE program as what I find the men do. Therefore I believe, and I am talking from experience because over the last couple of years when I have actually taught girls' classes, you can get away with a lower level of competence when you are teaching girls, than you can with boys. The girls are not as competent when they are 13 or 14. They can't throw, they can't run, they can't catch in as great a percentage as the boys can. Therefore you are teaching at a completely different level when you teach a girls' class of 13, 14, 15 year olds, than when you are teaching a boys' class. So I think the whole thing is a vicious circle. There is no reason why women can't become very competent at teaching any particular sport. We have a case in point here. ...But she deliberately worked on her level of competence and confidence to do that. So perhaps there is a barrier there with women in terms of taking charge of a department, because they don't feel confident enough in a large enough number of areas. (M23)

I think they are good at gymnastics and dance and swimming. And then the occasional one is outstanding in one of the team sports, but not enough. And there is not enough versatility. I don't believe women have enough versatility when they leave school in sports. It is very easy to find a boy who is competent in 6 or 7 sports by the time he leaves school. Competent at a very high level. And that is really what you need when you go into PE teaching. You need to be competent in a number of areas. To find women with those characteristics is very difficult. (M22)

Reference was also made to aspects of physical education lessons which tended to reflect the teaching ability of female physical educators, such as the level of activity evident.

Females don't seem to get in there and have a go, even in their lessons. I'm sure that is a factor in why males put them down a bit and don't give females the same respect. (M5)

People look at a female PE class, which is very slow and not doing a lot... whereas the boys' class is very active and going for it. You make an impression sometimes with classes, sometimes with teachers. We actually have here males taking female classes and females taking male classes. It is one of the ways to get rid of that image. But sure, it is male-dominated, and there are put downs on females, but I would say only where there is a perception of being inefficient and not doing their job. And there are women like that. (M11)

You know what I think would make a difference? If girls were taught by men Phys Eders for a number of years. (M23)

Some of the men indicated that in their school, male teachers often taught girls' classes in an attempt to raise expectations and skill levels. It is noteworthy that this perception was refuted by a number of male teachers, who in fact voiced their admiration for the teaching abilities of the women in their department.

It is not the case with girls here. I was watching athletics the other day, sprints, hurdles etc. You have got someone like the female exchange teacher who is a sensational athlete, and they are into it, having a go. You know the gymnastics, they do the same in there. (M7)

I can't say that it rings true to me, that the girls are less active, that they are not leading from the front. I have always said that female PE teachers deserve medals, because I really think that being a male PE teacher is far easier with the classes we have. Having to motivate students is far less of a problem. I think being a female teacher having single sex, girls classes... especially if they are going through puberty and adolescence... I mean all those changes going on in their body, just getting out there and performing in front of the boys on the oval and that... I think the females do a terrific job and I think it would be extremely hard to deal with those sorts of problems... and a male probably couldn't cope. I couldn't do it, I wouldn't have the patience. (M15)

Women's capacity to discipline disruptive students was also questioned by the male respondents. However, while some believed this to be a potentially limiting factor in women's ability to lead the department, others considered the role of disciplinarian as "insignificant in the whole scheme of things", and easily overcome by the managing student behaviour strategies in place in most schools.

As far as the traditional role of HOD being the person you send disruptive students to goes... if you got on well with the female HOD then surely you wouldn't send some of the worst boys to her. You wouldn't put that person under that pressure. You would deal with them yourself or send them somewhere else. There is no need to belittle anyone by saying "No you deal with it, it is your problem as HOD". As long as they do their job it doesn't come into it at all. (M3)

Nevertheless, women's weaker disciplinary skills obviously remain a common perception amongst male physical educators, and therefore more than likely function to further demean the capacities of female teachers in the subject area and lower the expectations of colleagues regarding their leadership potential.

The cumulative impact of the perceptions outlined lead the majority of the male physical educators interviewed to conclude that the paucity of women in the leadership role in physical education was the fault of the women themselves.

The underrepresentation of women at Head of Department level in physical education is the women's own fault

Despite acknowledging the existence of some barriers to women's career advancement in physical education, the majority of male participants concluded that ultimately, the blame rests with the women themselves. Justification for placing the responsibility for their plight back on the female teachers included: the fairness of the merit promotion system, the equal opportunity for promotion that it affords all applicants, and women's failure to apply for promotion:

I've got strong feelings about the fact that the jobs are there, and if they can show that they applied for the job and didn't get it on an equal basis and didn't get equal numbers of jobs, then they've probably got some argument, but they can't do that I'm sure. "I didn't get the job. Why didn't you get the job? I didn't apply". It's nobody's fault but their own! (M21)

I've been really dark on the women around the place saying that there's inequality, because there hasn't been. The jobs have always been open, they just haven't wanted to do the travel, because the jobs are there, they've been filled by people, it just happens to be men. The females have to answer to that, not the men. It's not like there's equal numbers of applications and there's too many men getting jobs. The women aren't applying, so I think it's selfish lifestyle reasons. Selfish is the wrong word, but it's self-centred lifestyle. (M6)

It is a matter of what we believe, which is that we give equal opportunity to quality people. I firmly believe in merit, where merit is due. ...I would be very interested to see the responses you get from females, indicating why they haven't pursued the career path, because I can't see how the way that I operate my department, would limit any female making a decision to chase that promotion trail. (M19);

their lack of understanding of the requirements of the role and consequent self-doubt regarding their capacity to fulfil it:

I am disappointed that women have the attitude, that if it is a males' area, male dominant, they don't want to have a go. I think that people like you, your study, will get some good information and you will tell them to stop being wimps and to get up and have a go. I think they are frightened and lack self-confidence. (M7)

The sooner more women wake up and get involved in, and have a bit of confidence in themselves to have a go, I bet they will find that they will be equally accepted. There won't be a problem. (M12)

I really don't think they understand what the job entails. I don't think they have ever explored it and found out. They might have watched males handle the situation, and if they feel that their male boss doesn't measure up under certain pressure situations, they might think "I am not going to do that". When really, if they found out what the problem was, and understood it, they might come up with other outcomes. They might handle the situations differently. I don't think they know enough about the position. (M3);

and women's use of their sex to account for failure.

There is one thing about which I am critical of a woman, and I would be critical of a man for the same thing... A lot of interfaculty competition goes on for all sorts of reasons... There is nothing worse than when women get beaten for something and are not successful, they take the attitude that "I wasn't successful because I am a woman.". I have come across that many times. Rather than saying "My argument wasn't good enough" or "I didn't present my case well enough". Everyone has losses... I have losses too. I don't win everything I go for, but when that happens you say "OK, well fair enough, someone had a better argument" or "I presented the argument as best I could, but it still didn't wash". But there have been a few females that take the attitude "This wouldn't happen if I was a bloke". And that's where they let themselves down. It is annoying to me too, because whenever I see that I think "Your credibility has just been shot out of the water". (M11)

There are things that happen in schools and in PE departments which are difficult for women. However, there is certainly blame, if blame is a good word, to be laid with the women themselves. There are the subtle things that go on, like the fact that they are not in it for the long haul. That they sometimes treat it as a nice job to do for a few years and make no secret of it. But they use the defence mechanism "Because I am a woman". Those sort of things become destructive, and I think yes, a lot of women do that and it doesn't help the cause. (M21)

Such remarks demonstrate little understanding of the contexts within which female teachers work, and no concession for the part played by male physical educators in deterring these women from aspiring to leadership roles. Perhaps by refusing to accept the fact that circumstances and experiences external to the women's perceived weaknesses have a significant impact on the career choices made by female physical educators, the men absolve themselves of any facilitatory responsibility.

## SUMMARY

This chapter began by outlining the perceptions of government school male physical

educators regarding the Head of Department role; its skill requirements; the ability of women to assume the role; possible differences inherent in female leadership of physical education; preferences for female or male leadership in the subject area; and the image associated with the Head of Department position.

This was followed by a consideration of the barriers to promotion that continue to exist for female physical educators. The men identified two aspects of the government education system which may hinder the advancement of women, namely, the reality of a limited number of promotional positions, and the likelihood of country service. While promotion by merit was seen as a fair and advantageous system for women, the respondents viewed the redressing of leadership imbalance by means of affirmative action in a very negative light.

The reasons given by the men for the apparent reluctance of women to apply for the Head of Department position were then addressed. The stereotyping of women's roles and behaviours; family responsibilities; the short-term nature of women's careers; the male image of physical education; the consequent male model of leadership and associated expectation that the Head of Department will be male; the fact that the leadership role is more difficult for a female; the chauvinism displayed by men in the subject area; the lack of encouragement provided to female teachers; the lack of female role models to demonstrate the leadership possibilities for women; and the fact that many women take on alternative responsibilities both within the physical education department and at the whole school level were all mentioned by the male respondents as factors contributing to constrain women's career aspirations. However, despite their acknowledgment of these deterrents, the male physical educators indicated that ultimately the decision to apply or not to apply for promotion rests with the women. They intimated that over and above the contextual factors of the attitudes and responses expressed by colleagues, are elements relating to the personal characteristics of the women themselves, such as their lack of confidence and assertiveness; their oversensitivity to other's opinions; their lack of



ambition; and the fact that women are weaker disciplinarians and teachers which resulted in women's failure to apply for promotion. The combined impact of the men's perceptions serve to shape their expectations regarding women's occupancy of the leadership role.

It is worthy of note that throughout conversations with the respondents, there was a determination on the part of the 'younger' men to delineate the attitudes and actions of the 'older' physical educators from their own. While members of the former group were depicted as dominant, chauvinistic, and "the problem" in terms of women's perceptions, the majority of 'younger' teachers and Heads of Department endeavoured to portray themselves as 'sensitive new age guys', conversant with equity issues, and the epitome of democratic and managerial leadership. Comments made by the respondents tended to confirm this delineation.

The chapter concluded with an investigation of men's expectations regarding female leadership in physical education, and reasons underlying the men's ultimate attribution of women's lack of promotional aspirations to deficiencies within the women. Figure 4 presents a cyclical summary of the male physical educators' perceptions regarding reasons for women's reluctance to apply for promotion comprising both contextual factors, and the personal characteristics of the women; the expectations generated by these perceptions; their impact on the career actions of female teachers; and how the women's leadership choices serve to either reaffirm or question the men's perceptions and subsequently their expectations.

While almost all of the men interviewed believed that women possessed the necessary skills to be effective Heads of Department, few thought that the lack of female representation in the leadership role mattered. Further, they intimated that the opportunities for promotion were now there, and that if women did not see fit to avail themselves of those opportunities, then they only had themselves to blame. How the men's expectations compare with those perceived by female physical educators will be examined in Chapter 9.

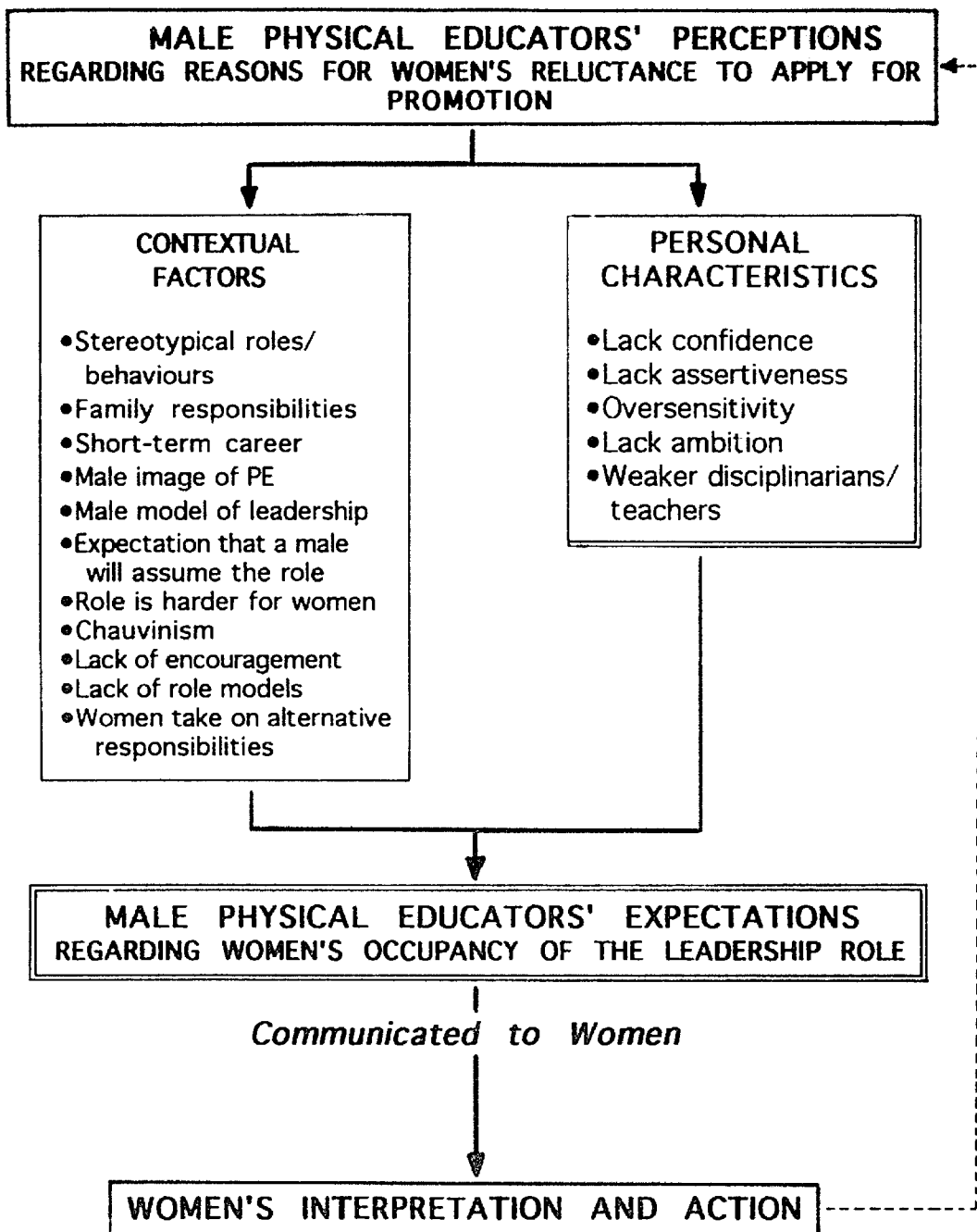


Figure 4: Male physical educators' perceptions and expectations regarding women's occupancy of the Head of Department position and their impact on the female physical educators' application decisions.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **A COMPARISON OF FEMALE PHYSICAL EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EXPECTATIONS OF THEIR SIGNIFICANT OTHERS REGARDING FEMALE LEADERSHIP AND THE EXPECTATIONS EXPRESSED BY THOSE SIGNIFICANT OTHERS**

Crucial in evaluating the impact of significant others' expectations on the promotional aspirations of female physical educators is determining the extent to which the perceptions of the women regarding these expectations actually reflect the expectations held by the significant others. This chapter presents a comparison of the opinions and attitudes concerning female leadership in physical education communicated by the two groups during interviews.

By way of clarification, within the context of this study, the term 'significant others' is used with reference to the female physical education teachers, and refers to individuals who have been influential, either positively or negatively, in the career development of these women. More specifically, based on interviews with the female teachers, 'significant others' were identified as the teachers and Heads of Department in physical education with whom they were currently working, or those they have worked with in the past. Consequently, in the discussion to follow, the term 'significant others' will refer to female and male physical education teachers and Heads of Department.

The perceptions and expectations of female physical education teachers and Heads of Department were outlined in Chapter 7, and those of the male teachers and Heads of Department in Chapter 8. Within those chapters, a variety of views were presented with respect to a range of issues, and conflicting responses were highlighted. However, in order to facilitate a comparison between perceptions of female teachers and their significant others, assumptions have been made based on the commonality

of concepts and themes evident in conversations with the respondents. Further, because the investigation did not apply case study methodology, the researcher is aware that the comparison exists at a general level, since individual female teachers' 'significant others' did not necessarily equate with the 'significant others' interviewed. That is, both 'female physical education teachers' and 'significant others' will be considered on group, rather than individual bases.

It was evident from the interview data that there was considerable agreement amongst female and male respondents regarding the nature and requirements of the Head of Department role. They concurred on the necessary skills and attributes for leadership in the subject area; the ability of women to assume the role, although judgements were hypothetical on the part of most men and many women; suggested differences in the leadership style of women; and the image of the Head of Department position. They also agreed that a lack of opportunity for promotion and the requirement for country service continued to constrain the career advancement of women. Also of interest is that not one respondent, female or male, voiced preference for a female Head of Department. This in itself has powerful implications with regard to the acceptance of a woman assuming the role.

Valuable insight into the basis for the development of expectations regarding female leadership can be gained through an examination of perceived reasons for women's reluctance to apply for the Head of Department position. Table 16 summarises the comparative perceptions of female and male physical educators in this regard. The female perceptions presented incorporate findings from a previous exploratory study concerning reasons for the underrepresentation of females at Head of Department level (Bloot, 1992). Agreement on a particular aspect is indicated on the table with a tick '✓' in the respective column. The absence of a comment and a tick does not imply disagreement, but rather indicates that there was no mention of the issue by that group of respondents.

