

**Women in Educational
Administration:
Progress towards equality?**

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The emergence of women in the modern economies of most countries is the most significant demographic change of our times.

(Grogan, 2010: 783)

1961

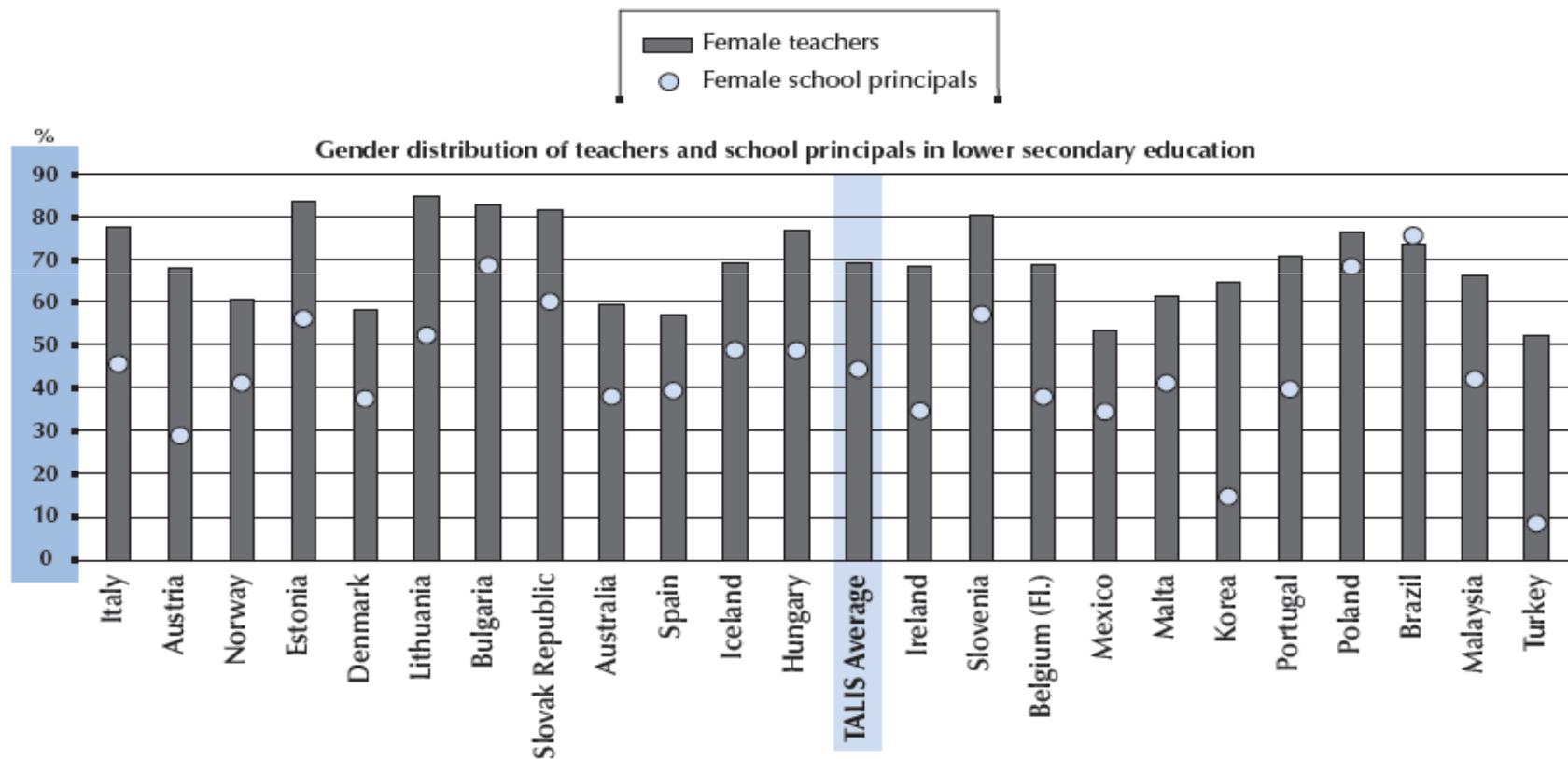
Barbie gets a job other
than modeling.

Her first career?
Registered nurse.



Gender gap: Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)

Source: OECD, 2009: 27



On average, almost 70% of teachers in lower secondary schools were female, whereas on average only 45 % of school principals were female.

