

## Challenges of Leadership from Narratives of Female Principals of Rural Secondary Schools in Vhembe District of South Africa

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This study investigated the challenges school leaders in South African rural secondary schools face. The leaders in this study are female principals. **Methodology:** Qualitative research method was utilized. Purposive sampling procedure was used to identify and select participants. Ten (10) female principals from ten (10) secondary schools in circuits within the Vhembe district of Limpopo Province in South Africa served as the participants. Focus group discussion was used as the data collection tool. The data were analysed using thematic analysis. **Findings:** The study findings revealed that the major challenges facing the female principals emanate from learners' ill-discipline and unwillingness to learn, drug, alcohol, and substance usage and abuse, lack of respect and negative attitudes from teachers, teachers' unwillingness to work and lack of corporation, lack of acceptance within the school context and the society at large, parents unavailability and unwillingness to support learners' education, and gender discrimination and societal stereotype. The findings show that the challenges female principals face in their leadership roles has extrapolative impact on their willingness to remain or leave leadership. **Implications:** By implications, dealing with the challenges through contextual support mechanism to complement affirmative policies and legislations is a good step towards gender equality ideologies that liberal feminism promotes. **Originality:** Till now, there are few studies about female school leaders in rural provinces of South Africa. Unique to this study, is the theoretical lens used and the district where the study was conducted.

**Keywords:** School leaders, leadership experience, secondary school, gender discrimination, South Africa.

### INTRODUCTION:

As part of a qualitative case study research, the study investigated the leadership challenges facing the female principals in South African secondary schools. Specifically, female principals of rural based secondary schools were asked to share their experiences on the challenges they face as regards performing their duties effectively and efficiently as leaders.

The researchers gathered relevant information from the female principals as they shared their experiences on the challenges they face from teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders such as the community and community leaders. These principals were asked a semi-structured question through focus group discussions (FGD).

The researchers conducted the research based on the premise that situation surrounding the female leadership is different in the country as compared to male leadership. As reported by the Vhembe Education

District (where this study is delimited or confined), Vhembe district comprises 968 schools, of which 303 are secondary schools and the striking revelation is that there are only 41(13.5%) female secondary school principals in the whole district (Vhembe district statistics, 2018: 22). For a country like South Africa, with a constitution that promotes equality, begs the question as why these disparities continue to exist 25 years after the constitution has been adopted. Is it that the capacity of woman to lead in secondary schools is in doubt or not? If not, what are the challenging experiences of those who make it to this level of leadership in secondary schools? The latter question is the one this study specifically seeks to answer.

## LITERATURE REVIEW:

### Women and Leadership:

Leadership is a broad concept which involves influencing a group of people to renew their way of thinking and motivating them to be productive (Lumby & Azaola, 2011). Leadership in some instances require that individuals hold a formal leadership position whereas others did not (Reed, Klutts, & Mattingly, 2019). In this study, the focus is on those who hold a formal leadership position. Leadership cannot be studied within a single definition; however, we use the description of a leader stated by Warren Bennis, a pioneer in the field of leadership studies to foreground our understanding of leadership. Accordingly, leaders have the capacity to create a compelling vision, one that takes people to a new place with the ability to translate that vision into reality (Bennis, 1990). This definition captures the essence of leadership without limiting the possible manifestations of leadership dynamics to gender, and defines leadership as “a function of knowing yourself, having a vision that is well communicated, building trust among colleagues and taking effective action to realise your own leadership potential” (Bennis, 1990). These aspects of leadership resonate well with facets of leadership.

Although the Constitution of South Africa addresses the issue of gender equality, but it appears that women in the education sector are not accorded equal rights in practice, given the predominance of males in leadership posts in education which defines South African culture (Cotter, 2004: 111). Studies conducted by Parsaloi (2012) and Schmidt and Mestry (2015: 819) revealed that women are often perceived as being incapable of leading educational institutions. However, this perception degrades women and contributes to their continuously having to prove themselves as effective leaders. Patriarchy in schools is prevalent, particularly in schools with black or coloured female principals who have to face resistance, insubordination and sabotage (Greyvenstein, 2000: 30).