**TABLE 16**

**COMPARATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF FEMALE AND MALE PHYSICAL EDUCATORS OF REASONS FOR WOMEN'S RELUCTANCE TO APPLY FOR THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT POSITION**

REASON GIVEN	FEMALE PERCEPTIONS	MALE PERCEPTIONS
Systemic Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the past- policy restrictions, breaks in service and lack of seniority disadvantaged females.</li> <li>• Restricted mobility due to family and isolation in country centres.</li> <li>• Lack of opportunity due to limited positions available. Talented females moving into other areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> </ul>
Patriarchy within the education system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of acceptance by older male staff and administration.</li> <li>• Dislike of power struggles and politics involved. Feel intimidated.</li> <li>• Selection process biased towards males.</li> <li>• Pressure from 'gatekeepers' to discourage women.</li> <li>• Chauvinism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> </ul>
Stereotypical roles and behaviours		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home environment and primary school education are key elements in socialising females into stereotyped roles.</li> <li>• Boys from European backgrounds do not respect female teachers. This is likely to cause problems.</li> </ul>

REASON GIVEN	FEMALE PERCEPTIONS	MALE PERCEPTIONS
Family responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional role of the woman at home.</li> <li>• Restricted mobility due to family.</li> <li>• Intentions to get married and have children.</li> <li>• Self-doubt and lack of confidence on returning to teaching following a break in service due to family.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> </ul>
Short-term career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor image of aging PE teacher.</li> <li>• Women look for alternatives as they get older.</li> <li>• Health concerns such as skin cancer and injuries.</li> <li>• Women do not see PE teaching as a career.</li> <li>• Concern for cosmetic appearance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓</li> <li>• Women are not in for the 'long haul'.</li> <li>• Many women only work to supplement the husband's income.</li> </ul>
Lack of skills and experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only three-year trained. Lack qualifications.</li> <li>• Don't have the assertiveness skills.</li> <li>• More difficult for a female to deal with discipline.</li> <li>• No training available for people wanting to take on the role.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>• Females are weaker disciplinarians/teachers.</li> </ul>

REASON GIVEN	FEMALE PERCEPTIONS	MALE PERCEPTIONS
The image of physical education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past male dominance of PE. Male image/'jock' image.</li> <li>• The HOD job is unattractive, particularly for females.</li> <li>• Stigma attached to being a female HOD in PE. 'Butch' image.</li> <li>• Males have a higher profile in sport which is reflected in PE. Females are not given the same kudos due to their orientation to the 'lesser' sports.</li> <li>• Competitive nature of PE-females likely to step aside for males in the promotion stakes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>• Females are weaker in sport.</li> </ul>
Male model of leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discipline problems are more difficult for women.</li> <li>• Female's concern about the need to prove themselves.</li> <li>• Overall, it is a more difficult role for a female.</li> <li>• Stereotyping. Male dominance in leadership, male style of leadership.</li> <li>• There is an expectation that the HOD will be male.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓</li> <li>• In women's own minds.</li> <li>✓</li> <li>• In the case of some 'older' HODs, but this is changing.</li> <li>✓</li> </ul>
Take on alternative responsibilities	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women tend to be more inclined to promote into a program co-ordinator role.</li> <li>• They do assume responsibilities such as dance co-ordinator and health co-ordinator within PE.</li> </ul>

REASON GIVEN	FEMALE PERCEPTIONS	MALE PERCEPTIONS
Female teachers' perceptions of the job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching is enough without the extra duties.</li> <li>• Enjoy contact with students.</li> <li>• Too much work for too few rewards. Too many hassles and stress.</li> <li>• Can't be bothered with the red tape and CVs required to apply for promotion.</li> <li>• No real love of the subject.</li> <li>• Tried the acting position and didn't like it.</li> <li>• Many HODs have been in the position too long and are no longer motivated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>• Women don't have the same 'passion' for the subject.</li> <li>✓</li> </ul>
Low promotional orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of ambition.</li> <li>• Can't be bothered with the hassles.</li> <li>• Not career-oriented.</li> <li>• Lack awareness and knowledge of promotional pathways and regulations.</li> <li>• Females don't promote themselves. They sit back and wait to be approached.</li> <li>• Just not interested.</li> <li>• Willingness to apply for promotion is not the only measure of career saliency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> </ul>
Lack of encouragement and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of female role models.</li> <li>• Importance of mentors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓</li> <li>✓</li> </ul>



REASON GIVEN	FEMALE PERCEPTIONS	MALE PERCEPTIONS
Personal characteristics make the job difficult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are concerned about others' feelings and the impact of their decisions on others.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too sensitive to the opinions of others.</li> <li>• Lack confidence in their own skills and abilities.</li> <li>• Lack assertiveness.</li> <li>• Too emotional.</li> </ul>
Women's own fault	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women need to show some determination and overcome the barriers, because they are capable of being leaders.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The opportunities are there for the taking, they just need to stop making excuses and apply.</li> </ul>

Female and male physical educators agreed on the following reasons for women's reluctance to apply for the Head of Department position, and these have been grouped as 'reasons related to the school context', and 'reasons related to the personal characteristics of the women'.

#### Reasons related to the school context

- ✓ restricted mobility due to family and the isolation in many country centres
- ✓ lack of opportunity to advance due to limited positions available
- ✓ lack of acceptance by older male staff and administration
- ✓ chauvinism
- ✓ traditional role of the woman at home
- ✓ past male dominance of physical education and its male 'jock' image
- ✓ more difficult role for women
- ✓ the expectation that the Head of Department will be male
- ✓ the unattractive nature of the Head of Department job
- ✓ the job is too much work for too few rewards
- ✓ uninspiring image of the current Heads of Department
- ✓ lack of female role models
- ✓ lack of encouragement and mentoring

### **Reasons related to the personal characteristics of the women**

- ✓ dislike of, and feelings of intimidation over, power struggles and politics involved
- ✓ intentions to get married and have children
- ✓ physical education is not seen as a career
- ✓ discipline problems are more difficult for women
- ✓ concern about the need to prove themselves
- ✓ teaching is enough without the extra duties
- ✓ no real love of the subject
- ✓ lack ambition
- ✓ not career-oriented
- ✓ just not interested
- ✓ they don't promote themselves, they just sit back and wait to be approached
- ✓ lack assertiveness
- ✓ assume alternative roles in the Physical Education Department

In addition, the female physical educators identified the following reasons which were not mentioned by the male respondents. Again these have been presented in two groupings.

### **Reasons related to the school context**

- policy restrictions in the past
- selection process biased towards males
- pressure from the 'gatekeepers' to discourage females
- poor image of the aging physical education teacher
- stigma attached to being a female Head of Department; 'butch' image
- due to the competitive nature of physical education, females are more likely to step aside for males in the promotion stakes
- males' higher profile in sport means women are not given the same kudos
- male style of leadership
- no training available for people wanting to take on the job

### **Reasons related to the personal characteristics of the women**

- self-doubt on returning to teaching following a break in service due to family
- health concerns
- concern for cosmetic appearance
- can not be bothered with the red tape and CVs required to apply for promotion
- tried the acting position and did not like it
- only three-year trained; lack qualifications
- lack of awareness and knowledge of promotional pathways and regulations
- willingness to apply for promotion is not the only measure of career saliency

It should be noted that most of the women's supplementary perceptions in some way relate either to concerns regarding their image, or how they may be perceived and

accepted by others. Such a focus tends to suggest that female physical educators may in fact be very sensitive to the opinions of others about their actions, hence the significance attached to the expectations expressed regarding female leaders in physical education by these women.

The male physical educators also identified a number of reasons which were not mentioned by the females.

#### **Reasons related to the school context**

- stereotypical roles and behaviours resulting from home environments and primary school education
- problems caused by the lack of respect shown for female teachers by boys from European backgrounds
- many women only work to supplement their husband's income

#### **Reasons related to the personal characteristics of the women**

- oversensitivity to others' opinions
- lack confidence in their own skills and abilities
- too emotional
- tend to be more inclined to promote to program co-ordinator

The men's additional perceptions tended to focus on women's stereotypical roles and behaviours, and to highlight the personal characteristics which they perceived as 'different' from those of male physical educators. They seemed to point to deficiencies inherent in the very nature of women which they believed constrained the promotional aspirations of female teachers.

The reasons suggested for female physical educators' reluctance to apply for promotion to Head of Department serve as a guide to the development of expectations regarding female occupancy of the leadership role. In order to facilitate an evaluation of the impact of expectations on the promotional aspirations of female teachers, it is important to assess the accuracy of the women's perceptions regarding their significant others' expectations, and the reality of those expectations. Table 17 presents a comparative overview of female physical educators' perceptions, together with the expectations expressed by both female and male significant others. Once again, a tick '✓' indicates agreement on a particular

aspect by the respective group. The absence of a comment and a tick does not imply disagreement, but rather indicates that there was no mention of the issue by that group of respondents.

It is evident from Table 17 that the women's perceptions regarding the expectations of their significant others, were confirmed by both the female and male physical educators comprising the 'significant others' category. The women's perceived expectations regarding assumed male leadership; the fact that physical education is a short-term career for females; family responsibilities; lack of ambition; stereotypical assumptions about appropriate roles and behaviours for women; and the fact that women will not fit the male model of leadership, appear to be accurate, since they were also identified by the significant others as assumptions made by them with reference to physical educators' aspirations to Head of Department and their occupancy of the leadership role. The male physical educators highlighted two additional expectations they held, namely that females tend to take on alternative responsibilities; and that they lack assertiveness, confidence, and are oversensitive to the opinions of others.

Because of the expectations that female physical educators believe their fellow teachers and Heads of Department have, these women feel that they will not be accepted in the leadership role. On the other hand, the significant others who hold these expectations, particularly the men, claim they do so as a result of witnessing the behaviour and reactions of the majority of female physical educators. Further, the men insisted that the basis for their assumptions was more strongly linked to the personal characteristics of women as displayed in their attitudes and conduct, rather than the men's own demeanour.

The means by which expectations are communicated are also worthy of consideration, since the strength of the 'messages' convey both the potency of the

TABLE 17

**A COMPARISON OF FEMALE PHYSICAL EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EXPECTATIONS OF THEIR SIGNIFICANT OTHERS REGARDING FEMALE LEADERSHIP, AND THE EXPECTATIONS EXPRESSED BY THOSE SIGNIFICANT OTHERS**

WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE EXPECTATIONS OF SIGNIFICANT OTHERS	SIGNIFICANT OTHERS' EXPECTATIONS	
	FEMALES	MALES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assumption of male leadership</li> <li>• PE is a short-term career for women</li> <li>• Family responsibilities</li> <li>• Lack of ambition</li> <li>• Stereotypic assumptions about appropriate roles and behaviours for women</li> <li>• Females will not fit the male model of leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Especially by 'experienced' female physical educators.</li> <li>✓ Majority agreed</li> <li>✓ Majority agreed</li> <li>✓ Majority agreed</li> <li>✓ Majority agreed</li> <li>✓ Majority agreed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Especially by 'older' male physical educators.</li> <li>✓ Majority agreed</li> <li>✓ Majority agreed</li> <li>✓ Majority agreed</li> <li>✓ Majority agreed</li> <li>• Acknowledged by the 'younger' males, but they suggested that the role was changing to one more suited to females.</li> <li>• Females take on alternative responsibilities.</li> <li>• Females tend to lack assertiveness and confidence and are oversensitive to the opinions of others.</li> </ul>

expectation, and the likelihood of reprisals for ignoring it. Discrimination; chauvinism; exclusion; the lower status accorded women in Physical Education Departments; a lack of both encouragement and female role models; and the fact that the leadership role is more difficult for females were all strong messages interpreted by female physical educators to indicate others' expectations regarding

their 'acceptable' role. The women intimated that the most powerful expectations were those expressed by the male physical educators. Perhaps this is because the males are perceived as the ones holding the status and power within the Physical Education Department, and therefore approval and acceptance by them means "you've made it". Perhaps it is also attributable to the greater severity of sanctions imposed by the men for nonadherence to their stereotypical assumptions. However, it must be remembered that women are not exempt from having their expectations shaped by societal structures and the differential power accorded to females and males. Therefore, it is possible for women to share the attitudes and perceptions of men, and to have similar expectations regarding the leadership role in physical education.

Overall, the men claimed that it is women's personal characteristics, more than the expression of expectations by significant others, which impact on their aspirations to Head of Department. The male respondents did acknowledge some female physical educators as being "outstanding" or "exceptional", and declared that if more women were 'exceptional', then perhaps expectations regarding their occupancy of the leadership role would change. The label of 'exceptionality' was reserved for those female teachers who demonstrated assertiveness, determination, high skill levels, and who were able to communicate with the males on their level.

The construction of expectations regarding female leadership in physical education, and the impact of these expectations on the decisions of female physical educators concerning application for promotion to Head of Department, will be examined in Chapter 11. In the interim, some attention will be given to reasons for the greater number of female Heads of Department in physical education in nongovernment secondary schools. An investigation of this phenomenon may provide added insight with regard to the impact of expectations on women's promotional aspirations. Chapter 10 therefore, will examine contextual differences in nongovernment schools which facilitate the career advancement of female physical educators.

## CHAPTER 10

### THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF NONGOVERNMENT SCHOOL FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT REGARDING FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

This chapter presents findings based on the data gathered from interviews with nongovernment female Heads of Department in physical education, during phase 3 of the study. The sample for this phase comprised five women from single-sex girls' schools and five women from coeducational schools. While the dialogue with these respondents covered topics similar to those of both the female and male government school physical educators, the discussion to follow will focus on the perceived differences between the government and nongovernment education system contexts, and their impact on the promotional aspirations of women. The intention is to ascertain possible reasons for the greater representation of females at Head of Department level in physical education in nongovernment schools, and in doing so, to confirm the crucial role played by the expectations of significant others in the career advancement of women.

It is noteworthy that while the 'significant others' of the government school female physical educators were limited to female and male teachers and Heads of Department within the subject area, the nongovernment school women included school administrators within their 'significant others'. Perhaps this reflects both differences in the nature of the school community, and in the promotional processes inherent in many private sector schools.

From conversations with the nongovernment female leaders in physical education, it was evident that they shared many of the government school female physical educators' perceptions regarding the Head of Department role: its skill requirements, the capacity of women to assume the role, and the differences inherent

in female leadership of the subject area. They did however emphasise the added time commitment involved in leading the Physical Education Department in nongovernment schools, since in most schools, the role entailed responsibility for both the physical education curriculum and the co-ordination of a sporting program. These women expressed no preference for either female or male leadership.

Further aspects of female leadership in physical education identified by the respondents in phase 3 of the study will be discussed under the headings: Heads of Department experiences; constraints on the career advancement of female physical educators; encouragement and support; expectations; system differences; and differences in the promotional process in the nongovernment sector.

## HEADS OF DEPARTMENT EXPERIENCES

In contrast to the somewhat negative image of the Head of Department role portrayed by the majority of female, and many of the male government school physical educators, the nongovernment women spoke of the challenges offered by the position, and the fulfilment and satisfaction they gained from guiding the department. This is illustrated in comments like:

I suppose I enjoy challenges. I enjoy the challenge particularly at this school where I have taken on board a very traditional department... and it is time for that to change. I enjoy timetabling structures and that kind of thing, which in normal PE I wouldn't be able to be involved in. (F26)

Being a HOD, setting directions, I think that is a very positive thing, and actually knowing this is where we've come from, and this is where we are now. ...There is still a long way to go but I can look back and think "Wow, I have a really big hand in that and basically that is the direction I've chosen to take", and I think that is very positive. (F29)

It's nice to be in control of the direction that things are going instead of just following what other people tend to do. (F32)

You're able to bring up lots of ideas about what you would like. I am constantly able to propose things that I would like to occur, changes that I'd like to be made. You know, building programs and all of these and it's not a case of "Dream on" type thing, but it's "OK, we will look at that". (F31)



One respondent remarked on her sense of achievement at having gained the position to which she had always aspired, and how her appointment had subsequently inspired other women in the school to apply for Head of Department positions.

I was the first female HOD here at the college, so that was pretty important and it was sort of like I made a mark on a male- dominated area. After I had been appointed, we had two other vacancies that came up in the next couple of years and they both went to females as well... I guess, it's not so much having power, but it's just having the opportunity to do what you know that you can do, if you know what I mean. I worked under a HOD who actually came from the government school system, and there was just the two of us at that particular time, and so because I was keen, I would do extra work. I would take on some of the committees and so I guess I always had that idea that it was what I really wanted to do, to get beyond just the teaching to the administration and sort of be able to do a little bit more. (F28)

When asked whether they perceived any 'negatives' with regard to the leadership role, all of the women interviewed emphasised the workload it entailed. However, rather than focusing on this aspect as a deterrent, the respondents seemed to accept the workload as integral to their commitment to the job and the school.

They (the administration) just expect so much and I guess in some ways, that's good because they'll also give to you at the other end. So it works out in the end, but the job role is just so difficult, because it's just not HOD, it's also sports coordinator and things like that, and because our sport is so big, we play interschool sport, in school, out of school, Saturday mornings...But it's worth it! (F28)

It is very demanding. But I couldn't honestly say that's a negative. That's a part of the job here and I think, as I say, I have got a wonderful job, but you just have to accept that those long hours... all of those things are part of the job and it is not just me.. ...Everyone in this school works very, very hard, and it all goes towards making it a better place. (F31)

Because the perceptions of the nongovernment women regarding the Head of Department role were far more positive than those of their government counterparts, it is likely that their aspirations towards the position would have been enhanced. However the Heads of Department did raise a number of concerns in terms of constraints on the career advancement of female physical educators which they believed existed in the nongovernment context. These will be addressed in the section to follow.

## **CONSTRAINTS ON THE CAREER ADVANCEMENT OF FEMALE PHYSICAL EDUCATORS**

Unlike the multiplicity of deterrents perceived by both female and male government school respondents, the nongovernment school female leaders identified only five factors which they believed had the potential to constrain the advancement of female teachers to Head of Department status in the nongovernment context. These included family responsibilities, the difficulties arising from some nonaccepting male physical educators, age considerations, some women's lack of self-confidence, and the image of the female physical educator.

### **Family responsibilities**

While the limited geographic mobility of females due to family responsibilities, highlighted by the government respondents as a major deterrent to the promotional aspirations of women, was not considered to be a problem by the nongovernment Heads of Department, conflict with regard to the time commitment demanded by the family on the one hand, and the leadership role in physical education on the other, was certainly a focus of concern.

A number of single respondents believed they would have been unable to satisfy the requirements of the leadership role had they been married with children.

It would be very difficult I think if you were married and had a family, because there is an awful lot of commitment expected, especially in the private school system, I would say, more so than the government schools. ...You can't really say how many hours you work. It is impossible to put a time on it. (F26)

...In this system anyway, there is a lot of after school work. It is just loaded. I know PE and Sport are two different things but they always get loaded back onto you. So the time commitment there, some women haven't been willing to give because they want to spend it with their families. ...I'm not married so I haven't had that hassle. (F27)

There is a growing number of females into the position. The only drawback is the time and family commitments, because I know quite a few who have taken on the position, but then they have started a family, or they find they just haven't got time to spend at home with them. I think the time constraint is difficult. Whereas the men, tend to be able to just come to work and go home again later. (F30)

On the other hand, two of the married women with dependents spoke of how they had managed to reconcile the conflicting demands placed on their time by career and family with the aid of their husbands.

My husband is very good, very, very positive, very encouraging and I wouldn't have got here without him. He sort of put his career on hold a little bit while I got myself established here. All the extra hours you put in, ...He sort of stepped in... we had two children in the meanwhile and he has done a lot of the child care and picking up and all the taxi services... because PE is such long hours. So he has been great... (F32)

The hours make it difficult sometimes. I mean if you were HOD of some other subject, then where you do the extra work load doesn't have to be straight after school. It could be taken home, you could be with your children, whereas my hours are so big. But luckily my husband is there... He lectures and his hours are flexible, so when I can't be there, usually he can. And that is really good. But I have tried to make it that I am home to be with the kids. On the weekends, like I mean for four or five hours at a time, I try and get my week set up and do all that sort of stuff, because I just can't do it during that week. I find it too hard, plus I get too tired. Yeah, I think it is tough and you have really got to want to do it. (F33)

It appears that family responsibilities function as a confounding factor in the promotional aspirations and possibilities of women in both the government and nongovernment school contexts. In addition, the nature of physical education and its requirements of before school and after school time commitments, further complicates the career decisions to be made by women in this subject area.