Cypriot teaching staff: % female teachers 2005

(UNESCO, 2008)

Category of School	% Female Staff
Preschool	99.1
Primary school	82.8
Secondary school	59.6

Employment of managers in Cyprus, by economic activity and gender in 2005

Sector	Female	Male
Education	256 (64%)	143 (36%)

(Soumeli & Papdopoulou, 2007)

The equitable representation of women in school leadership is seen to be important for a number of reasons:

- The equitable promotion of women in the labour sector of education is a right in itself
- The presence of women leading schools and colleges provides a role model of female success
- Many women arguably have a distinctive management/ leadership style which is valuable to schools
- The very high level of representation of women leaders in early years' education may embed further the belief that the care of small children is women's role.

The Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management (CCEAM) have established a long-term plan to map women's representation in CCEAM affiliate members countries, to record their experience and to use the data to make recommendations on how women can be further supported and empowered to lead schools.

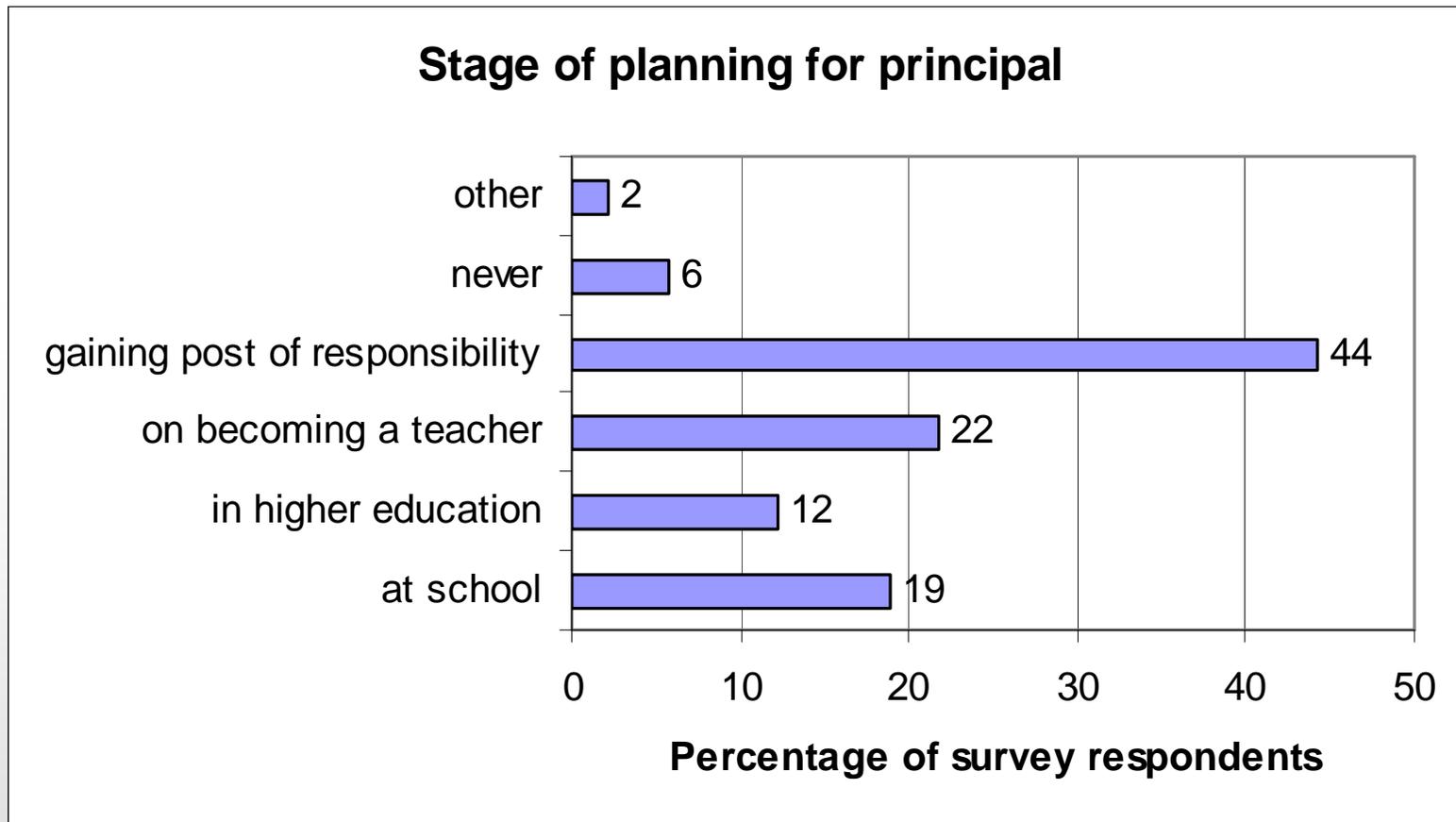
Pilot study in South Africa

Two main methods of data collection were used:

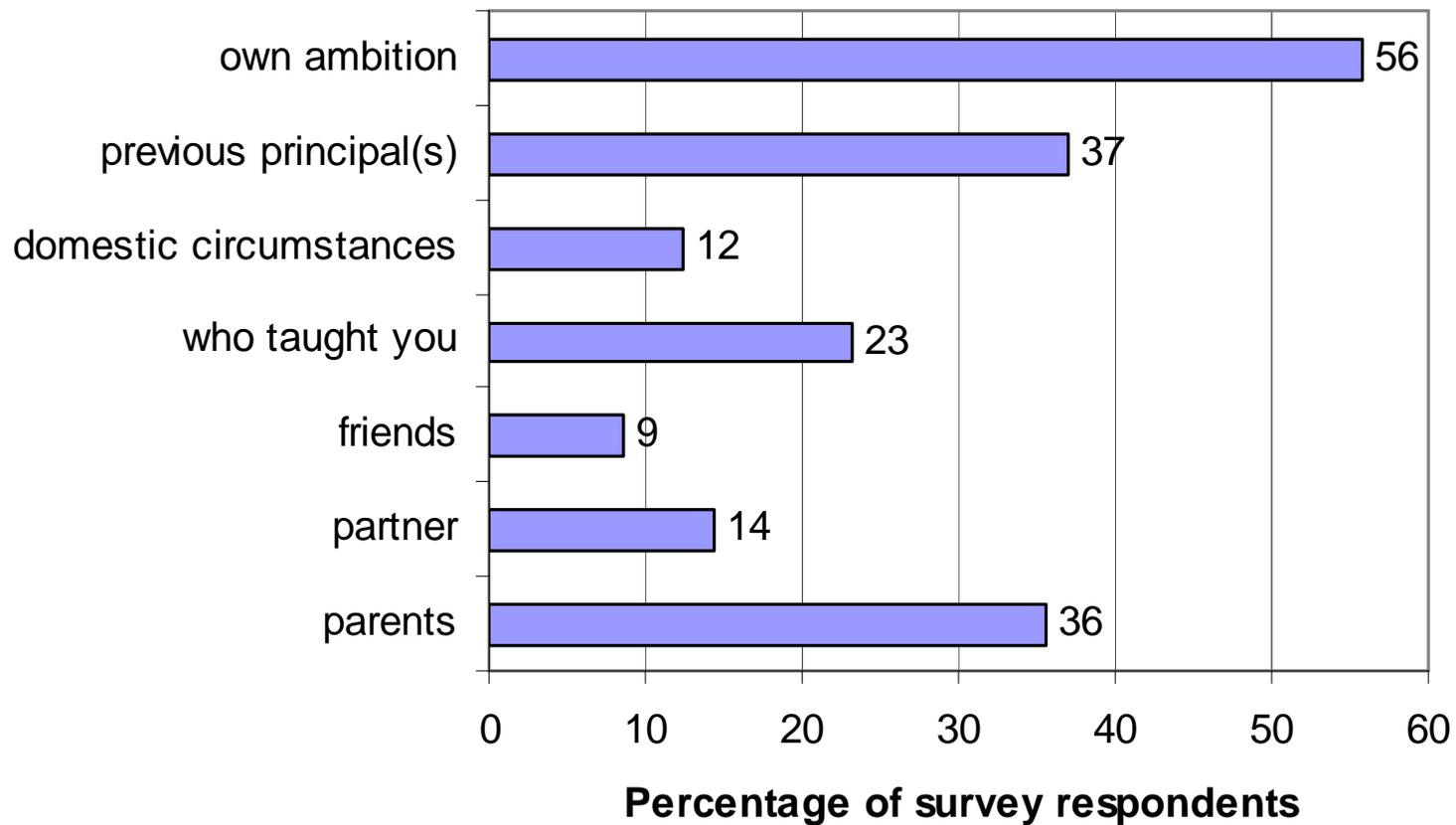
- A sample of 54 female principals in the Guateng and North West provinces of South Africa were interviewed
- A survey by questionnaire was implemented across both provinces, leading to 138 returns