Earlier studies conducted by Chisholm (2001) explained that women principals are painfully and powerfully exposed to gender discrimination because leadership is popularly attached to masculinity. She further posits that women principals lack desirable recognition, perceptibility and sustenance from the side of department of education officials. This once more increases worry about motives for male administrators’ support for women leaders. It is often clear that these women principals are deprived of support from the department of education, because most of the officials are males and they want to demonstrate that women are both disempowered by lack of experience and lack of technical knowledge and managerial capability. The fact, however, is that other male counterparts feels recognised, noticeable and reinforced (Chisholm, 2001:388).

Studies conducted by Yáñez and Moreno (2008:88) showed that women received little or no support from their male sub-ordinates and peers. They further explained in their study that “a particular female principal received no support from her male deputy, as he was also an applicant and did not get the principal post. The worst part is that there was also no support even from male and female principals in the school district”. Women leaders are treated more like a woman on a privileged pedestal other than a capable professional who is a superior and given an attitude of “you still need to prove yourself to us”. This implies that a woman been a top candidate in an interview for a leadership position does not necessitate that she is the best candidate for the job all because she is a female.

Ntaka (2013) argue that it is prevalent that educational leadership structure sometimes or often, concludes that women are too emotional, weak, and fragile, easily manipulated, indecisive, less assertive, and less committed to their career. This puts women who attain the principal role in a tough position to work twice as hard as their male counterparts because they have to start from a negative point building over years to convince the stakeholders of their actual capabilities (Ntaka, 2013). Kunin (2008) posits that the education system regarded teaching and management as two different professions. Kunin further indicated that teaching profession was regarded as a female duty whilst the

males only are capable to lead and manage. This implies that leadership was fundamentally linked with men not women.

According to Brandl, Mayrhofer and Reichel (2008: 72), women are commonly connected with shared qualities such as friendly, accommodating, approachable, sympathetic, compassionate, interpersonally delicate, calm and soft spoken whilst their male counterparts are generically known to be hostile, go-getting, assertive, contending for attention, dominant, self-assured, dynamic, independent, individualistic and egocentric. With this perceived different gender qualities, society expectations are different as regard a female and a male behaviour. Yanez and Moreno (2008)'s study went ahead to prove that women in leadership positions are expected to act in a particular way and control their anger and reactions professionally which is perceived as being in control, effective and acceptable to the members of the community. Whilst the expression of anger is seen as traditionally acceptable norm for men, but not for women. Women's anger is perceived to relate to characteristics of being sharp tongued, unkind, offensive, unpleasant or persistently infuriating, while women showing anger with tears risk being labelled as stereotypically emotional, weak or manipulative.

In the context of this study, the theory of liberal feminism under the description of black and African feminism are important as they stress the importance of building a working relationship between the leader and followers in order to achieve the set goals. This led to identifying the pertinent challenges that female principals of rural based schools face from the teachers, learners, parents, and other stakeholders.

### **Challenges of Women in Leadership:**

During the apartheid era in South Africa, females were not given many opportunities to become leaders in the workplace including schools. This was also caused by the fact that such posts were never advertised but were appointed by authorities. This then meant that stereotypes against female prospective leaders was practiced to their detriment. However, when the new government came into power in 1994, a new Constitution was drafted to promote equality for all.

The aim of the equal opportunity and affirmative action legislation (Republic of South Africa, 1996) which was implemented in the country was to address the past imbalances in respect of gender bias, discrimination and inequality (Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011: 50). Despite the policies which have been implemented, it is rare to find females in very high positions due to some intervening factors (Oplatka & Atias, 2007; Eagly, 2007). These factors include the cultural dilemma in respect of female capacity to lead, a perception based on gender stereotypes that women are not suited for a leadership position, a lack of support on the part of those in decision-making positions and the uncooperative attitude of community members.

The role of schools governing bodies (composed mainly by parents) to appoint panel members as well as make recommendations for the appointment of teachers including principals, is also to a large extent influenced by these gender stereotypes. The cultural stereotypes together with the failures of the system to enforce prescripts regarding gender parity and affirmative action has by and large led to the majority of woman being confined to middle or lower positions in the education sector (Johnson & Mathur-Helen, 2011; Robinson, Shakeshaft, Grogan & Newcomb, 2017). *Learning From the experiences and development of Latina school leaders*, Martinez, Rivera and Marquez (2020) suggest that there is a significant gap between the number of men and woman occupying the position of secondary school principal. According to these authors, gender roles and expectations of motherhood, the criticality of mentorship, how they confronted and addressed racism and sexism are most likely the obstacles which participants in their study believed they confronted and addressed in order to develop their leadership. Herein mentioned factors are part of the underlined reasons Shung-King, Gilson, Mbachu, Molyneux, Muraya, Uguru and Govender (2018) gave for overcome if female managers must assume role-modelling and mentoring others and built strong networks of support for emerging managers or leaders.