#### **Difficulties arising from nonaccepting male physical educators**

Anticipated nonacceptance of female Heads of Department by male physical educators, as demonstrated through their chauvinism and sexist behaviour, was perceived by the government school female teachers as a major dampening influence on their promotional aspirations. The Head of Department role was perceived as more difficult for females than for males. It was also acknowledged as a possible deterrent by the male respondents. From the comments of the nongovernment female Heads of Department located in a coeducational school context, it would appear that similar problems may also be faced by women in this system.

Two of the respondents related their experiences with male staff in their respective departments:

I had a first year out teacher join the department about five years ago and he just didn't like females. ...it took him about six months to just sort of settle in to the fact that I was in charge. Not that I stood over him or whatever, but that's the closest I've ever been to any sort of "Well like you're only a female" type attitude, and because he was young and in his first year out, he just settled in and he learned that, OK that's fine and it doesn't have to be a male. (F28)

I would recommend the Head of Department position, but I would suggest that females toughen up a little bit because of the male staff... I've had a couple of instances in the past where male members of staff can not work with a female head. Stereotypes that do not function... They don't respect. They don't uphold any authority, they don't feel the female has authority. So in other words I can't even try to fight them. They are aggressive in that they can't discuss things, and they are aggressive in their manner. So I would advise people who become HOD, to bear in mind that you have to put up with a lot from males. (F30)

When asked for examples of the ways in which the males communicated their lack of acceptance, responses included:

By means of a lot of subtleties. Our office is very small space wise... they would never be disrespectful to me directly to my face. However a lot of subtleties, like you'll walk in and they will be muttering something and they will do it quietly and go and make a dig to the other person about something which is really a dig to me but not face to face. So you can't really tell... whether it's me being sensitive, but I think it's not. They also go behind my back and try and do a lot of things. They try and get people to support it, the deputy or other positions. Sometimes they will go to the principal with a proposal. ...They do not take to constructive criticism very easily. They tend to be very aggressive, very stubborn. They create their own little world and that is their level of their expectation. They can't see that they are any different. ...The school has very high standards and at times, their expectations have differed from the school's. They have had to be called in to have it very carefully explained, that these are the rules. I had to put a lot of things in writing, whereas a lot of times it would just be easier to say something, but no, I've got to put it in writing. (F30)

However, this particular respondent, together with the other four women working in coeducational school contexts, focused on the need to "rise above" such encounters, because eventually "the guys had no choice but to come around". As explained by these women, it was fortunate for them that the unaccepting males received little support from other staff, or from the administration within their schools. Further,

the women intimated that such attitudes by their male staff only functioned to increase their determination to succeed in their goals.

I suppose it comes back to me personally because I don't like anyone telling me I can't do something. And if that's the case, I would work even harder to achieve it so I could turn around and say "there you go". I mean I would say to people, if that's happening at the school you're at, get a transfer and try and work your way up somewhere else, but not to sit back and say "Well they've said I can't do it" or "They're going to make my life too hard". I would work even harder to try and get there. (F27)

Perhaps it is the lack of support given to the unaccepting male physical educators by their colleagues which serves to both dampen the impact of their negative attitudes and behaviours, and to strengthen the resolve of the female Heads of Department. Unfortunately, within the government school context, it appears that the males are the ones who receive the support through the 'like-mindedness' of other male colleagues and administrators, also usually male.

#### Age considerations

Almost half of the nongovernment women acknowledged age as a delimiting factor in the career longevity of female physical educators. Comments relating their negative perceptions regarding the "aging Phys Eder" included:

As you get older and I suppose your body doesn't look as good as it used to look and that could be vanity as well. You tend to think "Do I want to be running around in a skirt, shorts or whatever?"... it's just something that's always been in the back of my mind, that I'm not going to be teaching PE when I'm 50. (F27)

Well I'm a frustrated Phys Eder because I really don't see PE teaching especially for females, as being a profession when they are 50 or 60, like some of them you see around the private schools. But I certainly enjoy the administration side, I enjoy the organisational time, but I would like to go on further. (F30)

I had done a number of those different types of things and I was looking further down the line, thinking at some stage I'm going to be wanting to get out of PE. I just don't believe it's a job you can do for ever. I don't want to be running around and playing softball in another 10 years' time. (F31)

However, the concerns of these women had not deterred their assumption of the Head of Department position, but rather served to cultivate further promotional

aspirations to Deputy Principal and Principal, as a means of overcoming the problem. This method of addressing the issue is in stark contrast to that purported by the government women who voiced similar concerns. The female teachers in government schools viewed age as a reason to move out of physical education, and hence they held no aspirations for the leadership role, since this would require them to remain in the subject area. The fact that the majority of the nongovernment respondents were in their early 30s indicates that these women had promoted to the leadership role fairly early in their career, and therefore were now in a position to make further career plans. The government school female teachers, on the other hand, appear to have reached their early 30s and then been faced with the dilemma whether to remain in physical education, or to find alternative job paths. By their own admission, few of these women had made any career plans. The apparent contrast between the career planning strategies of nongovernment as opposed to government female physical educators, serves to further illustrate the very real impact of expectations regarding female leadership on the promotional aspirations of women.

### **Lack of confidence**

Many of the government school female respondents believed that a large number of women are deterred from aspiring to the Head of Department position in physical education as a result of their feelings of inadequacy and a lack of self-confidence. Although all of the nongovernment females interviewed presented themselves as efficient, assertive and confident leaders, a number of them did acknowledge initial feelings of doubt regarding their capabilities to assume the Head of Department role.

One respondent described how she felt when first offered the leadership position:

...Many women just don't think they can do it. Like when I got offered the job, I went to the deputy and he said to me "Look, you've got the job if you want it, what do you think?". And I looked at the deputy principal and I said "Can I just talk to one of the female Phys Eders for a minute?". So I went out of the room and I said to her "Do you think I can do the job?". That was basically because I didn't have any confidence in myself, and I wasn't sure that I could take on such a huge role. And she said "Of

course you can, and we will help you", or what ever. So I went back inside and said "Oh OK then". So maybe that's what others are thinking too, that they just couldn't handle the position, or gain respect from their peers. (F28)

Perhaps one of the reasons why lack of confidence was not perceived as a major constraint by the nongovernment school women, was that during times of self-doubt, the females in this context received encouragement and support from the significant others, which served to confirm their aspirations and to communicate positive expectations regarding their success.

### Image of the female physical educator

While the government school female respondents tended to focus on the negative 'jock' image associated with the 'slack' male physical educator, a number of the nongovernment female leaders highlighted the detrimental image perpetuated by some of the female teachers in the subject area. They intimated that the "dolly birds" served to undermine the general status of female physical educators, and although giving pleasure to the males in a visual sense, did little to cultivate their respect and acceptance of women as potential leaders.

I think it goes back to female Phys Eders who I call dolly birds... a lot of Phys Eders that just float around in their little short skirts. They're are there for their appearance, for their own profile. They are not there to be a teacher for the students. They are not there to educate. I think there is a lot of difference between a good teacher who is there for their profession, and those who are there to be seen, and I think that there are still some there that like the image of being a female Phys Eder. Unfortunately they get tagged that way, and the males tend to enjoy it because they enjoy the visual presence, they enjoy the female company. So they tend to reinforce that role model as such. (F30)

In summary, family responsibilities, the difficulties arising from some nonaccepting male physical educators, age considerations, some women's lack of self-confidence, and the image of the female physical educator were identified by the nongovernment respondents as factors which they believed had the potential to constrain the advancement of female teachers to Head of Department status in the nongovernment context. However, these barriers were not perceived as delimiting

because they portrayed the negative expectations of others regarding female leadership, but rather were perceived as either a matter of women's life circumstances, as in the case of family responsibilities and age considerations, or as something to be overcome, as in the case of the nonacceptance by males, lack of self-confidence and the "dolly bird" image of some female teachers. With the exception of family responsibilities, the career impediments tended to be viewed by the nongovernment female leaders as 'inconveniences' rather than insurmountable barriers. It is likely that such a perception is attributable to the fact that these women have not been subjected to negative expectations regarding their capabilities as Heads of Department from their significant others. Instead, they have been encouraged and supported in their promotional aspirations.

## ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Unlike the government school female and male physical educators who proposed the lack of encouragement and support towards promotion received by female teachers as a significant factor in their reluctance to apply for the Head of Department position, the nongovernment women claimed they had been encouraged and mentored, and were fortunate to have had good role models.

The female leaders acknowledged the importance of mentoring in comments like:

...I think, role models are really important. And the acknowledgment from people in important positions approaching you. Your Deputies and your Principal and people like that, HODs when you are a growing female. I have never been in a system where females haven't been approached and encouraged. (F32)

...the fostering and support that the admin give you, and they're probably just a little more open minded about the fact that it doesn't have to be like it used to be, so to speak. (F28)

A number of respondents related personal experiences of encouragement and role modelling which had inspired them towards promotion.



I'm fairly ambitious in myself, whether it's sport or work, so I think partly that as well. If you're ambitious, and I wasn't content just to be one of the crowd anyway, so all of it was my own self-drive. We actually had a female who was Principal, so as all the girls went coed at lower school, and she actually said to me that I should look at moving across to the campus that was upper school and look at becoming head. Because she said to me, "You've got... you're quite capable of it and it's something you should be able to achieve". So that was like one conversation. It wasn't an ongoing thing that she kept trying to get me to do it. It was really something like planting the seed, I suppose. And then I moved across to here just as a teacher not as HOD and the two guys that I was working with initially have both now left, but they both did say "Well why don't you, if the opportunity arises? Keep your eyes open". So it was also people within the PE department. They all said go for it. (F27)

I was doing some Grad Dip work and the guy that was here was leaving and so he said "Oh you know, you should try" and so I said "Oh yeah, OK" and I did and I really didn't expect to get it, but you know I was surprised when I did. (F28)

...I suppose I was encouraged by my HOD basically. He said "Look you could do the job. You've been doing it". I used to share his job almost... But that was because I wanted to do it... (F34)

I had one lecturer who was from Loughborough, and he was always really encouraging of females in particular to go on with their careers. I was one of the top students, and so he would continually just grab me and say "Make sure you come back and see me when you're HOD" and things like that. Sometimes when I think back and it's his voice there saying it all the time, and I feel "Oh yeh, he obviously thinks I'm good enough to go for that". But at one school there was a female HOD, ...and she was exceptionally competent, you know, really dedicated. She was very much involved in everything that was happening in PE in Australia, and she would drag us all into it as well and that was really good. So she was a bit of an inspiration... (F32)

Well I have been really lucky because as I said, the lecturers at college, my husband... there are lots of men that have been in my life that have encouraged me to go for HOD. I have never seen it as a male thing. I thought "Yeah I could do that, I'd really like to do that"...(F33)

One female Head of Department went so far as to suggest that if more encouragement was offered to female physical educators in the government system, that number of women applying for promotion would probably increase.

I am sure that encouragement is an important aspect because a lot of females, in the government system, if they were actually approached by the principal and asked to take on the HOD role, they probably would. (F32)

It is evident from the remarks that the differential level of encouragement and support given to women in the nongovernment school context is likely to, in part,

account for the greater number of female Heads of Department in this education sector. There seems little doubt that if women were targeted as potential leaders, and "tapped on the shoulder" and requested to apply for the Head of Department position, that the number of applicants would escalate. Such an approach by a significant other would signal acceptance of female leadership, and the expectation of success.

### EXPECTATIONS REGARDING FEMALE LEADERSHIP

Within the government school context, negative expectations regarding female leadership, as perceived by the women and expressed by their significant others, have a significant impact on the promotional aspirations of female physical educators. These expectations are manifest in the women's concerns about lack of acceptance, and feelings of intimidation at the anticipated responses of colleagues, in particular the males. Conversations with the nongovernment female leaders revealed no such negative experiences or assumptions. The alternate nature of their perceptions was evident in comments like:

...Within our system, it's not thought of at all in terms of "I am the male and I can do it better than you" and you know "I do this and I do that". I've just never heard of it in a school. (F28)

...mostly I've found people very positive, and this school does have a gender equity committee that sorts out the whole range of things like how students relate to each other and how teachers relate to students and teachers to teachers. So I suppose within the school there is a realisation that there must be equity there. So I have never had any negative feedback from other staff members, as in "You're female, you can't do that", or "You shouldn't do that". ...There is a very young staff in the school, or relatively young, and I think that has a big effect on things too, because I know the people on staff that tend to be a little bit sexist, are really the older males. I haven't felt that I've had to prove myself, but I think what I've done makes them think "Well she can handle the job". (F27)

This was elaborated upon by another respondent who described her experiences at the regional network meetings with other Heads of Department in physical education:

...In fact the women outnumber the men. ...there is a majority in our group that are females, which is funny... the guys... I think most of them have just come into a position, like they haven't been there for years and years, and so therefore they don't have that sort of expectation that they should rule the roost and "You can say what you like but... we don't think it's any good". I look at myself and the others that are HODs and I just think we are quite strong people. So you know it's really not a concern at all. And I guess that's what makes it really good. That's what makes you sort of feel like you can do things, because people accept you. (F28)

The last line of the latter remark confirms the feelings expressed by many of the government school female teachers regarding their fears of not being accepted or respected in the leadership role.

One female leader gave an excellent summation of the power of significant others' expectations to either facilitate, or deter the career aspirations of female physical educators in her comment:

More needs to be expected from women. People assume that men will be the breadwinners, have the career aspirations and determine the path the family follows... If those in authority expect women to succeed and move up the ladder, believe in them and encourage them, then women will expect to succeed and success will follow. They are capable, they just haven't aimed that high before, in a lot of cases. It is not necessarily 'not a job for women', it's just that not many women have done it in the past. Too much talent is being wasted because they have not been expected to succeed. And the seeds need to be sown as early as possible. (F32)

The composite effect of the positive expectations regarding women's capabilities and advancement, the encouragement and support the women receive from colleagues and school administrators, and the greater number of female role models to demonstrate the career possibilities for women in physical education, are among the differential components in the nongovernment education context which serve to facilitate female physical educators' perceptions of the 'appropriateness' of applying for the Head of Department position. Additional differences in the nongovernment education system will be addressed in the section to follow.

## SYSTEM DIFFERENCES

The nongovernment school female Heads of Department identified a number of differences in their education system context, when compared with the government schools, which they perceived as contributing to the greater number of Heads of Department in physical education. Many of the comments were made on the basis of experience in both systems. The contextual differences highlighted included: the ability to apply for a specific position at a known location, which overcomes the risk of having to promote to a country centre:

I was... I looked into becoming a HOD in the Education Department. That was when I was at a high school. In fact I was acting HOD for most of my last year there. Because my superior there, a male, had gone up to the third Deputy's job, meant that I then went up. And I was looking at going through the process of applying for promotional positions. That was when promotion by merit was being introduced, so it was all changing and they were having workshops and so on. My choices, I think for a promotional position that year were Fitzroy Crossing, Gnowangerup... and there was one other, and they could be wonderful places but I didn't want to go there. And you had to be there for a period of three or four years and it just wasn't that important to me. It was something I thought I would probably look for at some stage, and I had decided that if I was going to get a promotional position, that I would prefer to work in one of these schools (nongovernment) than in an Education Department school. When this was offered to me, I grabbed it and ran. (F31)

I just wonder whether it's the fact that often when females apply for a promotional position in PE, the places that are available, and as a single female are just so unattractive and isolated. And I think often when men are applying for positions they are sometimes a bit older. They have got their family and so on and it's OK to go to places like that if you are prepared for them. I wouldn't.. (F33);

the opportunity to apply for a position at a desirable school, rather than suffering the uncertainty of having to "throw your hat in the ring":

I think there have been big changes in the Catholic school system over the last 10 years. Traditionally it had been considered to be very conservative. But I don't think that's the case any more and I think with that change has come the attitude that "Yes women are perfectly capable of holding down this job". I think also in the state schools, once you're HOD, you're it, and you can stay there for 20 years, 25 years and so basically you've got to wait for someone to drop dead so that somebody can move up to Principal, so somebody can move up to Deputy and so on and so on. And I think that plays a big part too. You get people who get into areas and don't want to move so the job doesn't come up. With the state school system, if you want a promotion you can't apply for a school, you have got to throw your hat in the ring. And especially if it's a

special promotion, you could get any number of places in the remote centres. Whereas in a private school system, you can think "That is the job I want" and you can apply specifically for that job. (F29);

the different ethos of nongovernment schools, which tend to value both physical education as a curriculum area, and the capabilities of women, in contrast to the double disadvantage suffered by many female teachers in government schools where physical education is perceived as a subject with lower status, and women are treated as subordinate:

In a school like this there are more positives than there are anywhere else, because if I was to compare it with my last city high school... the PE department here is streets ahead, and sport and PE are part of the whole ethos of this school. It is not just something we have to do. It's not something that's forced upon you and you have to do it, whether you want it or not. And that's the same with your Health Ed and all those type of things. You've got to teach it. You won't necessarily agree with it. Whereas here, sport, PE it is vital. It's as important as Maths, English and Science. So that makes a huge difference. We have a very, very supportive administration. We've got the equipment, we've got the facilities, we've got the coaches. You've got no concerns in terms of things like that. (F31)

...I think the standard of expectation of behaviour, dress, commitment, is just so much higher, so much higher. You can expect it in the state school but you don't necessarily have the support structure around you to back it up at all levels. But here, it exists at absolutely every level, and if people aren't prepared to toe the line then there is not necessarily a place for them at the school. ...I really do think the back up support and structure is just so much stronger. And the parents...because this school is very much a school of the community, so they have a real vested interest in it. ...I never ever experienced that sense of community in the state school system. (F29);

the fact that due to the number of female Heads of Department in the nongovernment sector, women do not experience the pressure of having to prove themselves worthy of the leadership role:

In the private school system females don't feel like they have to prove themselves, because there are just so many of them. You go to for instance, our ACC meetings and there are just as many females there representing their departments as there are males. But I think that's because there has been big changes in the Catholic school system of late, and those changes haven't necessarily happened in the state school system. (F29);

the manageability of a smaller department, as compared to many government schools:

In government schools I guess you're looking at a bigger department. Like I've got a department of four and a half, let's say, but in a government school there is a lot more teachers isn't there. ...So I guess maybe that's a bit more daunting too, especially if you've got a number of males in there. I think you'd have to be fairly strong and really believe in yourself. (F28);

the relative stability of staff, and the implications for merit selection based on witnessed standards of performance in a variety of situations by those doing the selecting, as opposed to the selection according to written application and interview in the government system:

In the independent sector each school has the status of being an independent school, and if you are the HOD at an independent school it's kind of like having this pseudo status. Particularly with the Catholic schools, they're supposedly looking at the person with merit and I think generally they are more open to seeing whether it is male or female. This is what they've done, this is how they've achieved it and if they are worthy of that position. Plus, the staff tend to be at a school for a lot longer, so you do get to see more of the person. Whereas in a government school someone is transferred every four or five years and really they don't have a lot of time to establish themselves. You need time to see the merit in a person. But I think in the private sector, they are just more willing to see the person and not the sex. (F27);

the satisfaction of remaining in a school long enough to see the implementation and completion of initiatives and to "reap the fruits of your labours":

...That this is my school, and things that I establish... because the school's still fairly young, there's lots of things I've put into practice that now are traditions within the school. It's nice to see them come true. ...Where as here you get some things you can put your stamp on, like starting up a house system and all the things that make a school, you know a really nice place to be, the positive stuff. Whereas talking to people in the Ed Dept, you're here and then you get transferred there. You get shuffled around and that is really sad. So if you bust a gut to develop something it may become a waste of time. So that uncertainty I don't think I'd like very much. (F32);

and, the fact that talented females in nongovernment schools are targeted and approached and mentored towards promotion, rather than having to compete for a position:

Maybe with the merit system, females are not encouraged to put forward their own CV or they haven't got the self-confidence to do that. Whereas in our sector we actually look at females who are excelling and go and get them, pull them out and say "Congratulations, you're doing really well... could you perhaps take on this role...", and gradually step them up. (F31)

The features of the nongovernment school context perceived by the female leaders as facilitating the upward mobility of female teachers in physical education, appear to be the antithesis of those aspects in the government school system that its female respondents highlighted as deterrents to their promotional aspirations. Perhaps the greatest dichotomy exists between expectations of female leadership communicated through mentoring, individual identification, and support and encouragement towards a role in which women are accepted and valued, as exemplified in the nongovernment school context, as opposed to the need to compete for a limited number of promotional positions in an unknown location, with minimal support, and in the face of chauvinistic and sexist attitudes, as required by the government school context. There appears little doubt as to the system most conducive to women's career advancement.