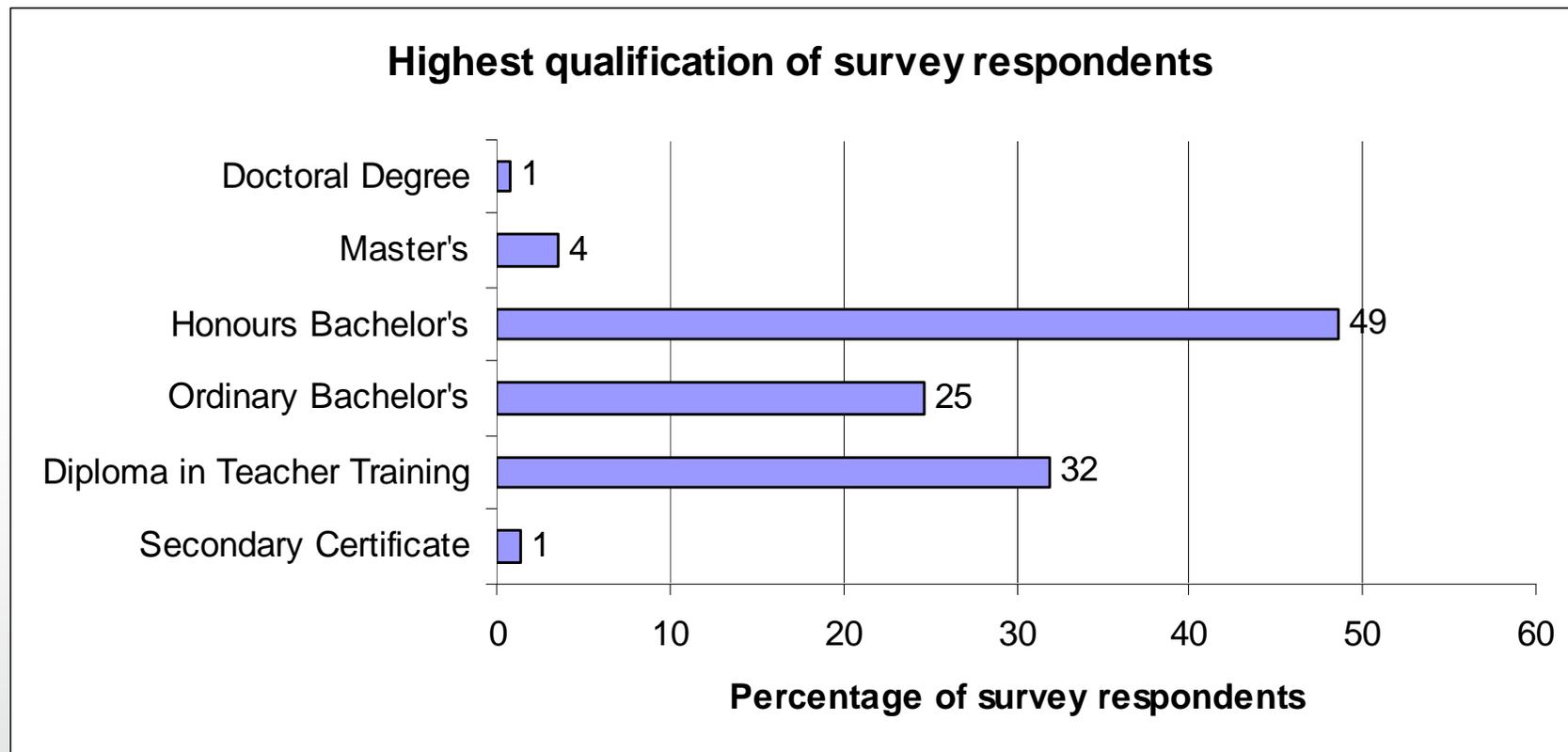
Additionally, available numeric data on the presence of women principals were analysed to ascertain the level of representation in Gauteng.