There is a dearth of studies on female leadership challenges in rural based schools particularly the context of this study, nonetheless, a number of studies locally and internationally such as those of (Schmidt and Mestry 2015; Jean-Marie and Martinez 2013; Msila 2013; Wrushen and Sherman 2008; Robinson, Shakeshaft, Grogan and Newcomb 2017) have investigated the challenges facing female leaders. Schmidt and Mestry (2015: 813) posit that the challenges faced by many South African female principals stems from three factors, namely, race, class, and gender. Most important and in relation to the context of this study, both women and men of color are still grossly underrepresented in leadership positions. Without detailed explanations, Lips (2009) notes that the challenging experiences of the female principals come

from the teachers, the community, learners and the education officers. Majority of the scholars (e.g. Lumby & Azaola, 2011; Arar & Queder, 2011; Boris-Schacter & Langer, 2006, Wrushen & Sherman, 2008) who investigated the challenges faced by female leaders concludes that lifestyle conflict, emotional pressure, gender-stereotyping, discrimination, pressure to compete with previous managers, lack of respect and negative attitudes, lack of respect and negative attitude, cultural norms, lack of acceptance, lack of family member support, management of change and limited resources are the predominant challenges faced by secondary school female principals.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:**

The study investigated the female leadership challenging experiences through the theoretical lens of liberal feminist theory. Fenwick (2008: 20) asserts that liberal feminism focuses on the elimination of all barriers that hinder women from becoming effective leaders and at the same time strives to alter women's status quo into the existing economic and leadership positions or framework. Chabalala (2006) argues that women have as much potential as men and should therefore be given equal rights to exercise their capabilities in order to remedy the injustices done to them. Fenwick (2008) and Potokri (2011; 2015) further point that if women are given the right platform to express themselves, they can be productive and effective leaders.

### **METHODOLOGY:**

This study applied the qualitative case study design. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 321), "qualitative research approach is based on a naturalistic-phenomenological philosophy that views reality as multi-layered, interactive and a shared experience explained by individuals". The choice of the qualitative approach for this study was mainly hinged on the fact that people construct meanings of their lives and as well make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Brink, Van de Walt & Van Rensburg, 2016).

The participants comprise only female principals from selected secondary schools in Vhembe District and were selected by the researchers from the entire target population by using the purposive sampling procedures. The Vhembe District which is the context of this study includes twenty-seven circuits with each circuit comprising of both primary schools and secondary schools. The researchers requested from the Limpopo Department of Education a list of all the rural secondary schools in the circuits which are managed by female principals. The researchers selected rural circuits which have secondary schools managed by females. The selected schools served as the cases studied. A total of ten female principals from ten circuits were selected.

Data was collected through focus group discussions. The responses from the focus group discussions (FGD) were coded line by line using thematic analysis to identify the themes that emerged. These themes were in-line with the study's aim – the question which is meant to be answered in this study.

Ethical permission for the study was obtained from the Limpopo Department of Education and the University's ethical clearance committee where the researchers are based as at when the study was conducted. In addition, consent and permission was obtained from the participants themselves. Permission to audio recording of the focus group discussion was sought and granted by the participants. To adhere to confidentiality and anonymity, participants were represented as SCH 1/P1 - SCH 10/P10. SCH 1 indicates school 1 and P1 indicates participant 1. That sequential order was randomly used and followed just for identification of participants.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:**

The FGD was conducted in order to bring the participating female principals together to enable them to jointly share, elaborate and justify their challenging experiences as leaders. The conversation during the FGD were analysed thematically and summarised into themes. These narrations/conversations led to a number of themes that were in line with the popular challenges other female principals encountered as shown in previous studies of (Lumby and Azaola 2011; Arar and Queder 2011 and Wrushen and Sherman 2008). The following themes emerged from the narration of the female principals:

1. Learners' ill-discipline and unwillingness to learn
2. Drug, alcohol, and substance usage and abuse

3. Lack of respect and negative attitudes
4. Teachers' unwillingness to work and lack of corporation
5. Lack of acceptance within the school context and the society at large
6. Parents unavailability and unwillingness to support learners' education
7. Gender discrimination and societal stereotype

#### **Learners' ill-discipline and unwillingness to learn:**

Ill-discipline is a major challenge that the female principals encounter amongst their learners. Majority of the participants agreed that most of their learners are not self-disciplined and are reluctant to learn. SCH 1/P1 expressed her experience with her feeling of concern for the learners whom she says are often absent from lessons and those who are not absent from lessons are always reluctant to do their school work, whilst others arrive late at school regularly and all these are signs of indiscipline. SCH 10/P10 said in her voice *"...the area where my school is, there are many orphans and vulnerable kids who stays with their grandparents and most of these learners tend to have discipline problems. These kinds of learners are very difficult to discipline, and you have to go extra mile and stretch your muscle especially if you want them to achieve something at the end of the day."*

It can be deduced that learners' indiscipline is aligned with their unwillingness to learn and is a major concern for the female principal. It is apparent that without the seriousness, willingness and corporation of a learner the principal can only do little in fostering their success and good academic performance. Parsaloi (2012)'s study supports this finding as he reported that female principals often complain of learners who do not respect time, who arrive at school late and also leave early. Cameron (2006) added that a lack of discipline on the part of the learners poses a significant challenge to the leadership of a school and impede the effectiveness of the leadership of the female principals for one reason or the other.

#### **Drug, alcohol, and substance usage and abuse:**

Another heart-breaking challenge is the use of drugs and hard substances amongst the students and with disappointments amongst some teachers. Majority of the participants reported that their learners are always on drugs while others are already drunk before coming to school. This kind of lifestyle is morally wrong and leads to violence, bullying, and even indiscipline on a higher level. It is also awful to note that some teachers are equally on drugs while in line of duty and this promotes their lack of corporation with the female principals. This kind of irresponsible behaviour amongst the teachers negatively influences the learners and promotes the usage and abuse of hard substances amongst the learners.

The experiences of SCH 3/P3, SCH 8/P8, and SCH 10/P10 are worth noting. SCH 3/P3 said *"With regards to the learner there are those that takes drugs and it's a very big challenge to us and the community do not want to tell us the people who are selling the drugs to this learners, one day a learner came with muffins and there were drugs laced in this muffins which made the learner unable to write an assessment because the learner slept for almost two days because of the muffin sold to him."* Similar to her experience was that of SCH 8/P8 who said *"As for the learners, challenges are a lot, been in rural area they involve themselves in drugs and alcohols and are been influenced by those things and their behaviour changes drastically especially after lunch break when they have taken those hard drugs."* The experience of the use of drugs by teachers was shared by SCH 10/P10 who said in her voice *"...to be honest even the educators smoke weed and are sometimes under the influence of hard substances, so when they are under the influences of this substance, they are not themselves and they can scream and yell and act unprofessionally at me which is disheartening."*

It can be deduced that the usage and abuse of drugs, alcohol and hard substance is heart-breaking for the female principals. It is apparent that such lifestyle jeopardises all the effort of the principal in promoting a sound and conducive learning environment. The experiences shared by the participants are in line with those in the study of Makgoka (2016). He argued that some learners come to school under the influence of alcohol and that they sometimes bring illegal substances to school while others sell drugs on the school premises. Makgoka (2016) further added that some of the teachers were reported to smoke in front of learners which do not set a good example for the learners.

#### **Lack of respect and negative attitudes:**

Makgoka (2016), (Kitele, 2013 and Damon 2008) pointed out that female principals are often

disrespected by their colleagues and by learners whilst parents often show negative attitudes in their dealings with female principals by giving them names intended to undermine them. Similarly, to this, the study participants narrated how learners and teachers disrespect and undermine them in every chance they get. They added that parents do the worse by shifting blames of their learners' failure on them. Parents have negative reservations towards the female principal from the onset and these parents expressly criticise every step and decision taken by the female principals. In the opinion of SCH 5/P5 she expresses that the learners disrespect her mainly because they disrespect their mothers at home and believe only the father have a say in their life, this affect their concept of respect and such learners replicate the same within the school context. Similarly, SCH 9/P9 explained that her learners disrespect her often, simply because they see the teachers doing same.