#### DIFFERENCES IN THE PROMOTIONAL PROCESS

In addition to contrasts inherent in the nongovernment as compared to the government school contexts, differences in the promotional processes of the two systems further confirm the impact of expectations on the promotional aspirations of women. The fact that in many instances promotion is gained through a personal approach by the Principal, rather than an application for the position, and that opportunities tend to be provided to internal staff before being openly advertised, were among the features of the nongovernment promotional process, perceived by the women as most desirable.

Through their remarks, the respondents highlighted advantageous aspects of the system including, the personal approach which clearly conveys expectations regarding the acceptance and anticipated success of the 'approachee':

...People like us, if they would like to be HOD, there is no application. The Principal basically comes up and asks a person if they would like the job. I was Year 8 coordinator and for Head of PE, it was basically the case of the principal asking me. They didn't say "The Head of PE is

coming up, anyone who wants to apply, write in", or "The year coordinator's position is coming up, anyone who would like to apply" or whatever. So they went through and thought they would like this person and if they said "No thanks" then they would choose another person. So in both instances where I've taken on positions of responsibility, it's been a personal approach and not an application. (F32);

a clearly established and recognised path towards securing a promotion:

...I've got a female staff member in my staff at the moment, and she is actually working towards promotion... In our school system, we have like you're just a class teacher, then we're divided into house groups and so you've got your house coordinators, and then virtually the next step on from that is HOD or senior teacher. I know that she is aspiring to that and so she is going through the steps. ...It's just a sequential thing here in the school. If you are looking for promotion or something, you know what you have to do. (F28);

the appointment of staff by the school community based on the individual's merit, judged according to her/his witnessed performance within the school context:

I guess that is the difference too from the government schools. The school itself, like the principal, deputy and management actually appoint the people. So it is very much the school community that is looking at who they want in that position. (F27);

Well it's on merit, completely on merit, but they sometimes have specific requirements like you have to be four-year trained. ...That is the basic cut off point. And then after that it really is just on merit, what you do in the school, how you are perceived in the school... Often in Catholic schools they try and fill it internally first. ...So I guess they look around, see what's here first, and if there's nothing here then they go outside. Or sometimes they just advertise openly and if you're in here then you can apply. So it's reasonably easy if you're a dedicated person. (F28);

and the existence of a contract system and a review process, whereby those who do not meet the performance criteria established for a position, do not maintain their status:

It is almost a contractual sort of system. If you prove to be satisfactory, you remain, but you're not locked... the principal is not locked into you being HOD with the only way to get rid of you being if you choose to move. There is actually a review process. (F29)

It should be noted that of the five female Heads of Department in single-sex school interviewed, four were physical education teachers in government schools when they applied for their respective promotional positions, and one was a Head of Department



in a government school at the time of her application. On the other hand, of the five female Heads of Department in coeducational schools, three had been appointed to their position without application, and two had applied for promotion within their respective schools following an approach by their Principals. Such evidence could lead to the assumption that aspiring female physical educators are prepared to compete for promotional positions in specific schools when there is not anticipated requirement for country service, and little likelihood of having to challenge males for the position, as is the case in Head of Department appointments to single-sex girls' schools. Further, in a coeducational setting, the fact that the need to 'compete' for the position against males is eliminated through a personal approach by the principal, facilitates women's assumption of the Head of Department role.

It is likely that if women in the government school context were "tapped on the shoulder" and identified as the preferred incumbent for a promotional position, that they too would be more inclined to take on the leadership role.

## **SUMMARY**

This chapter began by outlining the perceptions and expectations of nongovernment school female Heads of Department regarding the Head of Department position and the experiences of these women in that role. This was followed by a consideration of the constraints on the career advancement of female physical educators which exist in the nongovernment school context. The women identified family responsibilities, difficulties arising from unaccepting male physical educators in the coeducational context, age considerations, lack of confidence, and the "dolly bird" image of some female physical educators, as problems that women may encounter, and have to overcome, in the pursuit of promotion to Head of Department.

The importance of encouragement and support for female teachers in their career aspirations was then addressed, and the nongovernment female leaders highlighted the degree of mentorship and role modelling provided in their school contexts.

The chapter concluded with an investigation of the contextual differences between the nongovernment and government education systems with regard to the opportunity to apply for specific locations, the contrasting ethos typical of the two systems; the degree of pressure on women to prove themselves worthy of the leadership role; the size of Physical Education Departments; the relative stability of staff, and the implications for merit selection and satisfaction gained through a sense of achievement; and the differing promotional processes adhered to by the two education systems.

The fact that one third of the Heads of Department in the nongovernment sector are female, and that the leadership role is perceived in a more positive light in this context despite the heavy workload, serve as confirmation of the impact of the expectations of significant others regarding female leadership in physical education. In the nongovernment schools, positive expectations communicated through the presence of female role models, the mentoring of women towards promotion, personal approaches to apply for positions by superordinates, and the encouragement and support of colleagues, convey the appropriateness of the Head of Department position as one to which women should aspire, and the likely acceptance of their authority. Additional to these motivational 'messages' is the fact that in many cases, there is no need to actually apply for the position; that in single-sex girls' schools there are few males to challenge women's authority; and the certainty of location without the risk of "going bush".

However, there were a number of constraints identified by the nongovernment female Heads of Department which could not necessarily be overcome, even within the supportive and positive context they portrayed. The reality of time constraints imposed by family responsibilities, the presence of unaccepting males in some

coeducational schools, and the personal characteristics of the female physical educators, remain influential in determining these women's aspirations for the Head of Department role. Figure 5 presents a summary of the perceived expectations of significant others; the various ways in which these expectations are conveyed to female teachers; the women's interpretation of these expectations based on their teaching experiences, life circumstances and personal characteristics; and their resultant career aspirations, or lack of interest in promotion. The contrast evident between the negative expectations conveyed to female teachers in the government school context illustrated in Figure 3, as distinct from the positive expectations communicated to women in the nongovernment school context depicted in Figure 5, is stark.

It is interesting that the requirements of a "commitment to the position", a "passion for the subject", and a "vision", all so strongly emphasised by the male physical educators, which they intimated female physical educators did not possess, were also characteristics identified by one of the nongovernment female Heads of Department as essential in order for women to attain the leadership role. She said: "...You must have a passion for what you are doing... you must have a dream for yourself and a vision for PE, and go for it!" (F32)

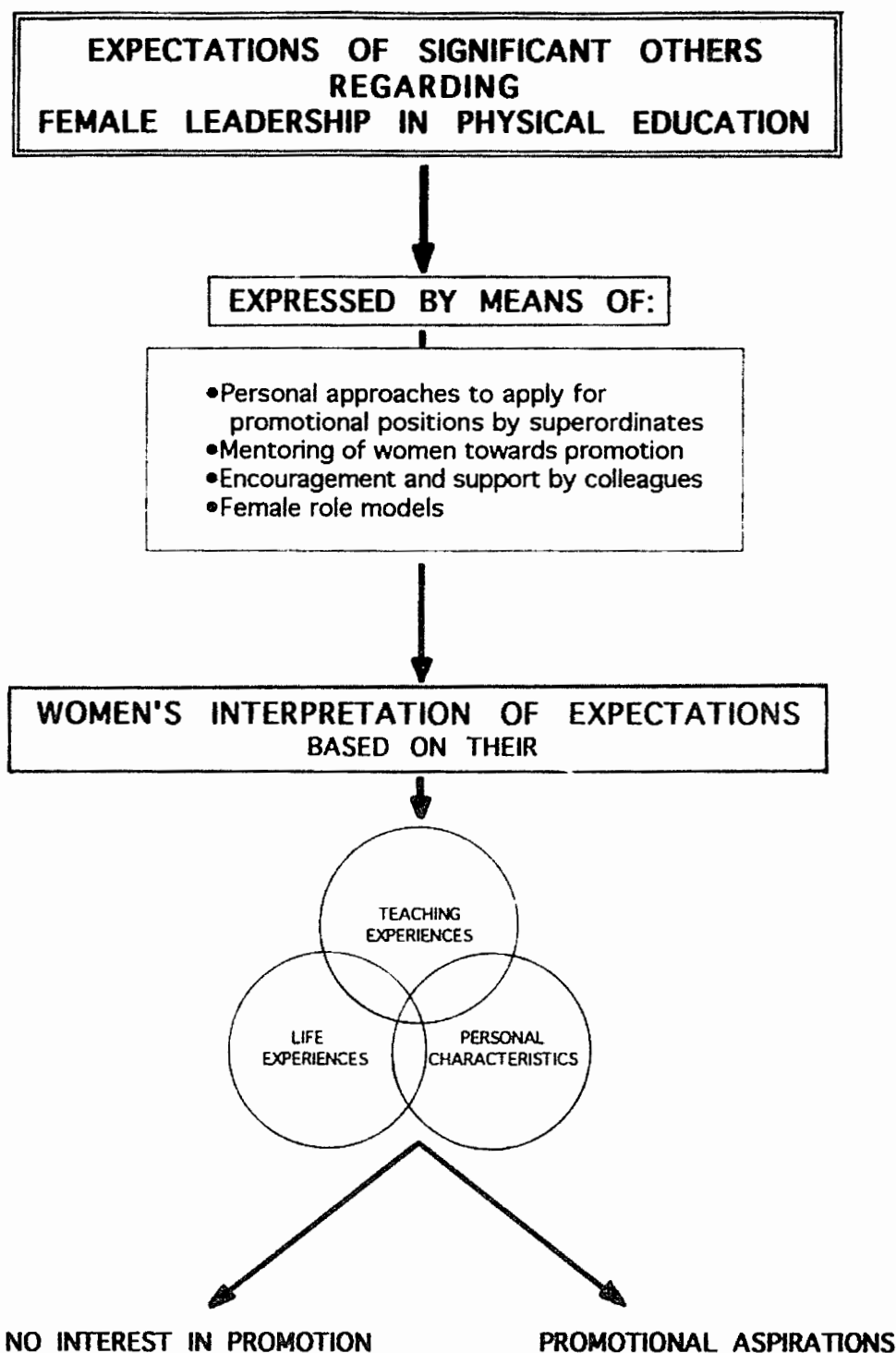


Figure 5: Perceptions of female Heads of Department in nongovernment schools regarding the expectations of significant others and their impact on promotional aspirations.

## **CHAPTER 11**

### **THE CONSTRUCTION AND IMPACT OF EXPECTATIONS**

The goal of this critical research has been to understand the patterns of beliefs and social conditions that restrict human actions and to provide those being researched with the insight necessary to 'demystify' and critique their own social circumstances, and to choose actions to improve their lives. As such it is designed to provide a critique of the status quo.

The socialisation of physical education teachers into gender roles and the construction of expectations regarding leadership in the subject area are viewed as problematic, rather than a neutral process. The present underrepresentation of females at Head of Department level is seen as historically produced and socially constructed. The expectations of significant others have been examined in the context in which they occurred. The intention was to centre and make problematic female physical educators' diverse situations and the institutions that frame and influence these situations, in order to identify ways in which women create meaning and experience life in their position in the social hierarchy.

The interactive nature of the research process itself has been fundamental to this critical approach in terms of provoking thought amongst both female and male physical educators, and empowering individuals to critique their own circumstances in order to make formal decisions regarding their actions and the future directions of their lives.

Within the preceding chapters, the perceptions of the female and male physical educators participating in this study were examined, and similarities and differences in their views were highlighted.

However, because the very process through which one interprets and defines a situation is itself a product of the circumstances in which one is placed, it is crucial to move beyond the perceptions held by individuals, to the factors which influence such perceptions. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to examine the circumstances of female physical educators through a frame of reference committed to a view of society which emphasises the importance of overcoming the limitations of existing social arrangements in order that individuals can realise their full potential.

To understand the construction of the expectations of significant others in the secondary school setting, and the impact these expectations have on the promotional aspirations of female physical educators, it is essential to examine the dialectic that takes place between individuals and the social system within which they function. This socialisation process is problematic rather than automatic, and one in which the individual is an active agent capable of not only reproducing meanings, but also of creating meanings. This constant interplay between individuals, societal influences, and the institutions into which they are socialised, means that individuals are not only constrained by social and structural limitations which play an important part in shaping their identities, but they may also act in ways that contradict the norms and values that pervade the social setting.

This chapter will begin by examining the process by which expectations regarding the appropriateness of female leadership in physical education are constructed, based on the interaction of the individual with the social and educational systems in general, and more specifically, with the institutions of sport and physical education. Discussion will then focus on the impact of these expectations on the career saliency of female physical educators, taking account of their own interactions with these same structures. The chapter will conclude with an investigation of possible ways in which the cyclical, self-perpetuating phenomenon of expectations regarding women

in physical education, and the consequent reactions of these women, may be interrupted.

## **SOCIETY, EDUCATION, SPORT, PHYSICAL EDUCATION: THE MALE PARADIGM**

Our social system is structured in accordance with a male paradigm, and is characterised by male dominance across all aspects of life. Men have historically held political and economic power, which continues to be reflected in societal, familial, educational, and sporting spheres. Because men hold the power, they dominate positions of importance and are accorded structural status. This translates to a pervasive male perspective on how the world should function, and consequently, all decisions, judgements and choices are made according to deeply embedded male values. Such a paradigm has profound implications for women, who have traditionally been rendered powerless, perceived as being of lower status, and judged as 'deficient' according to male standards.

Judgements and assumptions made regarding what women and men 'should' or 'should not' be able to do are bound up with the concept of gender. Gender is a socially constructed set of power relations, within a framework of social interactions and expectations, which function to perpetuate a male-dominated society. Gender categories are overlaid and stereotyped by reference to notions of femininity and masculinity, and the suitability of certain behaviours is decided by reference to feminine and masculine stereotypes. Stereotypes portraying the female as subordinate, subtly shape the perceptions and attitudes of both women and men in our culture, and their resultant expectations are a major barrier inhibiting women from developing their full range of career opportunities.

Based on gender stereotypes, individuals are assigned 'appropriate' roles. The roles that individuals 'play' are guided by specific social contexts, by their own expectations of themselves, and by others' expectations for appropriate behaviour in

a given situation. Many writers believe the male or female sex role to be most central to self-concept. Males are considered highly independent, competent and adventuresome only relative to women, for women are perceived to be the opposite of men in these and many other respects. Thus a strong, interlocking and mutually reinforcing system is established and maintained which clearly outlines sex-role appropriate behaviours and administers rewards and sanctions for adherence and deviance, thereby strengthening the centrality of the concept.

Organisations have been shaped and fashioned by men and remain a masculine domain. Social codes and beliefs about management and leadership have been structured from stereotypical male traits and experiences. Gender differences are deeply embedded in the beliefs and practices of these organisations, often occurring in the day to day decisions regarding assignment of tasks, recruitment and selections, and performance appraisal. For women aspiring to career advancement, this masculine management and culture has a number of consequences, including misconceptions about their commitment and stereotypical assumptions about their competence.

However, in the workplace, the full complexities of gender relations are often masked by rules of politeness, expressed values of equal opportunity, guidelines and penalties for sexual harassment, and the general rules of organisational life that structure relations in terms of power, authority and work experience. Beneath this are the gender subcultures, maintained through discourse framed by cultural assumptions regarding power, dominance and sexuality.

Power forms the basis of societal structure and as such, informs all aspects of the social world. There is a constant interplay between individuals, societal influences, and institutions into which they are socialised, as individuals negotiate their beliefs, behaviours and perceptions. However, although individuals enjoy 'agency', or the power to act, not all possess resources which have an equal legitimacy of power in influencing the behaviour of others. The institutional order does not allow equal and



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unencumbered access by all persons. This is determined by culture, which tends to allocate power according to sex. Because society in general, and education, sport and physical education more specifically, have all been structured according to the 'male' perspective, men are dominant, hold the power, and effectively shape women's lives.

The patriarchal nature of the system in government coeducational schools closely reflects cultural images of 'maleness' and 'femaleness', which in turn implies the replication of conventional sex differentiation in career opportunities. Male dominance in administrative positions across various aspects of schooling, and within and between specific subject areas, ensures that the definition of schools reflects values and meanings of the male culture. Again, because men hold the power, they constitute the rules and policies, and they attempt to structure the experiences and opportunities of educators in such a way as to ensure the perpetuation of the male discourse. The allocation of duties in schools characteristically confirms women's subordinate dependent status.

On a more specific level, the male paradigm, characterising the society and the government education system, also pervades sport, which has traditionally been co-opted as an essentially male activity, and by association, the subject area of physical education in secondary schools. As indicated by Evans and Davies (1993), physical education is a powerful social process which contributes to establishing the rules of belonging to one's culture, gender and social class, and has a lasting impact on individuals and their attitudes towards themselves and others. In Australia, teaching physical education tends to be directly linked with sporting ability and physical educators are seen as physical people who play sport proficiently. Physical education's links with sport impact on the construction of gender and the development of identity and self-image. Sport plays a central role at both the individual and societal levels in the construction and maintenance of hegemonic masculinity by providing training in a sense of power and forcefulness, as well as

promoting a sense of male solidarity. It is a key medium for conveying messages of gender domination. The superiority of males in sport through physical strength is translated to physical education, which maintains practices that institutionalise men's dominance over women and defines women as weak, passive and submissive. In this way, women have been kept 'unequal'.