Ambitious



Major influences on career path

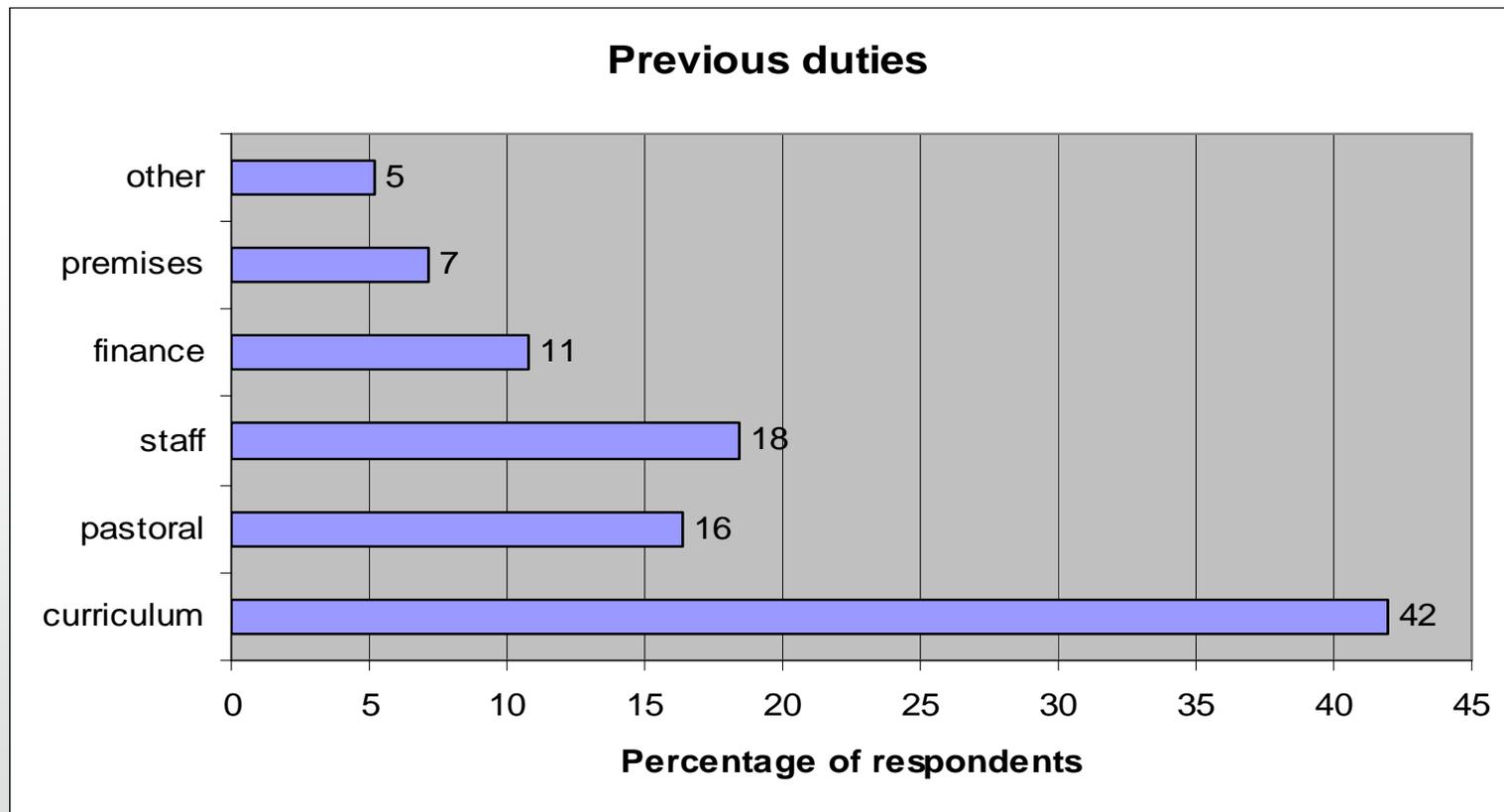




Preparatory experience is still influenced by stereotypical role allocation.

Experienced

The area of responsibility in a previous job held by the largest number was curriculum, four times as many as finance:



Appointed

50 per cent of survey respondents were aware of gendered attitudes and felt that they must be better educated and experienced to compete successfully with male candidates.