During the FGD, SCH 2/P2 added that some of her male teachers show her negative attitude because some of them desired the principal position but the position was not given to them and in return, they became hostile and disrespectful. The disrespect and negative attitude experienced from the parents are overwhelming as narrated by the participants. SCH 3/P3 said and we quote *"As for some parents, when they come they quarrel with us and they indicate we are not working especially when they come to get the end of year report of their children who have failed and these are the same parents who do not come to parent meeting or show up during the school term when they were been invited as regard their child, you never see them throughout the year, and you only find them at the end of the year."* SCH 7/P7 added that on some occasion when the parents visit the school with a notion to discuss with the principal, they become hesitant and reluctant the moment they find out the principal is a female and they disregard the presence and capacity of the female principal. These are a few negative attitudes from the parents. Furthermore, the participants expressed that disrespect and negative attitude from the learner, teachers and parents often lead to threats and bully. Often time female principals are being threatened mainly by the male teachers and male over-aged learner and even by some parents who believe that female principal does not have what it takes to challenge them in this respect.

#### **Teachers' unwillingness to work and lack of corporation:**

Many of the participants reported how difficult it is for them to convince their teachers to perform their tasks or follow department policies. They expressed that majority of the male teacher prove so difficult and uncooperative. SCH 4/P4 said despite her effort to make the teachers especially the male teachers to follow what is written in the policy book/document, they are still reluctant to follow or abide by it. SCH 6/P6 complained about the lack of corporation she receives from her teachers. She said *"When you give the teacher an instruction, the teacher will question that instruction and nag; they will not just follow the instruction immediately."* On the same note, SCH 3/P3 said *"Another challenge is with regards to the educators who don't want to go to classes they want to be talking in the staff room and some during break they don't want to eat in the staff room they go out and end up coming late every time and their period will be on and they are not there. Most male educators are lazy and unwilling to work because in my school here there are a lot of female educators and they are the ones who work hard to get the job done."*

As the FGD progressed, SCH 1/P1 added that she has to push the teachers really hard for them to come to school on time or attend their classes. *"They won't work without a push"* she said. The participants' experiences are supported by the study of Chabaya et al. (2009) who assert that without staff member support and corporation it will be challenging for female principals to excel in the leadership capacity.

#### **Lack of acceptance within the school context and the society at large:**

Chisholm (2001: 389) reveals that female principals experience lack of acceptance by colleagues at work. Likewise, and common to the revelations of the FGD, is the difficult of acceptance of the female principals as leaders by learners, teachers and parents when they were first appointed as the school principal. Accordingly, most of the learners and teachers were used to having a male principal and found it difficult to adjust to the reality of having a female principal. The participants also said it was gravely difficult for the community to accept the reality of a woman leading a school as majority of the community leader belief that men are born to lead while women are only there to provide support remedy.

At some point, SCH 3/P3 shared her experience and said *"Other male educators wanted the same principal post and they couldn't get it, then they negatively influence the learners and parents not*

to accept my leadership, they try to make me look bad even in the community.” Similarly, SCH 7/P7 said “Some women teachers do not accept my leadership because they don’t want the other female leaders to excel and believe another female cannot be leading them so they don’t do their best or put extra effort, they only do their minimum.” The participants’ narration is similar to those of Boris-Schacter and Langer (2006) who argue that often times female teachers under the administration of a female principal fail to take orders from their female leader and few male teachers find it difficult to follow any order or instruction given by a female leader, this situation invariably leads to lack of community acceptance.