Scruton (1990) highlighted the concepts of 'motherhood', 'sexuality' and 'physicality' as powerful gender ideologies created by the internalisation of gender images and ideas. The ideology of 'motherhood' is based on the historically distinct gender assumptions related to the aims of physical education. For girls it was health-related for the future of a healthy race, while for boys it was character building and served to develop leadership qualities. The power of the resultant societal expectations lies in their assumed inevitability for most girls and young women. While the ideologies of motherhood and domesticity and their associated restrictions no longer appear to directly influence the content and teaching of physical education, it is the dominance and internalisation of the ideological constructs of the 'woman's place' which put indirect but substantial limitations on the experiences and opportunities afforded to female physical education staff.

The ideology of 'sexuality' is one in which the conceptions of femininity and masculinity demarcate clear boundaries which are reinforced by separate and different opportunities afforded to females and males. The demonstration of power and assertion between women, for example, is viewed as unacceptable in relation to the social construction of female sexuality. Desirable female sexuality is presented as a passive, responsible, heterosexuality. Traditionally, boys' physical education was designated to play a pivotal role in the development and construction of masculinity, by providing the force, skill and competence to turn a boy into a man; giving him the competitive edge and the teamwork mentality for the defence forces, or corporate boardroom; and a sense of initiative and control. By contrast, the activities traditionally offered to girls emphasised co-operation over competition,

restricted their space, reduced their speed and constrained their bodies. Femininity was constructed by emphasising sociability, health and beauty, focusing on the body as a reproductive machine and sexual object. Although expectations regarding the standards of behaviour and appearance for girls and women is altering, there remains a powerful reaffirmation of 'femininity' which deems females to be weaker, less physically powerful, less aggressive than their male counterparts while retaining more grace, poise, finesse, flexibility and balance. Scruton contends that the importance lies not in the accuracy of these stereotypes, or in the arguments concerning biological determination or cultural reproduction, but rather in the restrictions such automatic assumptions place on women, their pursuits and their aspirations.

Ideas about 'physicality' are not restricted to common sense assumptions, achieved by some and challenged by others. Taken collectively, they form ideologies of the physical which are formulated and articulated in cultures of masculinity and femininity. It is the institutionalisation of this ideology, incorporating ideas about the biology and psychology of women, which comes to define 'womanhood', and to restrict and subordinate them in all aspects of their participation in social practices. Although physical education may have contributed historically to the liberation of girls and young women in relation to dress, opportunities for physical activity and access to a future women's profession, physical education has also reaffirmed clear physical sex differences in ability and capacity within generalised boundaries and limitations of women's sexuality. It tends to be commonly accepted that men are better at sport than women because they are stronger, faster and 'tougher'. Because sporting prowess is positively valued and in many cases associated with social acclaim and economic benefits, men by implication can be seen as more capable and skilful than women, at least in activities of importance. In this way, male-female physical power relations form an integral and crucial aspect of patriarchy.

Sport and, by association, physical education, have traditionally been seen as sites where sexist versions of masculinity are constructed and maintained, and are therefore not perceived as the appropriate place for women, particularly in positions of leadership, with authority over men. With the entrance and visibility of female athletes, the nature of sport as a gendered activity has changed, and mere participation by males has become insufficient in establishing their superiority. The maintenance of leadership positions in sport, by men is a means by which they continue to demonstrate their dominance over women. This is strongly reflected in most Physical Education Departments at secondary coeducational schools.

Unfortunately, the automatic categorisation of attributes and capabilities on the basis of sex, fails to take account of individuals or the contextual determinants of their actions. There has been little acknowledgment of the possibility that sex differences can in many cases be attributed to situational factors, rather than biology or childhood socialisation. Many of the characteristics attributed to women such as interpersonal sensitivity, lack of assertiveness, and attention to detail in order to avoid failure, may relate more specifically to subordinate/superior relations, rather than being gender specific. They may actually be characteristics of people of either sex who find themselves in token positions or powerless roles. Those who are less powerful have a greater need to be aware of the feelings and reactions of their superiors in order to respond to their needs and acquire their favour. They lack the structural status and legitimate power to assert themselves, and feel that they must avoid mistakes in order to prove their competence. Unfortunately, it is often women who find themselves in such a circumstance.

Further, little credence has been given to the fact that because it is men who typically occupy the promotional positions, the behaviour of women assuming such roles is interpreted as 'masculine' rather than 'managerial-like'. By accentuating the concepts of 'sex roles' and 'sex difference' rather than 'gender inequity',

significance of individual attitudes are exaggerated, while the importance of the economic and social forces to which those attitudes are a response are minimised.

The place of women in the workforce has changed so rapidly that the old stereotypes of female teachers are in error, yet the framework of beliefs and attitudes which cause people to judge females and males according to different criteria still lingers, continuing to restrict expectations regarding female career aspirations. Women are becoming in the workplace what they have traditionally been in the home: the worker, organiser and carer, without prestige and without power. Their efforts to make the working environment a better place are welcomed, but regarded as ancillary to the main business of the organisation.

The strength and pervasiveness of common-sense assumptions about what it means to be a woman or a man cannot be underestimated. While the definitions of femininity and masculinity may vary, the extent of gender-specific assumptions, which collectively lend support to powerful dominant ideologies, have considerable impact on cultural and institutional practice. The consequent assignment of stereotyped sex roles on the basis of male power and dominance, and female frailty and constraint, has had a profound impact on the representation of women in leadership roles.

## **EXPECTATIONS REGARDING FEMALE LEADERSHIP**

The dialectic which takes place between individuals and the social system within which they function, shapes their perceptions and assumptions, and guides their interactions with others. Characteristics associated with stereotypical views of femininity and masculinity provide a framework for the construction of expectations of what is appropriate for women and men.

Expectations about individuals are not based solely on their capabilities and personal characteristics. Over and above such considerations is an overlay of expectations based on their sex, and these are backed by sanctions expressing approval or disapproval of particular behaviours and attitudes. The representation of the relative capabilities of women and men as extremes on a continuum, with independence and competence at the masculine pole and dependence and nurturance at the feminine pole, renders the perception of women as both competent and feminine, incongruous. Many significant choices can be unnecessarily restricted by stereotyped expectations about individuals. These constraints tend to bear more heavily on women due to their inferior social power and resultant lower confidence concerning the acceptance of their decisions. There is also resistance to women's exercise of choice in ways that would threaten the more powerful positions held by males.

Within the context of government school Physical Education Departments, factors such as the patriarchal nature of society, school organisational norms and values, gender-role stereotypes, the male model of leadership, the nature of sport and its links with physical education, and past experiences with female physical educators all contribute to the development of an individual's expectations. The individual's perceptions regarding each of these factors, are of course shaped by her/his personal knowledge, beliefs and values, which serve as a 'filter' for these 'expectancy inputs'. The government school female physical educators' female and male significant others hold expectations regarding male occupancy of the leadership position in the subject area; the short-term nature of women's careers in physical education; family responsibilities; women's lack of ambition; stereotypical assumptions about roles and behaviours for women, and the fact that women will not fit the male model of leadership. In addition, the men also hold expectations regarding women's lack of assertiveness and confidence, and their oversensitivity to the opinions of others.

Among the strongest of the expectations was the traditional assumption that women who choose to marry and have children can not seriously expect to pursue a career in teaching, let alone assume a leadership role. The fact that many women have to manage two careers, paid and unpaid, has important implications for how women are perceived in schools, and concomitantly for their occupational careers. Broken career paths and family leave are perceived as barriers to women's progress, and their interrupted work pattern is seen as abnormal and deficient. Respondents in the present study repeatedly referred to the need for women to make a commitment; a choice between career and family. The expectation was that the women could not make such a decision, and this was perceived as a weakness on their part. The ideology of 'familism' or motherhood, firmly established in the thinking of significant others, together with the practical difficulty experienced by many women of juggling a demanding paid job and the primary care of children and a household, serves to maintain male dominant structures in the education system.

While the proponents of these negative expectations regarding female occupancy of the leadership role in physical education, claimed they had been formed as the result of witnessed behaviour and reactions by a majority of female physical educators, the strong links of such assumptions to the stereotypical perspectives of the male paradigm can not be overlooked. Further, it is likely that expectations serve as self-fulfilling prophecies, through a process whereby individuals who hold sex-role stereotypes actually illicit stereotypical behaviour from people with whom they interact. Self-fulfilling prophecies serve to validate the stereotypes and therefore confirm the expectations. The fact that female physical educators are not expected to become Heads of Department, reinforces their reluctance to apply for promotion, which in turn substantiates the validity of the expectation that the leadership role will be assumed by a male.

It is important to remember that women are themselves subject to gender-stereotypical attitudes and may be unable to overcome the impact of patriarchy, of



gendered roles and of systemised oppression in the school. Therefore, they may believe that a male is indeed a better administrator than a woman.

Past Education Department policies and regulations functioned to reinforce the values and norms of the male-oriented society. The systemic constraints imposed on married women in particular, explicitly supported the stereotypical notions of women's place in society. Although the 'official' messages no longer exist, the inherent sentiment and intentions still linger and continue to limit women's access to promotional positions.

Overall, there is a tendency to expect men to exhibit dominant behaviour and assume leadership roles, and are encouraged and mentored towards this end, while women are not to the same degree. The differential encouragement provided to females and males by significant others confirms the societal perception that leadership and decision-making is more appropriate for males. Mentoring provides the individual with assistance, encouragement and insights into power relationships, and cultural and informal processes in the workplace. Without a mentor or sponsorship, the teacher has no feedback on performance, or access to the 'power-group' norms. The enormous impact of encouragement and support on women's perceptions of their capabilities and their aspirations was demonstrated in the present study by the contrasting attitudes and behavioural realities evidenced in the nongovernment system, which 'expected' women to assume leadership roles, as opposed to the government system which in the main quashed female teachers' promotional aspirations. Men have long recognised the informal path to professional acculturation which mentorship offers. The lack of significant numbers of women in promotional positions in government schools means that women are often dependent on male superordinates for encouragement and support. Findings revealed that a small number of female physical educators had been sponsored by male Heads of Department, and as a result, were aspiring to leadership roles. In fact, all of the

women from government schools who expressed interest in promotion, had at some stage been encouraged and mentored towards this end by their male superordinates.

Unfortunately, the traditional male dominance of decision-making positions together with the emergent model of leadership have resulted in a tendency to measure aspiring females against the male-oriented criteria, and find them deficient. The majority of males perceive their standard, based on their experience as the only standard, and women simply do not 'measure up' in their terms. The application of such a standard ensures that only men, or women adopting male views, will be respected as leaders.

A number of the younger male physical educators interviewed declared their support for women's promotional aspirations, and their acceptance of female leadership. Some of these male respondents even acknowledged the sexism and chauvinistic behaviours displayed particularly by the older male teachers, but ultimately, they believed that the women were responsible for their underrepresentation in decision making roles.

Further, although many men may tend to distance themselves from cultural oppression of women, they nevertheless covertly contribute to sustaining patriarchal hegemony through their complicity, because most men benefit from the subordination of women. While men hold the power, they are afforded the status, and they are able to control the structure and function of the system to facilitate the perpetuation of their power. Surely female teachers should not be expected to adopt characteristics and behaviours typified as masculine in order to gain status and be accepted in leadership roles. The findings contend that many women and men believe this to be an expectation.

Expectations regarding female occupancy of the Head of Department position are communicated to female physical educators through verbal and behavioural interactions. A noteworthy finding in the present study was the fact that the

government school female physical educators perceived the expectations expressed by their male colleagues and superordinates, as more potent than those expressed by their female colleagues. Due to the differential structural status of women and men, they have different power strategies at their disposal. 'Maleness' carries a higher status than 'femaleness' and individuals of high status have a strong base of legitimacy that allows them to rely upon competence and concrete resources in influencing others. As a group, women lack the structural status of maleness and the power bases that it generates. Due to the legitimated status and power possessed by men, they were perceived as more influential in determining the female teachers' actions.

#### THE IMPACT OF EXPECTATIONS ON FEMALE PHYSICAL EDUCATORS

Female physical educators' experiences in the school setting are meaningful only when viewed in a wider political and sociocultural framework. The socialisation process that these women undergo is embedded in historical, political and social contexts which provide individuals with differential degrees of power to create, negotiate and contest their professional identities and career paths in schools, based on their sex. The socialisation of the female physical educator is an ongoing process that includes experiences beginning in early childhood through interactions in the home environment. It continues in the school context through studentship experiences, in sport through participation and competition; in the tertiary education setting through teacher training; and through teaching experiences in a variety of school contexts. Through these interactions and lived social realities, the female teacher constructs values, beliefs and meanings in relation to her role as teacher, including the gender-roles implicit in the organisational structure of Physical Education Departments and schools.

The uncertainty women feel about leadership roles is undoubtedly based on concrete features within women's experiences. Female teachers view the teaching profession differently from male teachers. They are surrounded by an environment in which they are constantly receiving strong messages from colleagues and superordinates which are likely deterrents to the pursuit of promotion opportunities, and function to foster doubts regarding the appropriateness of the leadership role as a career option for women. There is overwhelming evidence in the research literature that women experience direct discrimination whether through negative attitudes towards them, or from behaviour that is harmful to them (Bloot, 1992; Hutchison, 1992; Randell, 1990; Sampson, 1986; Saunders, 1993; Wallis, 1991). They are repeatedly required to formulate complex strategic combinations of co-operation, compliance, and resistance in order to maintain a workable relationship within the physical education and school contexts.

The expectations expressed by colleagues and superordinates, like all other socialising factors, are interpreted by the female physical educator, based on her personal knowledge, values, beliefs and meanings, and the characteristics of the significant other. These function as a filter through which interactions are judged. Researchers have suggested a number of aspects characteristic to the 'female discourse' which may shape women's interpretations of their interactions and therefore of the expectations communicated by their significant others (Cahill, 1993; Gallos, 1989; Gilligan, 1988; Long, 1993; Martin & Smith, 1993; Weiner, 1993). In addition to the insurmountable biological reality of child bearing, which constitutes a considerable constraint on the career advancement of women in the present male-structured system, are concepts concerning the nature of women's power; their resultant locus of control; the way in which women's self-image is formed; and the reward system with which they identify.

Firstly, with regard to the nature of women's power, because men are more likely to assume positions of legitimate power, they are able to exert direct and overt power

over others, while women on the other hand, are in most cases forced to use indirect power techniques to 'manipulate' those they wish to influence. A number of the respondents in the present study spoke with pride of their ability to 'manipulate' their superordinates to achieve their goals. Unfortunately, while these indirect power techniques may be effective in the short term, they are limited because others are unaware of the source of the influence. Further, in order to exert influence over others, one must have resources with which to bargain. While women through necessity tend to employ personal resources, such as affection or approval, which depend on personal relationships for their maintenance, men tend to hold the majority of concrete resources, such as money, strength and knowledge, with which to exert reward and sanctions. One does not have to like or approve of the person with concrete resources in order to be influenced. Every influence attempt carries with it an implied threat or promise. Unfortunately, women's power is primarily personal power, which works only in areas affected by personal relationships, and is therefore dependent upon the good will of others (Colwill, 1982), while men are able to supplement their personal power by virtue of concrete resources. Hence, a woman who assumes the Head of Department role may be placed in a position of status incongruity, whereby the use of her customary personal resources and indirect power may prove ineffective due to the legitimate status accorded her by the leadership role, while the employment of 'masculine' power techniques may cause her motives to be misinterpreted. Perhaps as more women gain higher status, masculinity will begin to lose some of its potency as a status symbol, and the consequent separation between status and sex will result in the disassociation of sex and power. However, such change implies a shift in paradigm and a restructuring of the very basis of societal values. It is unlikely to be a rapid or painless transition.

A second aspect which may significantly impact on women's interactions and their interpretation of others' expectations is their locus of control (Colwill, 1982; Lips & Colwill, 1982). Due to their lack of legitimate power in the masculine discourse, females tend to have an external locus of control, believing that their destinies are

largely governed by external forces. Social realities serve to repeatedly confirm this attribution. Males occupy the positions of power, and in many cases function as 'gatekeepers' to constrain the career advancement of women. This aspect is exemplified in the dominance by males at Head of Department level in physical education in government schools. Those with an external locus of control are also more likely to bow to social influence, which may in some way account for women's sensitivity to the opinions of others, and the profound impact of others' expectations on their career choices. This sensitivity was repeatedly alluded to by both female and male physical educators, and in many cases perceived as inappropriate and detrimental to women's advancement. Men on the other hand, functioning in a world of their own making, believe themselves to be in charge of their own fates. Perceptions regarding the locus of control also have implications for the attribution of success and failure, and therefore levels of self-confidence. While those with an internal locus of control are more likely to attribute their successes to skill, individuals with an external locus of control tend to attribute their successes to luck, or 'being in the right place at the right time'. This was certainly true for five of the seven female Heads of Department in government schools (Bloom, 1992). Further, those who believe themselves to be controlled by external forces, tend to attribute their failures to inadequacies within themselves. Such attributions were made by a number of the female physical educators who expressed no promotional aspirations. It is evident how the combination of these attributions for success and failure are likely to result in a lack of self-confidence on the part of individuals with an external locus of control. By way of contrast, those women who desired promotion were confident in their skills and capabilities, and expressed frustration at the promotional system's failure to reward these qualities.

A third aspect of the female discourse highlighted by researchers such as Forrest and Mikolaitis (1986), Gilligan (1982), and Lyons (1983), was the deeply embedded differences in the ways that women and men come to form an image of self, and self in relation to others. For males, the self is formed primarily through a

growing capacity to develop autonomy, detachment, and objectivity, and by differentiating themselves from others in terms of abilities and attributes. By contrast, women tend to perceive self in the context of connection with, and responsiveness to, others. Rather than being grounded in individuality, women's self emerges primarily through a growing capacity to develop empathy, attachments, compromises and self-transformation. Therefore a woman's judgements are influenced more by the outcomes for the relationship, than the outcome for autonomous individuals. These developmental differences are crucial in defining how women see the world, their choices, and their opportunities. The fact that women's career development is characterised by attachment to significant others also has implications for the impact that these significant others' expectations will have on the aspirations of women. A consistent feature of the conversations with the male physical educators in the present study, was their perplexity over the extent to which female teachers "worried about what everyone thought". They considered this to be detrimental to women's decision-making ability.