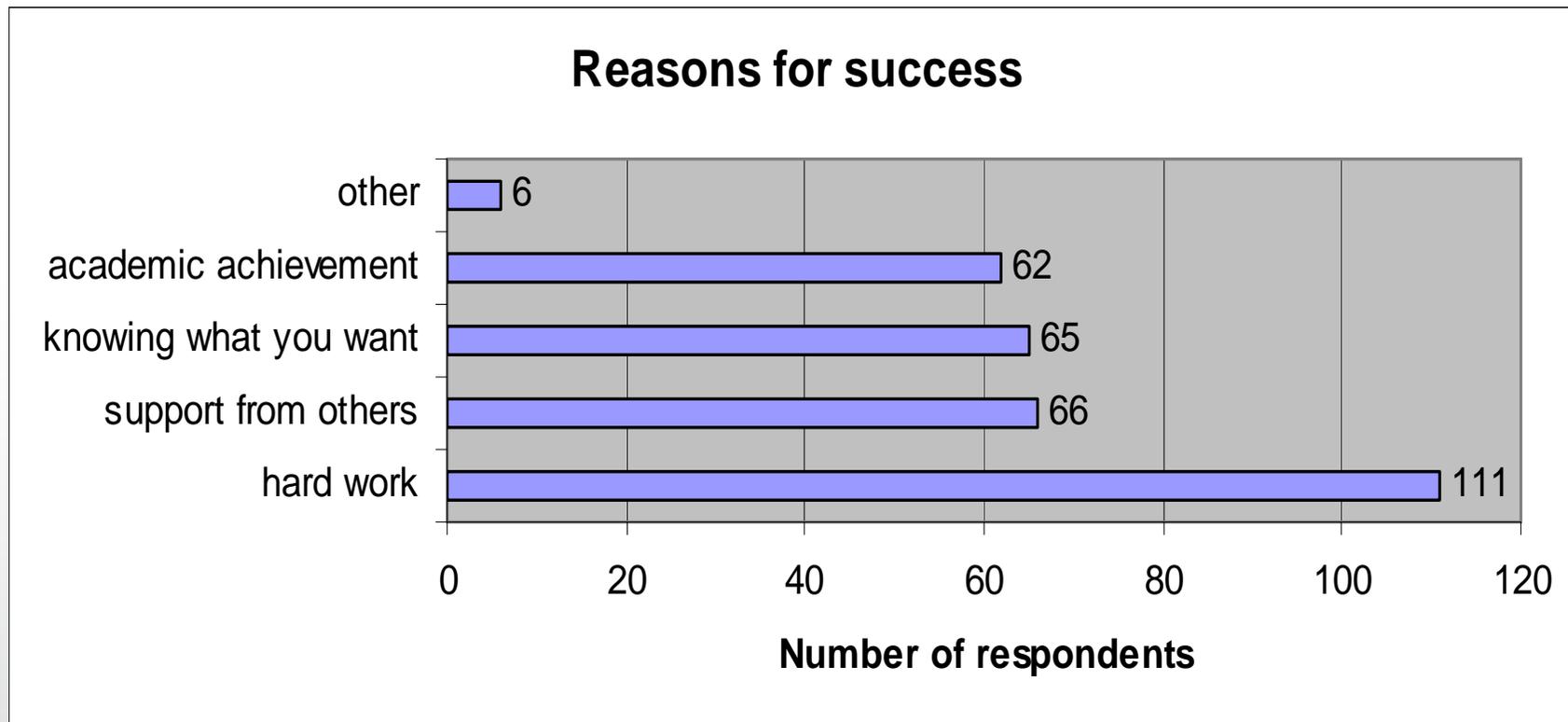
The first time I applied for a permanent post I was told that a male educator applied for the post, too, and I that I had to stand back for him. He was appointed although I was first in line for the post.

Success or otherwise

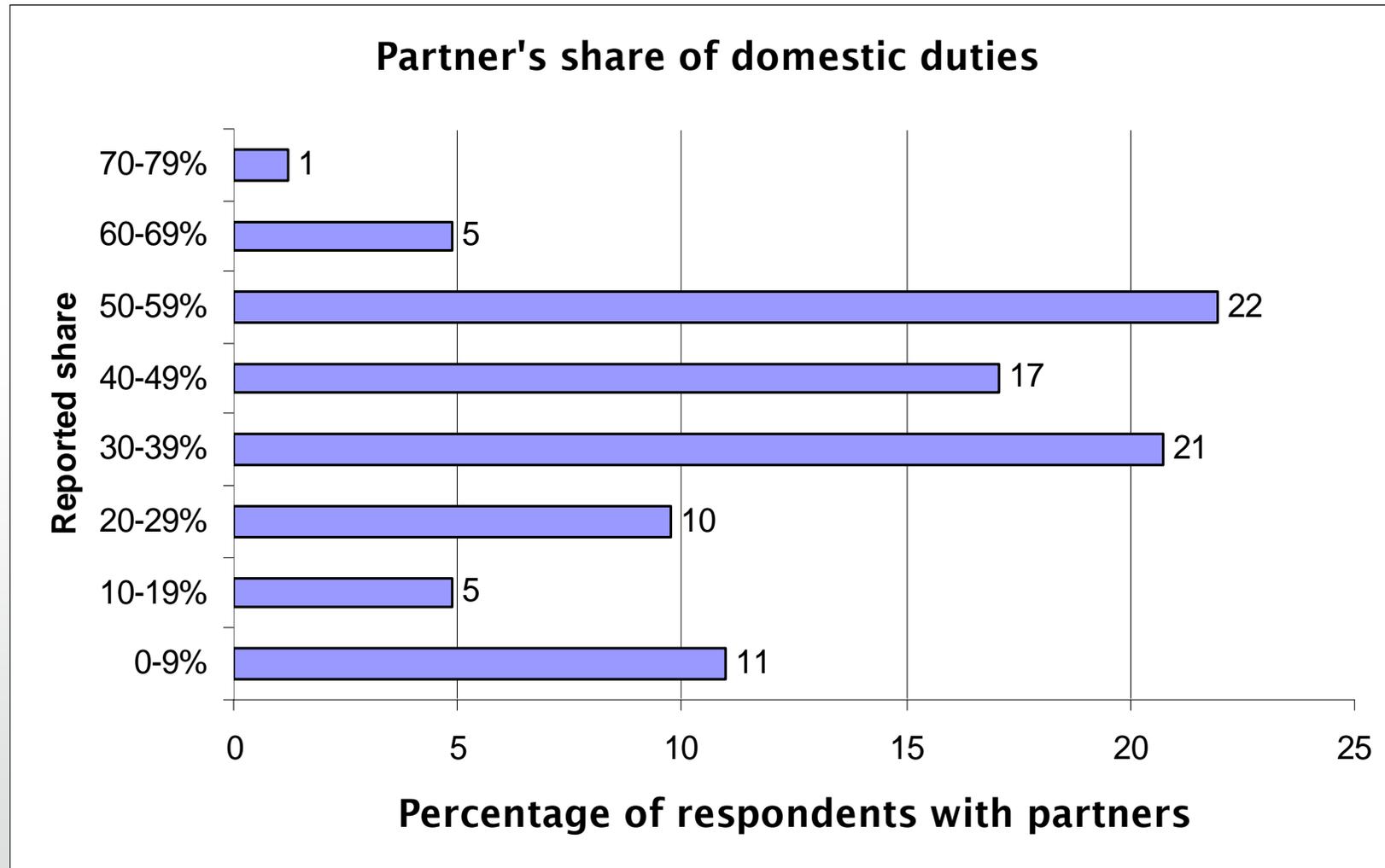
The degree to which women were successful is evident in the representation data. Data was available on women principals from Gauteng province only:

Number of male and female principals and deputy principals, all school categories in Gauteng

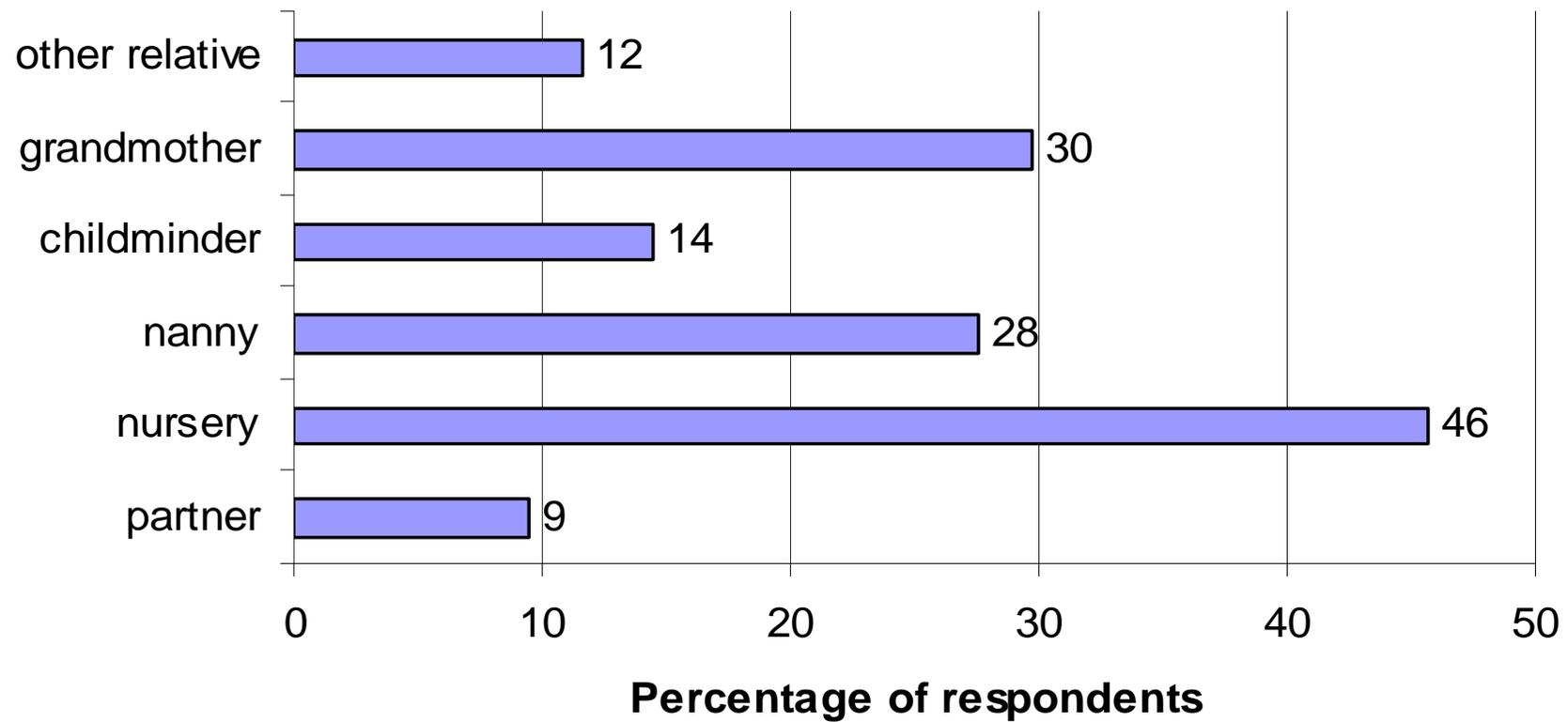
	Male	Female	Percentage
Principals	1479	881	37.33%
Deputy principals	1367	1157	45.84%
TALIS average, across 23 countries			45%