#### **Parents unavailability and unwillingness to support learners’ education:**

According to all the participants who participated in the FGD, parents’ lack of interest, availability and involvement in learners’ life pose a major challenge. During the FGD, participants expressed themselves elaborately. For example, SCH 4/P4 said “Parents are unwilling to contribute emotionally or financially to the success of their learners.” SCH 5/P5 said “...since 2014 that I joined the school, the lack of parents’ involvement in learners life especially in their academics, homework and other activities is of concern.” Other participants further narrated that most of the parents are always away and never physically available to support their learners and this led to the challenge of ‘child headed learner’ as termed by another participant. SCH 4/P4 laid emphasis on the ‘child headed learner’ and said “The major challenge in my school is with the child headed learners because most of the parents are working far from home and staying in the cities and the learners are left to live alone without parental influence, and they make majority of the decisions on their own taking the head responsibility for themselves and their younger siblings.” In line with this, SCH 5/P5 added and said that it becomes very difficult for them to reach the parents when they are really needed to attend to their learners’ performance, misconduct and ill-behaviour.

#### **Gender discrimination and societal stereotype:**

From inception, according to Lips (2009) gender discrimination and societal stereotype has always been a challenge for the female leaders. Owing to the societal norms that female is considered fragile or substandard and treated as such as to when compared to male in leadership position (Kattula, 2011). This study’s participants narrated their experience in this regard and a number of the experiences are worth noting. The challenges with regards to gender discrimination and societal norms were narrated and highlighted during the FGD. The narratives of two participants that uniquely capture the issue of discrimination and societal stereotype are that of SCH 5/P5 and SCH 7/P7. SCH 5/P5 said “Because I am a female principal, the teachers especially the male exhibit the PHD (Pull Her Down) syndrome and question every instruction I give them as the head of institution.” SCH 7/P7 shared a similar sentiment and said “Mainly with educators, especially the elderly male educators still have the notion that women cannot and must not be a principal. When you assign any task to them they drag their feet and do not do their best because they don’t want a woman to be praised in case the school succeed and they also influence the younger male teachers not to do their best all because I am a woman.” It is apparent and can be deduced from the narrated experiences of the participants that gender discrimination is still the order of the day amongst the learners, teachers, parents and the society at large and it is very challenging for a female principal to perform effectively in such a hostile environment.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

The study investigated the challenges facing the female principals in performing their leadership roles. The challenging experiences of the female principals from rural based secondary school in Vhembe district of Limpopo Province as revealed or emerged in this study were elaborately discussed.

The participants’ narratives showed that female principals are faced with learners’ indiscipline and unwillingness to learn. The participants complained about the use and abuse of drugs and hard substances amongst the learners. They believe that the use of drug and alcohol or any hard substance influences the learners to behave irrationally and out of respect, making it difficult for the female principals to effectively perform in their leadership role. Also, parents’ unavailability in the lives of their children and lack of interest and participation in the studies of their children add up to learners’ indiscipline and

unwillingness to learn. They narrated how close to impossible it is to get hold of parents simply because most of these parents are living in the cities and their children are left alone in the village to fend for themselves from an early age when they needed parental guidance and support. The female principals went further to express the heat they receive from teachers and parents in form of negative attitudes and disrespect. They alarm that colleague especially the male teachers disrespect their orders whilst learners' parents undermine their ability to lead. The participants added that it can be difficult to convince male teachers to perform their task because they are uncooperative and difficult. More so, teachers and parents often threaten and bully the female principals with the belief that the female leaders do not have what it takes to challenge them in this respect.

At large, the female principals blame the school context and the society for the unacceptance of female leadership. They expressed how difficult it was for learners, teachers and parents to accept them as their leader when they were installed as the school principal. They believe that it was due to the fact that majority of the educational stakeholders are used to having a male figure lead the school in time past. They added that the community found it difficult to accept the reality of a woman leading a secondary school as the majority of the community leaders believe that men are born to lead while women are meant to support but not actually take the steering wheels of leadership. The participants capped this female leadership unacceptance under the gender discrimination and societal stereotype. They expressed how their colleagues especially the male teachers are always out to get them and see them fall/fail. Hence, it is only imperative to conclude that the aforementioned challenges are the core challenges faced by the female principals which make it very challenging for a female principal to perform effectively in such an unsupportive and hostile environment.

In sum, the findings show that the challenges female principals face in their leadership roles has extrapolative impact on their willingness to remain or leave leadership. The study thus concludes that for female principals to remain in leadership and as well motivate other women to aspire to be leaders, the identified challenges should be dealt with. By implications, dealing with the challenges through support mechanism to complement affirmative policies and legislations is a good step towards gender equality ideologies that liberal feminism promotes.

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#### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST:**

We have no conflict of interest associated with this research.

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