The final aspect likely to impact on women's interactions and interpretations, is their tendency to seek intrinsic rewards such as good relationships and improved student outcomes, viewing their career as only one part of their lives. Men are more likely to seek ego-identification and self-validation through their work, and therefore apply for promotion for the extrinsic rewards of status and power in a professional position (Saunders, 1993). Four of the female respondents in the present study voiced strong objections to the assumption that the desire to seek promotion is perceived as the only measure of career saliency, and that leadership status is the only acknowledged reward. They expressed a genuine commitment to their teaching, from which they derived a great deal of satisfaction. Unfortunately, such choices tend to be perceived as a 'lack of ambition' by observers with a 'male' perspective. In the light of the findings from the present study, such a dichotomy of rewards, while acknowledged by a number of the physical educators, may be considered somewhat simplistic. Evidence regarding women in leadership roles in

nongovernment schools, suggests that women's career choices and their perceptions of 'reward' may be, at least in part, influenced by the nature of their working environment. The fact that the nongovernment system tends to be more supportive of women's promotional aspirations, may in itself be perceived as a 'reward', hence encouraging their advancement. In contrast, the reality of difficulties faced by women in the government system with regard to receiving extrinsic rewards such as status and power, may force women to focus on intrinsic rewards, which they perceive as more accessible.

Given the removal of directly discriminatory practices, there is a perception that all is now well. Women, it is argued, have equal access to, and opportunities for, promotion that will result in more equitable representation of women in senior management positions. This was certainly the view of the male physical educators in the present study. However, it would be a mistake to equate opportunity with access. As indicated by Talbot (1993), the distinction between opportunity and access is based on two aspects of freedom: "freedom from constraint confers access, while freedom to do as one wishes confers opportunity. This active and positive definition of opportunity is crucial, because it relates to individual interpretations of what is possible, salient and relevant..." (p.85). The expectations expressed by female physical educators' significant others play a substantial role in setting the parameters of what is 'possible' and 'salient' and 'relevant' for these women in regard to their aspirations for the Head of Department position. While in the government schools negative expectations deter women in their career advancement, the encouragement and support provided to female teachers in the nongovernment system confirms the appropriateness and acceptability of their leadership aspirations.

A confounding issue is the fact that many female teachers, particularly those who have achieved success in their careers, perceive no evidence of disadvantage or discrimination against themselves or their colleagues. In the case of the women who



have gained promotion, this may be because they received support and encouragement in their endeavours, while for other female teachers, it may be the fact that they have never intimated a desire for advancement, nor attempted to gain promotion, and consequently have not been confronted by the barriers which can exist. Some believe that the problem lies in the lack of commitment among their female contemporaries, quoting their own experiences as proof of career possibilities available, if only females persevere. Unfortunately, this again focuses on the inadequacies of women as the reason for their lack of achievement, and ignores the determining impact of powerful dominant ideologies and institutional practices.

Because expectations seldom constitute formal organisational policies, their effects are particularly difficult to counter. However, the existence of gender stereotypes and the communication of stereotypical expectations is not all-determining, resulting in the conformity of all women and men to expected roles, behaviour and attitudes. Clearly, many individuals challenge the process of gender stereotyping, not always consciously, and as a consequence, the transmission of stereotypes is by no means simple, absolute or uncontested. Human agency was demonstrated in two ways by the female physical educators in the present study. Firstly, not all women passively accepted the definitions of femininity which placed them in weaker and subordinate positions. There were a number of women who rejected conventional expectations, and showed considerable determination in constructing their own intellectual lives and careers. In their responses and practices, these women negotiated stereotypes and encouraged others to challenge 'femininity'. Secondly, there was also evidence to suggest that many highly capable women made a conscious choice not to apply for promotion, because it would mean either losing aspects of the job they valued, or trying to resolve tensions between their beliefs and the administrative practices of the establishment. The choice of these women not to accommodate the male model of leadership was an act of resistance, rather than a passive acceptance of the status quo.

The expectations expressed by significant others, as perceived by the female physical educator, impact on her career development and aspirations to the Head of Department position. Her choice of action serves to either reaffirm original expectations, or prompt a reassessment of expectations, which may or may not be altered as a result.

Unfortunately, stereotypes are very difficult to debunk. Because they are a categorisation scheme framed according to the prevailing social paradigm, their integrity must be maintained in order to perpetuate existing social structures. Stereotypes tend to be resistant to information which may prove them inaccurate, and are therefore rarely revised. Information that is inconsistent with expectations is simply ignored or reinterpreted. While behaviour that corresponds with stereotypical beliefs is accepted as evidence to confirm expectations, actions which contradict the stereotype tend to be attributed to unstable causes or temporary factors, or result in the creation of a new category of 'exceptions'. The male physical educators in the present study remarked on the "exceptional" nature of some women. The fact that the label of 'exceptionality' was reserved for those female teachers who demonstrated assertiveness, determination, high skill levels and who were able to communicate with the males on their level, illustrates the creation of a new category for individuals who do not 'fit' the stereotype. This recategorisation allows the original stereotype to remain intact. Perhaps when the size of the 'exceptions' category exceeds that of the traditional stereotype, incongruous expectations will be forced to change.

A further means of maintaining the integrity of stereotypes is to demean the characteristics exhibited by individuals who overstep the bounds of expectations. Outspoken women tend to be labelled as 'loud', or women with opinions may be perceived as 'pushy' or 'bossy'. The imposition of such sanctions serves to alert these nonconforming women to their inappropriate actions in an endeavour to discourage their pursuit of nonstereotypical goals.

## INTERRUPTING THE CYCLE

Women are under considerable psychological pressure to identify with the dominant male members, rather than their own social category in all settings. In order to alter women's access to promotional positions in physical education, it is necessary to address the social dynamic which constitutes the construction of female and male identities, and ways in which both females and males think about themselves and each other. Instead of continuing to portray women as 'deficient' males, or as passive victims of restrictive gender-stereotyped attitudes and practices, we must change the unequal power relations between the sexes by transforming the patriarchal and ethnocentric nature of the Education Department and the subject area of physical education, bringing into starker focus the connections between the many different kinds of gender and gendering practices in sport and physical activity through which hegemonic masculinity reconstitutes itself.

However, the reality of change is not always readily accepted. Resistance is expected not only from those who have a vested interest in the status quo, but also by those who do not perceive change bringing any direct benefits or advantages for themselves. To transform or restructure the power bases of gender is a difficult task, because although the powerless can attempt to appropriate their rightful status, the powerful are unlikely to relinquish their position willingly. Change forced upon a reluctant participant is likely to be superficial and unstable, and will probably result in an act of compliance, rather than an internalisation of the inherent perspectives and values being promoted, together with a modification of expectations. As demonstrated in the present study, an awareness of equal opportunity issues, and the desire to appear politically correct, resulted in many of the male respondents' assertions that "whether the Head of Department is male or female makes no difference". While superficially acquiescing to the acceptability of female leadership, their true intimations were that there is no need to alter the

status quo, because an increase in the number of women at Head of Department level would be of little consequence to the functioning of physical education in schools. By defining equality as a lack of difference, these men are able to justify and perpetuate their dominance while, in their own minds, satisfying equal opportunity mandates.

Obviously, the personal characteristics of some women, just as those of some men, are incongruous with the leadership role. The crucial thing is that the women who have the necessary attributes and qualities, are granted unconstrained human agency to make their career advancement decisions.

Suggested strategies to encourage women's aspirations towards promotion in physical education, based on the findings of the present study, will be addressed in the chapter to follow.

## **CHAPTER 12**

### **CONCLUSION**

This chapter will present the major findings of the study; propose strategies and make recommendations concerning measures to encourage female physical educators in government schools to aspire to leadership roles; offer suggestions for further research in the area; and provide final comments.

#### **MAJOR FINDINGS**

Interviews with female and male government school physical educators, and female Heads of Department of physical education in nongovernment schools, gave rise to a number of findings related to the impact of the expectations of significant others on the promotional aspirations of women in the subject area of physical education. The findings revealed that:

- Female and male physical educators agreed on the nature of the Head of Department role in physical education, its requirements, and on the essential skills and attributes necessary for leadership in the subject area. Amongst the qualities considered most important were organisational, communication, and interpersonal skills, together with the ability to promote physical education in the school.
- All respondents agreed that women were capable of assuming the leadership role in physical education, however, no-one voiced preference for a female Head of Department.

- Lack of opportunity for advancement resulting from the limited number of promotional positions available, and the probable requirement for relocation to a country centre in order to gain such a position, were identified by both female and male government school respondents as remaining systemic barriers to the career advancement of female physical educators. These structural constraints imposed limitations on women's aspirations, supplementary to the impact of others' expectations.
- The government school female physical educators perceived their significant others to hold expectations regarding male leadership in the subject area; the short-term nature of women's careers in physical education; the limitations imposed on women by family responsibilities; women's lack of ambition; stereotypical assumptions about the behaviours and roles of women; and the fact that females do not fit the male model of leadership. These perceptions were confirmed as accurate, by both female and male physical educators comprising the 'significant others' category. The men highlighted two additional expectations, namely, the tendency for women to assume alternative roles and responsibilities in both the physical education and school contexts; and aspects related to women's personal characteristics, including their lack of assertiveness and confidence, and their oversensitivity to others' opinions.
- The male physical educators claimed that their expectations were based on the witnessed behaviours and reactions of female physical educators, and that the women's career decisions were more strongly linked to their personal characteristics, rather than others' expectations of them, or the men's own demeanour.
- Expectations regarding the appropriateness of female leadership in physical education were communicated by means of chauvinism; exclusion; the lower status accorded women in Physical Education Departments; the lack of both encouragement towards promotion, and female role models to demonstrate the

opportunities for women; and the fact that the leadership role is more difficult for females. The female physical educators believed that the most potent expectations were those expressed by the men.

- The greater number of female Heads of Department in physical education in nongovernment schools was the result of differences in both the school context and the promotional system, and served to confirm the impact that expectations have on the promotional aspirations of women. Contextual differences included: the fact that physical education is valued as an integral part of the nongovernment schools' ethos; the opportunity to apply for specific locations, rather than risking the isolation of relocation to a country centre; the stability of staff, and its implications for merit selection; the typically smaller size of Physical Education Departments as compared with those in government schools; the single-sex nature of many nongovernment schools; and the promotional process. Further, the positive expectations communicated to these female physical educators through the presence of female role models, the mentoring of women towards promotion, personal approaches by superordinates to apply for promotion, and encouragement and support by colleagues were all perceived by the women as contributing to their acceptance of the Head of Department position as an appropriate role for females.

The present study maintains therefore, that the expectations of significant others in the school setting have a powerful impact on the promotional aspirations of female physical educators. If it were simply the characteristics of female teachers which constrained their career advancement, as was intimated by the male respondents, then how can account be given for the potency of contextual differences in the nongovernment school system to increase the representation of females at Head of Department level in physical education? It has everything to do with the expectations of significant others regarding the appropriateness of the leadership role for women, expressed by means of encouragement and support through

mentoring and personal approaches to apply for promotion, in the absence of chauvinism, sexism, and discrimination.

As teachers' careers are located within school structures, it is the relationship between teachers' selves and the circumstances in which they are located that is of concern. The extent of influence of others' expectations appears to be a function of the personal career experiences of female teachers. Their positive or negative perceptions regarding promotion created from these experiences, serve to either reinforce their career aspirations, or lead to self-limiting beliefs and values which deter their advancement. While in some schools stereotypical notions regarding appropriate female roles and associated sanctions are no longer an issue, other schools remain patriarchal, and Physical Education Departments continue to be chauvinistic. In this way, the perceptions and expectations of others can structure the opportunities of female teachers, and exercise control over their lifestyles and careers within the institutional workplace, by either reinforcing gender inequalities, or by empowering women to exercise unrestricted human agency.

The highly discriminatory Education Department policies and regulations of the past were based on the stereotypical premise of the male as breadwinner, and the female as homemaker. The patriarchal nature of the education system developed as a result of these stereotyped roles, and served to support the intent of the policies. Since career orientation was considered inappropriate for females, the male inevitably emerged as leader, and male attributes were exemplified as the 'norm'. The establishment of a male model of leadership has grave implications for any aspiring female, as she is automatically compared to the 'norm' and perceived as inadequate. Sport represents another arena in which male dominance was, and still is, reinforced and perpetuated. The close links between sport and physical education have led to similar perceptions regarding the subject area, which has a history of male dominance, a male perspective, and consequently, a masculine image. Females teaching physical education have therefore been grossly disadvantaged by the



perceptions of others regarding the appropriateness of their promotion to Head of Department level, and have been deterred by the threat of sanctions imposed to discourage such aspirations. The lack of encouragement and support received by female physical educators further epitomises the stereotypically-based expectations regarding male leadership. The consequent reluctance of female teachers to apply for promotion, and their rather negative perceptions of the worthwhile nature of the Head of Department position, become major barriers to their career advancement.

In addition to the impact of significant others' expectations regarding female occupancy of the leadership role on constraining the promotional aspirations of female physical educators, is the reality of women's life circumstances. Family responsibilities and consequent limited geographic mobility may pose insurmountable barriers to advancement. The possible requirement for relocation to a country centre, and the likelihood of a husband either unwilling or unable to transfer, render promotional opportunities beyond the consideration of some women.

Overall, it is the expectations of female and male colleagues and superordinates in the Physical Education Department, which impact on the promotional aspirations of female physical education teachers. These expectations are constructed through individuals' interactions with the social and educational systems in general, and more specifically with the institutions of sport and physical education, all of which are characterised by a male paradigm, and consequently, male dominance and male power. This dialectic is both structured by, and serves to shape, the 'mind-set' of individuals, within the framework of their personal characteristics, life circumstances and teaching experiences. Expectations formed as a result of this process are communicated to female physical educators through both verbal and nonverbal interactions. The female teachers interpret the expectations expressed by significant others based on their personal knowledge, values, beliefs and meanings which comprise their 'mind-set'. This 'mind-set' has also been shaped by interactions with societal structures, within the framework of personal

characteristics, life circumstances and teaching experiences. The women's interpretations of their significant others' expectations serve to either reinforce their career aspirations, resulting in their applying for promotion, or lead to self-limiting beliefs and values which deter such an application. The resultant action serves to either reaffirm original expectations, or prompt a reassessment of these expectations, which may or may not be altered as a result. Figure 6 presents a diagrammatic overview of the construction and impact of significant others' expectations on the promotional aspirations of female physical educators.

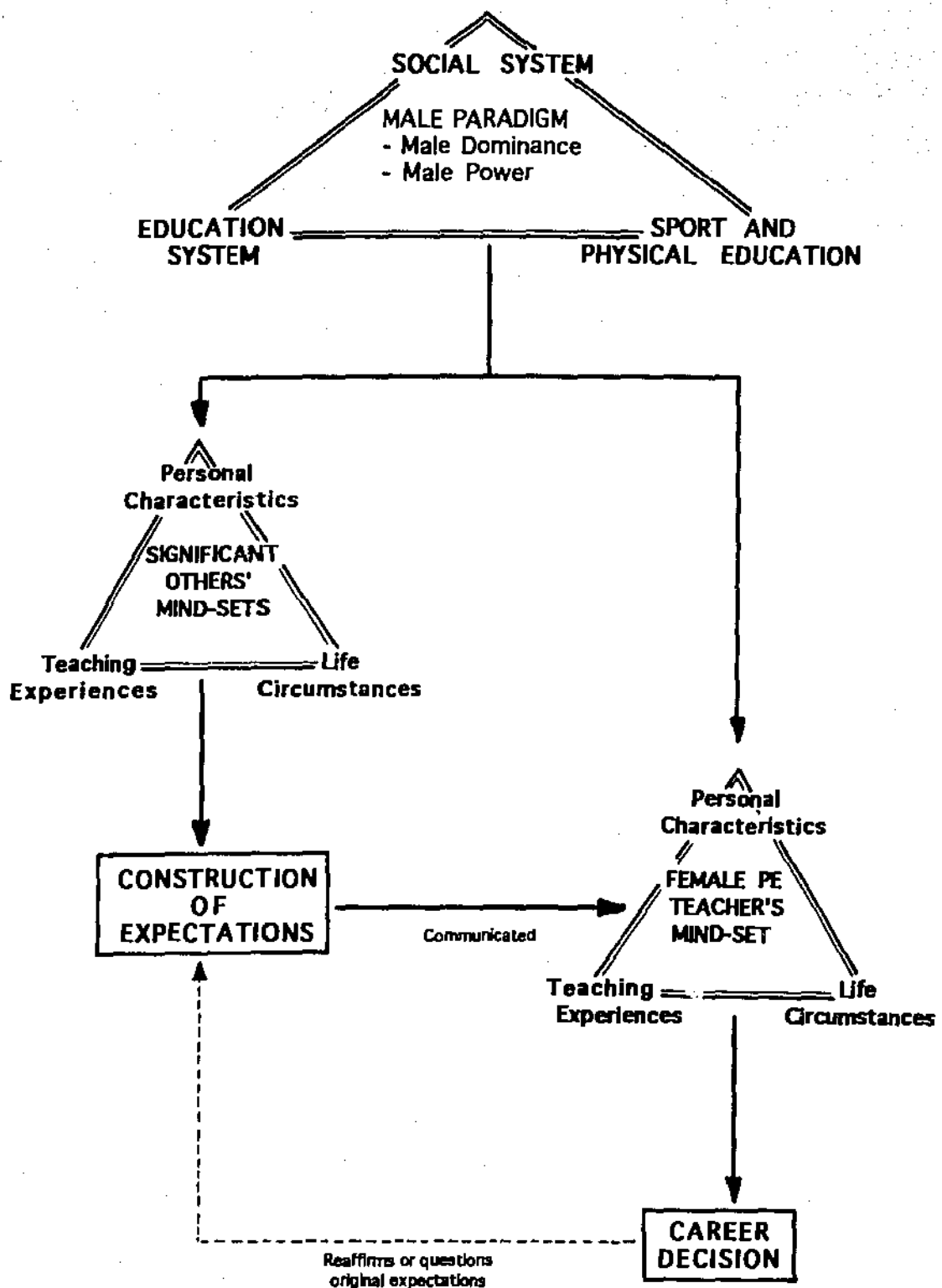


Figure 6: Overview of the construction and impact of significant others' expectations on the promotional aspirations of female physical educators.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite societal changes regarding traditional female stereotypes, and attempts to redress the imbalances of females in promotional positions through policy changes and affirmative action, the framework of attitudes and ideas which causes most people to judge females according to male criteria still lingers, continuing to impose restrictions on female perceptions regarding promotion.

There has been considerable criticism by feminist writers of the equal opportunities approach to increasing the representation of women in leadership positions (Blackmore, 1993; Ferguson, 1984; Lewis, 1992; Ozga, 1993; Spender, 1982; Shakeshaft, 1987; Weiner, 1993). Many claim that the elimination of discriminatory regulations does little to dispel male bias and therefore, that equal opportunity policies have merely provided easier access for women to take up agency within the male discourse. Further problems are perceived in the policies' treatment of individuals as if they were physically and mentally able, white Anglo-Saxon heterosexual males. Such a perspective implies that individuals can only achieve equality if they have similar life circumstances to the male dominant group. Women are therefore usually disadvantaged by their different family responsibilities and different experiences.