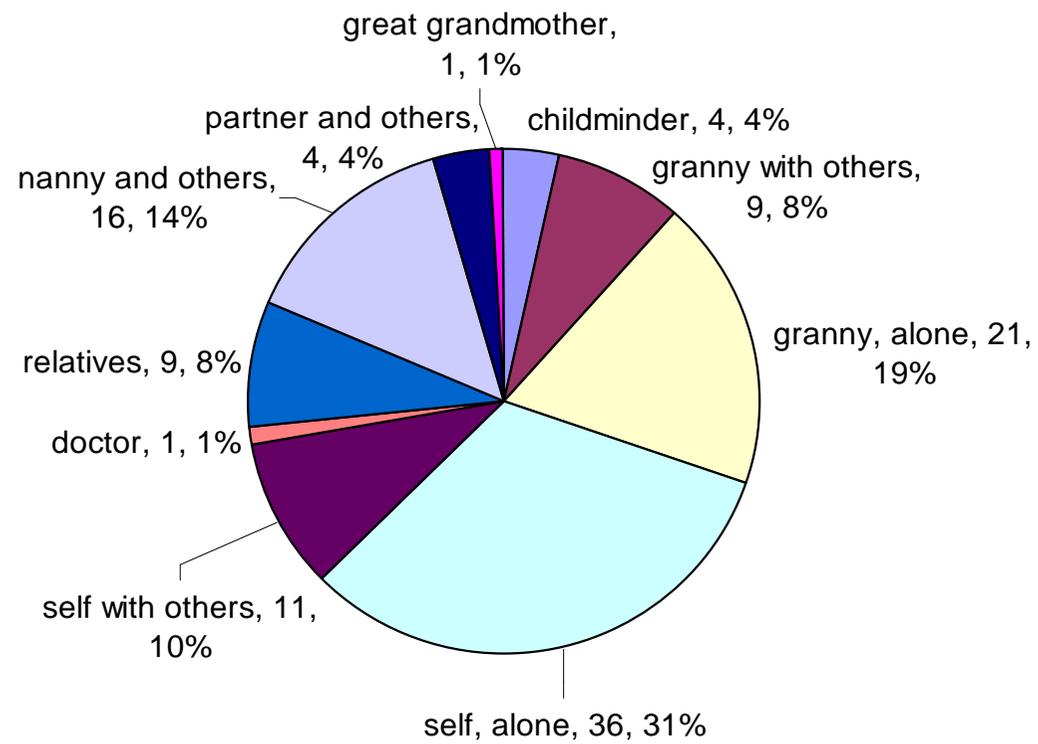
Family pressures



Main methods of childcare



Who looks after a sick child?



Approach to leadership

A distinctively feminine way of leading emerged, with 88 per cent of all respondents referring to a mothering or nurturing orientation to the community.

Sexism

Sexism is a common experience. 47 per cent of survey respondents reported sexist attitudes. There were many examples among the interviews of not receiving respect from men and women, and being disregarded.

An experience frequently highlighted is being watched by people who expect them to fail. A 'pull her down' attitude was widely reported.

Findings

Discrimination

The extent and nature of discriminatory behaviour in some cases prevented the principal doing her job well or, in a few instances, doing it at all, leading to withdrawal from the post.

Determination

The determination of many of the principals to succeed, sometimes against great odds, is evident. Lifelong learning is a strong theme, with many women determined to educate themselves into the principalship.

Leadership style

Many of the women explicitly connected being a principal with being a mother as a conscious choice to harness the focus, commitment to children and skills gained through motherhood to address the very challenging circumstances of learners' lives often preventing learning.

Competence

Many asserted their skill and competence and provided examples of the progress the school had made. Many believed that, not only were they as good as men in the areas in which they were particularly doubted, but that they brought highly developed skills in organising and multi-tasking, and in establishing positive and supportive relationships with staff and learners.

Degree of progress

There is evidence of some progress in the position of women leaders in education in South Africa. Some women believed attitudes towards them as principals were more positive than they had been.

However, many principals perceive that they are still seen as having different and less valued skills than men, and are judged more stringently.

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