The removal of discriminatory Education Department regulations, and the implementation of equal opportunity policies to redress imbalances, have had a minimal impact. Merely attempting to include females in a patriarchal system from which they have previously been excluded is an ineffective solution to the problem, since in most cases the system can not accommodate them. "Many patriarchal discourses are incapable of being broadened or extended to include women without major upheavals and transformations" (Gross, 1986, p.191). This suggests that unless equal opportunity is enforced, and is accompanied on the one hand by programs to bring about attitude change in men, and on the other by a willingness to

modify the system so that the female perspective is valued equally with that of the male, then any real change in the circumstances of females will be extremely slow, if it occurs at all.

Although equal opportunity policies have had little numerical impact on women's representation at Head of Department level, and it is essential that policy does not remain locked into an 'equal opportunity approach', it should be acknowledged that some equal opportunity initiatives have represented an important political response to generations of limitations on women in all aspects of education. The removal of discriminatory regulations has demonstrated a recognition of the injustices of the differential opportunities offered to women and men, and must be attested to as an essential first step in women's struggle for equality.

The findings of the present study gave rise to a number of recommendations which attempt to address the problem of women's reluctance to apply for promotion to Head of Department in physical education. The recommendations, incorporating solutions offered by the respondents, and other research findings where relevant, are directed primarily at the Education Department, in an endeavour to progress equality of opportunity for women beyond the mere removal of discriminatory regulations, but also to teacher education institutions, and to female physical educators.

### **Recommendations for the Education Department**

- ◆ **Make those in authority accountable for the implementation of equal opportunity initiatives**

The Education Department is obliged under the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 to ensure that the Chief Executive Officer has taken all reasonable steps to prevent employees from discriminating against, or sexually harassing other employees, or students in the course of their duties. The Act also requires the

Department to include in its annual report, to the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment, demographic data to illustrate progress in implementation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan (Saunders, 1993).

Despite these obligations however, within the school context, responsibility for equal opportunity initiatives typically rests with a woman, or group of women who feel strongly enough about the issue. This isolation from mainstream policy processes has consequences for the monitoring of, and accountability for, the implementation of equity measures, at both the school and departmental levels. In order for equal opportunity initiatives to become more than just a means of providing compensatory benefit to interest groups, these policies must be granted legitimate status.

Therefore, accountability for equal employment opportunity practice should be fully incorporated into the job descriptions of Principals, Deputy Principals, and Heads of Department, and into the school development planning process. Further, in order to ensure high standards of professional behaviour between all staff, clear codes of conduct for teachers and administrators, incorporating equal opportunity guidelines, should be developed and enforced.

◆ **Amend merit selection procedures**

Fundamental to the appointment of women to promotional positions is the recruitment and selection process, and performance appraisal system implemented. Any gender bias or indirect discrimination in these systems will significantly affect the appointment and career progression of female teachers. Despite the current requirement for female representation on selection panels, there is no guarantee that those making the decisions, male or female, do not have discriminatory perceptions or gender-stereotyped misconceptions, and that they recognise and value the full range of skills and attributes.

Therefore it is crucial to normalise the strengths of feminine leadership by ensuring that the definition of 'merit' is inclusive of both women and men, and acknowledges and values those skills and competencies traditionally associated with women.

The current selection processes should be amended to ensure that selection panel members receive training in the nature and implications of equal employment opportunity, to ensure that selection criteria are interpreted to incorporate the full range of skills and competencies.

◆ **Provide incentives for country service**

The likelihood of relocation to a country centre to accept a promotional position, was perceived as one of the major contributing factors to women's reluctance to apply for promotion to Head of Department. This implicit requirement, which may be construed as indirect discrimination on the grounds of sex and family responsibilities, remains a significant structural barrier within the Education Department promotional system. Conversely, the opportunity to apply for a specific position at a specific school was considered an important advantage of promotion within the nongovernment system.

Therefore, additional incentives such as financial rewards and increased professional support should be provided to teachers accepting promotions in country areas, together with improved transfer opportunities for women whose partners are also employees of the Education Department.

◆ **Provide career development training, and professional development regarding promotional positions for teachers**

The lack of role models and mentors to demonstrate the career possibilities for female physical educators, means that many women do not ever consider applying for promotion to Head of Department. There is no expectation that

they do so. In order to indicate to female teachers that the leadership position is an appropriate role on which to focus their aspirations, they require career development training.

Career development workshops for women that aim to increase their awareness of the range of career opportunities open to them, and to identify their own skills should be provided at both system and school level. Career counselling services and documented information should be provided for all teachers. Prior to 1995, when the *1995 Promotions and Transfers: An information guide booklet*, was published by the Education Department, there had been no 'official' resource on promotion structures and required procedures under the merit promotion system.

Further, in order to facilitate the accrual of experience necessary to meet the selection criteria for promotion, schools should rotate acting administrative positions and encourage women to undertake positions of responsibility, ensuring that these positions have a title, and that experience in them is recognised. Acting and relieving positions have the potential to function as effective leadership development tools. As suggested by one of the respondents in the present study:

I think this sort of training could start very early. The females could be given extra responsibility early on in their teaching career... In terms of PE there could be a Dance program and a Dance coordinator. Just really give them small areas of responsibility and then start bringing them up in terms of the skills needed. And I think it just goes back to preparing them management-wise, giving them all the different skills, really preparing them to look to the future in their careers. Looking at carnival organisation, and just giving them different skills that they can package together. (F30)

◆ **Establish targets for women's representation in leadership positions**

The setting of forward estimates is a powerful strategy to nurture women's promotional aspirations, because it clearly communicates an expectation and a



commitment to addressing the imbalance in the representation of women in leadership roles. This strategy could be effectively implemented in conjunction with the identification of potential female candidates for promotion, proposed in the recommendation to follow.

The establishment of targets was perceived by the physical educators in the present study as far more desirable than affirmative action measures.

◆ **Identify and sponsor potential female candidates for promotion**

Female physical education teachers currently lack role models and mentors, and receive little support and encouragement to apply for promotion. By directly seeking out capable females, informing them of promotional opportunities, increasing their awareness of career pathways, and encouraging them to apply for promotion, the promotional orientation of female teachers will be maximised. School administrators and subject superintendents can assist by identifying the potential candidates. The impact of such a strategy was demonstrated in the present study within the nongovernment school context, in which women felt valued and respected as a result of the positive expectations expressed through personal approaches by their superordinates. The result is evident in the greater number of female Heads of Department in these schools.

The 'targeting' of capable women was suggested as a worthwhile strategy by many of the respondents in the present study. As summed up by one of the nongovernment school female Heads of Department:

Obviously you need a few more role models. It certainly is something you need to be looking at very seriously. I mean perhaps an approach would be to actually go to prospective, well respected, experienced females who would be seen as doing well in that role and say "Have you considered this? These are the things you have done. We think you have got the qualities to be able to do that". Nothing helps more than positive feedback or encouragement. It gives you confidence in your own abilities.  
(F31)

◆ **Use 'Advanced Skills Teachers' as mentors for other female teachers**

The importance of encouragement and support for females to apply for promotion can not be overstated. Female teachers need mentors to assist their career advancement. Research has revealed that female administrators who had mentors believed that they played a substantial role in their promotional success (Dogson, 1986; Bloot, 1992). Due to the stereotypical perceptions and lack of role models, female teachers often do not see themselves in a leadership role, and therefore require a great deal of encouragement to prompt them to take the initial step, and considerable follow-up support to facilitate positive leadership experiences.

Including a mentoring role in the duty statement of the 'Advanced Skills Teacher' would provide support for the sponsoring of potential candidates for promotion by the Education Department, and provide further encouragement through personal contact with female teachers.

◆ **Limit the size of the department under the charge of a Head of Department**

Government school Physical Education Departments vary markedly with regard to staff numbers. Currently, a Head of Department in charge of a staff of five, has the same status and income as the Head of Department of 10, which demands considerably more co-ordination. In addition to incentive considerations, a smaller department would be perceived by women, and possibly many men, as less daunting than the prospect of taking charge of 10 staff on the first promotional appointment. A scale of incentives and promotional status according the department size would be appropriate.

◆ **Introduce a five year contract system for Heads of Department**

The question of numbers has its impact in a variety of ways on the personal experiences and likely successes of the few. Until the number of female Heads of Department in physical education increases to establish a more equitable balance between the sexes, there is little hope that female teachers will aspire to the leadership position. Even if all the preceding strategies were effectively implemented, and women began applying for promotion in equal numbers to the men, the unfortunate reality is that their chances of being appointed to Head of Department would be minimal due to the limited number of positions available. It would be impossible for any significant changes to occur in the current state of education, and the prevailing economic climate in which the incumbent Heads of Department are clinging to the security of their positions.

Instituting a contract system will facilitate a more rapid turnover of Heads of Department by increasing demands for the incumbents' accountability, thereby ensuring they demonstrate competence in their teaching and leadership, and that equity policies are enforced.

It is noteworthy that of the 20 male physical educators interviewed for the present study, only six were supportive of contracts for Heads of Department. The remaining 14 expressed concerns regarding "Who would make the decision?" and "What would happen to the deposed HOD?". Three of the current male Heads of Department went so far as to say that they would tender their resignations, the day such a system was implemented. All of the female physical educators believed it to be a worthwhile strategy to "get rid of all the dead wood at the top". Two of the supportive comments were:

I don't think it is fair that a person should be landed in a position on the basis of what they did up to 1978 or something and they are still here in 1994, if they are not performing. I think you need review. I think you need performance appraisal. There is a queue for HOD jobs. I couldn't see a problem with it at all. But maybe my peers would see it as a threat. A real threat. How can it be a

threat, if you are doing your job? It doesn't add up to me, because I am in favour of any sort of accountability. (M17)

Workplace reviews, performance appraisals, like in private business. That's where devolution could work. If you perform, then your contract is renewed and your salary is based on performance. That's the only way I can see women actually starting to move through the system. Out of four schools I have been in, two of the HODs would have held their positions if they'd been evaluated. Two would not. We've got to be prepared to sack some of the old Phys Eders. (F3)

### **Recommendations to teacher education institutions**

#### **◆ Provide promotion education in undergraduate programs**

Randell (1989, p.1) stressed that "early intervention is required for women in career planning", before they make a commitment to family and child-rearing responsibilities. By presenting promotion as a 'expectation' for women, and by educating them as to how best to prepare themselves in order to meet the criteria for advancement, a greater proportion of female teachers would be likely to apply for Head of Department positions, particularly under the conditions of promotion by merit.

It is realised that the implementation of many of the preceding recommendations could not occur for physical education in isolation, but would require corresponding modifications and adjustments in other subject areas. This is deemed entirely appropriate, since the need to encourage and support female teachers in shaping their careers and nurturing their promotional aspirations is applicable throughout.

## **Recommendations to female physical educators**

### **◆ Improve women's networking and support groups**

Women must find ways of coming together in formal and informal groupings to support each other, exchange ideas, discuss and plan for successful joint action, and gain strength from other women's experiences and aspirations. As individuals, women may struggle in isolation to gain acceptance in the masculine discourse; together, they can exert pressure for change within that discourse. In the first instance, the Equal Employment Opportunity Unit could take a role in facilitating the establishment of appropriate network groups, perhaps by region.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

From a broader educational viewpoint, it would be worthwhile to conduct a similar investigation in other subject areas in secondary schools. Females in English, mathematics and social studies are just as poorly represented at Head of Department level. Do women in these subject areas perceive similar expectations regarding female leadership to those identified by the female physical educators? Who do the women in these subject areas identify as their 'significant others'? Do the 'significant others' in these subject areas hold similar expectations to those expressed by physical educators? What is the gender image of these subjects? On what basis are these teachers' expectations constructed and how are they communicated?

In the light of the contrasting findings in the government and nongovernment school systems with regard to the career advancement of female physical educators, further investigation of physical education in both coeducational and single-sex

nongovernment schools would be valuable in providing additional comparative data and signalling strategies for change.

It is crucial that the underrepresentation of females at Head of Department level in all subject areas be addressed, in order to maximise the achievement motivation of girls, to encourage promotional aspirations, and facilitate the career advancement of female teachers. Until the number of women in leadership roles increases to such a level that stereotypical expectations are forced to change, women will remain a powerless subculture, appreciated for their efforts to render the working environment a better place, but regarded as ancillary to the main business of the organisation.

## **FINAL COMMENTS**

This thesis has outlined my research into the impact of the expectations of significant others in the school setting on female leadership in physical education in government secondary schools in Western Australia. It has focused on the perceptions of female and male physical educators, ascertained through in-depth interviews, which were structured on the basis of previous exploratory research and relevant literature.

The study explored the ways in which meanings and expectations in the school environment are constructed in relation to wider societal values and ideologies, and how they are negotiated in social settings that are characterised by both constraints and opportunities for action. The thesis concluded with recommendations to the Education Department, teacher education institutions, and female teachers themselves, suggesting strategies that might be implemented to communicate more positive expectations regarding the appropriateness of female leadership to women, and thereby encourage them to apply for promotion in physical education.

In conclusion, it is hoped that this study, through its investigation of the neglected area of females in decision-making roles in physical education, will achieve three outcomes. Firstly, to sensitise female physical education teachers to the reality of the expectations of 'significant others', the nature of their construction, and the implications of the women's responses. Secondly, to sensitise 'significant others' regarding the construction and validity of their expectations, and the impact these expectations can have on female physical educators. In creating such an awareness amongst these individuals, it is hoped that they will be empowered to instigate change from 'within'. Thirdly, to suggest a range of positive actions which might be implemented to redress the imbalance in female leadership in physical education.

I am aware that the recommendations made, fall short of the total restructuring of existing social systems, demanded by the critical paradigm. However, in improving the position of the disadvantaged female physical educators, account must be taken of the pragmatic reality of attempting to change the schooling system, and the futility of proposing massive restructuring that has no chance of acceptance by the Education Department, and which would therefore be ineffectual in altering the present circumstances of these women.

Because any moves towards female leadership challenge the foundations of traditional male-dominated social structures, it is inevitable that they will meet with resistance, and since women form an integral part of those structures, the resistance is likely to come from within themselves as well as from others. For these reasons, it is likely that change will be slow, and progress uneven. However, it is inevitable that the removal of official sanctions for the sexist practices of dominant men, together with the focus given to equal opportunity, will not only increase the awareness of society with regard to such inherent inequities, but will also force individuals to question their attitudes and assumptions, and perhaps even, given sufficient time, cause the demise of hegemonic stereotypes that currently shape society itself.

My intention in conducting this research was to question the status quo, and many aspects of current practice in Physical Education Departments and schools, which have until now been taken for granted. I hope that both the research process, and the findings and recommendations of this study, will act as facilitators and catalysts for change in the immediate future.



## APPENDIX A

### EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA SALARY/PROMOTION LEVELS

- LEVEL 1:** • Temporary status primary and secondary classroom teachers.
- LEVEL 2:** • Permanent status primary and secondary classroom teachers.
- LEVEL 3:**
- Deputy Principal (Primary), District High School (Primary enrolment less than 200 students).
  - Deputy Principal (Secondary) District High School.
  - Deputy Principal, Education Support School or Centre, Class 4 or 5 (Student enrolment more than 40).
  - Deputy Principal, Primary School (Student enrolment more than 200).
  - Program Co-ordinator, Secondary.
  - Head of Department, Secondary.
  - Principal, Education Support School or Centre, Class 3 (Student enrolment less than 40).
  - Principal, Primary School Class 3 (Student enrolment less than 100).
  - Senior Lecturer, Senior College.
- LEVEL 4:**
- Principal, Denmark Agricultural college, Class 4
  - Deputy Principal, Agricultural College.
  - Deputy Principal, High and Senior High School.
  - Deputy Principal (Primary), District High School (Primary enrolment more than 200 students).
  - Deputy Principal, Senior College.
  - Deputy Principal (Administration).
  - Deputy Principal (Curriculum).
  - Deputy Principal (Planning).
  - Deputy Principal (Services).
  - Principal, Education Support School (Enrolment between 40 and 80 students).
  - Principal, Gnowangerup Agricultural School.
  - Principal, Primary School (Enrolment between 100 and 300 students).
- LEVEL 5:**
- Principal, Agricultural College, Class 5.
  - Principal, District High School, Class 5.
  - Principal, Education Support School or Centre, Class 5.
  - Principal, Primary School, Class 5 (Enrolment between 300 and 700 students).
  - Vice-Principal Senior College, Class 5.
- LEVEL 6:**
- Principal, District High School, Class 6.
  - Principal, High and Senior High School, Class 6.
  - Principal, Primary School, Class 6.
  - Principal, Senior College, Class 6.

## APPENDIX B

### HEAD OF DEPARTMENT, SECONDARY (LEVEL 3) JOB DESCRIPTION

#### Head of Department, Secondary Level 3

##### Context and Scope of this Position

The aim of the Education Department is to ensure that all students within its schools develop the understanding, skills and attitudes which are relevant to individual needs, thereby enabling them to fulfil their potential and contribute to the development of our society. The Department's commitment to enable all Western Australian students to achieve optimum educational outcomes, irrespective of their background or geographical location, has resulted in the provision of primary and secondary schools, specialist schools and centres and facilities located in urban, rural, mining and remote communities.

##### The Nature of these Schools

High and Senior High Schools exist in urban and large country centres in Western Australia. High Schools cater mainly for students from Years 8 to 10 and may offer limited access to upper school courses, while Senior High Schools cater for students from Years 8 to 12.

For the lower secondary years (8 to 10), students undertake Unit Curriculum studies. In Years 11 and 12, they undertake studies leading to employment or further education at TAFE or other tertiary institutions. Many sit for the Tertiary Entrance Examinations at the conclusion of Year 12. The majority of upper school students receive the Certificate of Secondary Education, while some are also awarded Secondary Graduation.

A large number of schools offer specific curriculum programs in response to the particular needs of the students, or to the environment in which the school is located, or in order to develop a particular emphasis. Examples include instrumental music, performing arts, agriculture, TAFE or industry links, community participation in schooling or student behaviour or welfare programs. Some Senior High Schools offer special placement programs in specific program areas such as Academic Extension, Art, Music, Sport, Aeronautics, or Performing Arts to limited numbers of students who meet specific selection criteria. A selection of such programs, sponsored by the Department of Education, are open to students across the state.

##### The Role of the Head of Department

The Head of Department is responsible for the management of a distinct responsibility area (usually a specific subject or group of subjects within the school), and provides educational leadership within that area, while at the same time contributing as a member of the school management team. As a curriculum leader, the Head of Department provides professional leadership to specialist subject teachers or others in the school who teach within the area of responsibility.

There is considerable liaison with students and parents of students studying in the area of responsibility. While the range of interactions may vary according to local school circumstances, a considerable focus is placed on providing advice for students and parents about course options and selections. In addition, extensive liaison occurs with the Principal and Deputy Principals of the school (referred to as 'the school executive team'), other Heads of Department and relevant specialist staff.

*In High and Senior High Schools, the number of Head of Department positions is determined by the classified school enrolment. When adjustments are necessary, the designation*

*of the positions to be added or terminated is determined by the school in consultation with relevant Central Office personnel. Further, there may be some positions to which two persons are appointed so that either their roles are complementary (e.g. Geography and History/Economics) or their duties are determined in consultation with the Principal (e.g. English).*

The Head of Department has a significant classroom teaching role, in addition to administrative duties related to the particular area of responsibility.

The conditions of work governing this position are subject to relevant industrial awards and agreements made from time to time between the Department and the State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia. Western Australian Government schools operate within the context of the Education Act 1928 and Education Act Regulations 1960, as well as other relevant legislation, including the Industrial Relations Act 1979, the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1984, the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 and the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1985.

##### Summary of Responsibilities

The Head of Department provides educational leadership within the school and is accountable to the Principal for the efficient and effective management of a designated area of responsibility within the school.

Responsibilities are carried out in accordance with:

- the approved school plan;
- agreed school policies and procedures;
- current Department of Education policies and guidelines;
- negotiated industrial awards and agreements; and
- relevant legislation.

The key responsibilities are as follows.

1. Undertake classroom teaching and associated activities.
2. Exercise responsibility for and manage processes designed to improve the educational outcomes of students within the designated area of responsibility.
3. Exercise responsibility for and manage human, financial and physical resources within the designated area of responsibility in order to meet the educational and organisational objectives of the school.
4. Contribute to the development and implementation of whole school policies, programs and procedures.

##### Specific Responsibilities

###### Classroom Teaching

1. Undertake classroom teaching and associated activities within the parameters of the school's staffing allocation, and promote and demonstrate sound teaching practice.

###### School Planning

2. Promote the ethos of the school.
3. Contribute, through appropriate decision-making processes, to the development, implementation, monitoring and review of the school plan and associated policies, and manage these in the designated area of responsibility.

###### Staff Management

4. Manage and supervise staff in the designated area of responsibility, including performance management, professional development and delegation of roles and responsibilities.
5. Provide advice and support to staff about professional and work related matters in the designated area of responsibility.

- Promote the self esteem and morale of staff members in the designated area of responsibility, and encourage them to work as a team.

#### **Curriculum Management**

- Manage the development and implementation of the curriculum and associated policies and programs within the designated area of responsibility.
- Manage the monitoring of individual student outcomes and effectiveness of programs in the designated area; the assessment and reporting of individual student progress; and relevant moderation and comparability processes.
- Manage the evaluation, selection and allocation of curriculum resources for the designated area of responsibility.
- Promote and maintain awareness of current educational developments in the designated area of responsibility, disseminate information and facilitate the incorporation of new ideas, as appropriate.
- Provide advice about the selection of courses by students in the designated area of responsibility.
- Liaise and negotiate with the school executive team and other members of staff about curriculum matters in the designated area of responsibility

#### **Student Management**

- Monitor the tone of the school, in particular relationship to the designated area, and promote the self esteem of students
- Manage the development and implementation of policies and procedures to promote the positive behaviour of students in the designated area of responsibility, including providing appropriate advice to teachers, students and parents.
- Manage the development and implementation of policies and procedures to address and enhance the welfare of students in the designated area of responsibility.
- Liaise and negotiate with the school executive team and other members of staff about student matters in the designated area of responsibility.

#### **School and Community Interaction**

- Initiate, facilitate and engage in appropriate communication and interaction between staff, parents, school and community support services, the general community, the school executive team and organisational units of the Department of Education.
- Participate in relevant School District and other Department of Education activities.

#### **Administration and Financial Management**

- Manage the establishment and review of operational, communication and administrative systems in the designated area of responsibility.
- Manage financial planning and liaise with the Registrar concerning financial operations in the designated area of responsibility.
- Manage the provision and use of physical resources for the effective operation of the designated area of responsibility.
- Liaise and negotiate with the school executive team or the Registrar about administrative and financial matters in the designated area of responsibility

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible for appointment to this position, an applicant must:

- be a permanent teacher with the Department (in accordance with Regulation 62(4); and
- have a four-year teaching qualification or equivalent, as approved by the Chief Executive Officer (in accordance with Regulation 185).

#### **Selection Criteria**

- Sound understanding of the content and structure of the secondary curriculum in the area relevant to this position, including assessment and grading requirements and procedures.
- Interpersonal skills that demonstrate an ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with students, staff, parents and other community members.
- High level of competence in classroom teaching skills demonstrated in the relevant curriculum area and proficiency in the monitoring of student outcomes.
- Demonstrated ability to develop or implement policy and programs in the relevant curriculum area
- Ability to identify and clarify problems in the school context and to generate appropriate strategies to address them
- Organisational skills that demonstrate an ability to plan and coordinate activities in schools.
- Ability to establish or maintain administrative systems supporting policy and program implementation in schools.
- Proficiency in written and oral communication for a range of specific purposes and audiences.
- Substantial and successful tertiary level studies in a discipline relevant to this position.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This means completion of one or more units at the second year level of tertiary study in a subject which forms a significant part of the curriculum area covered by the title of the position.

## APPENDIX C

### SUMMARY OF REASONS PRESENTED IN THE LITERATURE FOR THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF FEMALES IN PROMOTIONAL POSITIONS

SUGGESTED REASON	REFERENCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies and regulations</li> </ul>	<p>Bloot (1992); Burton (1987); Cockburn (1990); Connell, (1987); Education Department of Western Australia (1976); Hutchinson (1981); Miland (1984); Ministry of Education, Western Australia (1989; 1990); Randell (1990); Saunders (1993); Scraton (1990, 1992); Stewart (1976); Talbot (1993); Thomson (1993); Weiner (1993); Yeatman (1993).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patriarchy within the education system</li> </ul>	<p>Apple (1986); Ball (1987); Bloot (1992); Burton (1987); Cahoon (1991); Chapman (1986); Connell (1985); Davies (1990); Evans &amp; Davies (1988); Hoferek (1986); Kessler, Ashenden, Connell &amp; Dowsett (1987); Knoppers (1989); Long (1992); Martin &amp; Smith (1993); Randell (1990); Sampson (1986); Saunders (1993); Smith (1988); Tancred-Sheriff (1988); Tannen (1991); Thomson (1993); Thornton (1989).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender-role stereotyping</li> </ul>	<p>Al-Khalifa (1989); Ball (1987); Colwill (1982); Davies (1990); Dyer (1986); Griffin (1989); Hoferek (1986); Josephson &amp; Colwill (1982); Kanter (1977); Kessler, Ashenden, Connell &amp; Dowsett (1987); Knoppers (1989); Martin &amp; Smith (1993); McKinnon (1975); Miland (1984); Randell (1990); Sampson (1981); Scraton (1992); Stewart (1976); Vertinsky (1992).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The perceived male model of leadership</li> </ul>	<p>Acker (1983); Al-Khalifa (1989); Ball (1987); Bloot (1992); Bryson (1987); Davies (1990); Hutchinson (1981); Knoppers (1989); Spender (1982).</p>


SUGGESTED REASON	REFERENCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family responsibilities</li> </ul>	Al-Khalifa (1989); Arnot (1984); Ball (1987); Bloot (1992); Bryson (1987); Davies (1990); Randell (1990); Sampson (1986); Saunders (1993); Spender (1982).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobility</li> </ul>	Bloot (1992); Saunders (1993).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The low promotional orientation of women</li> </ul>	Acker (1983); Archer & Lloyd (1985); Ball (1987); Bloot (1992); Martin & Smith (1993); McKinnon (1975); Miland (1984); Sampson (1986); Sarros (1983); Whitcombe (1980).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's perceptions of promotion and leadership</li> </ul>	Al-Khalifa (1989); Ball (1987); Bloot (1992); Chapman (1986); Ingleton (1993); Lips & Colwill (1982); Marshall, C. (1985); Marshall, J. (1987); Martin & Smith (1993); Pavan & Robinson (1991); Sampson (1981; 1986); Saunders (1993); Schmuck & Schubert (1986); Sharpe (1993); Weiner (1993); Wentworth (1980).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's lack of skills and experience</li> </ul>	Bloot (1992); Cahoon (1991); Hutchinson (1981); Randell (1990); Sampson (1986); Saunders (1993); Spender (1982).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of encouragement and support</li> </ul>	Acker (1983); Bloot (1992); Davies (1990); DeLyon & Migniuolo (1989); Ellis (1987); Randell (1990); Sadker, Sadker & Klein (1991); Sampson (1986); Saunders (1993); Shannon (1993).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The image of physical education</li> </ul>	Bloot (1992); O'Rourke (1991); Pratt, Bloomfield & Searle (1984); Sikes (1988).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age concerns</li> </ul>	Bloot (1992); Sikes (1988).

## APPENDIX D

### HEADS OF DEPARTMENT IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIAN NONGOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN 1994

Nongovernment Schools	Heads of Department		Percentage of Heads of Department	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Girls' schools (10)	9	1	90.0	10.0
Coeducational schools (35)	6	29	17.1	82.9
TOTAL: Girls' schools and Coeducational schools (45)	15	30	33.3	66.7

## APPENDIX E



**Have you ever considered becoming a 'Head of Department Physical and Health Education'? Might you apply for this position in the future? Is promotion through physical education a possible career move for you? If so, please read on...**

As part of my doctoral studies, I am investigating why there are so few female Heads of Department in physical education.

You may or may not be aware that despite the equitable proportion of females and males teaching the subject, and the absence of Education Department policy constraints on female promotion since 1972, females remain significantly underrepresented at Head of Department level. In 1995, women held only two (3%) of the 70 substantive appointments.

To date, I have interviewed numerous female and male physical educators in an endeavour to gain some understanding of the situation, and have gathered a great deal of information from these individuals. As the final step in my research, I would like to conduct a group session with female physical education teachers who are currently contemplating applying for Head of Department, or may be considering doing so in the future.

The session is envisaged as an information sharing forum, in which we can discuss relevant issues, problems and strategies in applying for promotion, and I can take the opportunity to relate my findings in order to gain your feedback. Such collective information and opinion will be crucial to the conclusion of my study.

I would like to plan the session/sessions for early in second term, at a time or times most convenient to you. The venue will probably be Edith Cowan University, Churchlands Campus.

**If you are interested in taking part in such a session,  
please contact me before the 5th of May to discuss  
a suitable date and time.**

**My telephone number is** 

If I am not available when you phone, please leave a message and I will return your call as soon as possible.

**REGINA BLOOT**

## **APPENDIX F**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE 1 MALE PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS**

1. Reasons for becoming a physical education teacher
2. Career plans
  - any promotional aspirations
  - why not Head of Department now?
  - any acting positions
  - positive and negative influences
3. Perceived constraints on career development
4. Essential skills and qualities for a Head of Department in physical education
  - comparative perceptions of females and males
5. Stated role of Head of Department Physical Education
  - suitability for males/females ... reasons
  - is the role easier for a male?
6. Perceptions of a female Head of Department in Physical Education
  - experiences?
  - preferences ... reasons
  - any female teachers suitable for HOD position?
7. Do males/females hold equal status in PE Departments in terms of decision-making, allocation of classes, etc?
8. Why are there so few female Heads of Department in Physical Education?
  - does it matter?
  - what can be done?
9. Are female physical educators' perceptions of others' expectations accurate?
  - quotations
  - possible reasons for their perceptions



## **APPENDIX G**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE 2**

#### **MALE PHYSICAL EDUCATION HEADS OF DEPARTMENT**

1. Reasons for becoming a physical education teacher
2. Gaining promotion
  - reasons for aspirations
  - critical point in career development
  - positive influences
  - deterrents
3. Perceived constraints on career development
4. Experiences as Head of Department in Physical Education
  - positive aspects of the position
  - negative aspects of the position
  - recommendations about the position
5. Essential skills and qualities for a Head of Department in physical education
  - comparative perceptions of females and males
6. Stated role of Head of Department Physical Education
  - suitability for males/females ... reasons
  - is the role easier for a male?
7. Perceptions of a female Head of Department in Physical Education
  - experiences?
  - preferences ... reasons
  - any female teachers suitable for HOD position?
  - mentoring
8. Do males/females hold equal status in PE Departments in terms of decision-making, allocation of classes, etc?
9. Why are there so few female Heads of Department in Physical Education?
  - does it matter?
  - what can be done?
10. Are female physical educators' perceptions of others' expectations accurate?
  - quotations
  - possible reasons for their perceptions

## **APPENDIX H**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE 3 FEMALE PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS**

1. Reasons for becoming a physical education teacher
2. Career plans
  - any promotional aspirations
  - why not Head of Department now?
  - any acting positions
  - positive and negative influences
3. Perceived constraints on career development
4. Essential skills and qualities for a Head of Department in physical education
  - comparative perceptions of females and males
5. Stated role of Head of Department Physical Education
  - suitability for males/females ... reasons
  - is the role easier for a male?
6. Perceptions of a female Head of Department in Physical Education
  - experiences?
  - preferences ... reasons
  - any female teachers suitable for HOD position?
7. Why are there so few female Heads of Department in Physical Education?
  - does it matter?
  - what can be done?
8. Are female physical educators' perceptions of others' expectations accurate?
  - quotations
  - possible reasons for their perceptions
8. Are others supportive of females wanting promotion?
  - experiences
  - reasons
10. Do males/females hold equal status in PE Departments in terms of decision-making, allocation of classes, etc?

## **APPENDIX I**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE 4 FEMALE PHYSICAL EDUCATION HEADS OF DEPARTMENT**

1. Reasons for becoming a physical education teacher
2. Gaining promotion
  - reasons for aspirations
  - critical point in career development
  - positive influences or deterrents
3. Perceived constraints on career development
4. Experiences as Head of Department in Physical Education
  - positive aspects of the position
  - negative aspects of the position
  - recommendations about the position
5. Essential skills and qualities for a Head of Department in physical education
  - comparative perceptions of females and males
6. Stated role of Head of Department Physical Education
  - suitability for males/females ... reasons
  - is the role easier for a male?
7. Perceptions of a female Head of Department in Physical Education
  - experiences?
  - preferences ... reasons
  - any female teachers suitable for HOD position?
  - mentoring
8. Do males/females hold equal status in PE Departments in terms of decision-making, allocation of classes, etc?
9. Why are there so few female Heads of Department in Physical Education?
  - does it matter?
  - what can be done?
10. Are female physical educators' perceptions of others' expectations accurate?
  - quotations ... possible reasons for their perceptions
11. Were others supportive of your promotional aspirations?
  - reasons

## **APPENDIX J**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE 5 NONGOVERNMENT SINGLE SEX SCHOOLS FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT**

1. Reasons for becoming a physical education teacher
2. Experience in government schools?
  - major differences between school systems
3. Gaining promotion
  - reasons for aspirations
  - critical point in career development
  - positive influences or deterrents
  - would you apply in a government school?
  - the promotional system
4. Experiences as Head of Department in Physical Education
  - positive/negative aspects of the position
  - recommendations about the position
5. Essential skills and qualities for a Head of Department in physical education
  - comparative perceptions of females and males
6. Stated role of Head of Department Physical Education
  - suitability for males/females ... reasons
  - is the role easier for a male?
7. Number of male PE staff
  - number of male HODs
  - likelihood of male HODs
8. Why are there so few female Heads of Department in Physical Education?
  - does it matter?
  - what can be done?
10. Are female physical educators' perceptions of others' expectations accurate?
  - quotations ... possible reasons for their perceptions
11. Were others supportive of your promotional aspirations?
  - reasons
12. Do males/females hold equal status in PE Departments in terms of decision-making, allocation of classes, etc?

## **APPENDIX K**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE 6**

#### **NONGOVERNMENT COEDUCATIONAL SCHOOLS FEMALE HEADS OF DEPARTMENT**

1. Reasons for becoming a physical education teacher
2. Experience in government schools?
  - major differences between school systems
3. Gaining promotion
  - reasons for aspirations
  - critical point in career development
  - positive influences or deterrents
  - would you apply in a government school?
  - the promotional system
4. Experiences as Head of Department in Physical Education
  - positive/negative aspects of the position
  - recommendations about the position
5. Essential skills and qualities for a Head of Department in physical education
  - comparative perceptions of females and males
6. Stated role of Head of Department Physical Education
  - suitability for males/females ... reasons
  - is the role easier for a male?
7. Perceptions of a female Head of Department in Physical Education
  - experiences?
  - preferences ... reasons
8. Why are there so few female Heads of Department in Physical Education?
  - does it matter?
  - what can be done?
10. Are female physical educators' perceptions of others' expectations accurate?
  - quotations ... possible reasons for their perceptions
12. Do males/females hold equal status in PE Departments in terms of decision-making, allocation of classes, etc?

**APPENDIX L**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

AGE \_\_\_\_\_

MARITAL STATUS \_\_\_\_\_ DEPENDENTS \_\_\_\_\_

QUALIFICATIONS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN YEARS \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECTS TAUGHT \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

BREAKS IN SERVICE \_\_\_\_\_

LENGTH OF SERVICE AT PRESENT SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_

LENGTH OF SERVICE AT PREVIOUS SCHOOLS (LIST) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

MEMBERSHIP OF TEACHER ORGANISATIONS, PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, OTHER  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SPECIFIC ROLES WITHIN THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
(ADDED RESPONSIBILITIES) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ANY ACTING PROMOTIONAL POSITIONS (LIST) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX M

### FORM OF DISCLOSURE AND INFORMED CONSENT

The research in which you have been asked to participate comprises a substantive part of my doctoral studies in education at Edith Cowan University. I intend to investigate the impact of the expectations of significant others in the school setting on the promotional aspirations of female physical education teachers. You may or may not be aware that despite the equitable proportion of females and males teaching the subject, and the absence of Ministry of Education policy constraints on female promotion since 1972, females remain significantly underrepresented at Head of Department level. In 1993, women held only four (6%) of the 70 substantive appointments.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be involved in one, or possibly two interviews of one to two hours duration, to be conducted in a location of your choice. The interviews will be recorded using an audio-tape.

All interviews will be confidential, and neither you, nor your school will be identified by name. All records of the interview will be destroyed at the completion of the study and feedback on the research findings will be provided when they become available.

Any questions concerning this research can be directed to *Regina Bloot* of Edith Cowan University on **447 8145 (home)**.

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I (the participant) have read the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising I may withdraw at any time.

I agree that the research data gathered for this study may be published provided I am not identifiable.

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PARTICIPANT

DATE

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INVESTIGATOR

DATE

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