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The support women in management positions need to be effective managers

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation, titled, “The support women in management positions need to be effective managers”, is the product of my own work and effort. I have, to the best of my knowledge and belief, acknowledged all the sources of information used by means of references.

I further certify that this dissertation has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

S’mangele Constance Ngema

Signature: ………………………….

Date: ....

DEDICATIONS

This dissertation is dedicated to all women in leadership positions. Always keep your light shine despite the opposition. Somebody once said “God doesn’t give big fights to little solders”, Women of Virtue you are equal to the task. Remember it’s not about your accolades and your connections, but whose life you have made better.

“Igama lama khosikazi malibongwe”.

ABSTRACT

This study analysed the progression of women to senior management positions in organisations focusing on the support women need to be promoted to senior managerial positions in state owned enterprises in South Africa. It used the specific case of Transnet in Richards Bay, KwaZulu-Natal to understand the phenomenon of women's under-representation in senior management positions within the framework of Critical Mass Theory. The study's objectives were; to identify challenges of mainstreaming women into managerial positions in public enterprise organizations such as Transnet, analyse the support structure and systems that women have and need to succeed and recommend strategies that can be implemented for promoting women to senior management positions.

The study adopted a post-positivist research paradigm to enable multiple perspectives from participants/target population rather than a single reality. A mixed method was used to benefit the study. In that light, both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were simultaneously used during a single phase of data collection. Primary data was gathered by survey method involving self-administered questionnaires with women employees who were not in the management and through semi-structured interviews with women who were junior managers. The secondary data was gathered by in-depth literature review and document analysis of Transnet policies, and both data were analysed using qualitative content analysis.

Confirming findings from existing literature which show that women are still under represented in managerial positions in public and private institutions in South Africa and worldwide, this study found that women face promotion hurdles to senior managerial positions in Transnet. Preference is given to men compared to women and men have senior mentors while women usually do not. Also, there are hidden difficulties in Transnet that women face and prevent them from moving into higher positions such as fearing criticism. While there are support structures in place to enable women to be promoted to senior managerial positions, however, implementation is a problem due to entrenched patriarchal attitudes. Based on its findings, the study made a number of recommendations was such as underscoring the urgent need for women to have matured mentors who will guide those in senior

management with the skills required in management positions and also mentor those who are aspiring. It was also recommended that previous experience, skills and knowledge should be considered for women to be promoted to senior management positions.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CEO Chief Executive Officer

EEA Employment Equity Act

HE Higher Education

HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HR Human Resource

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

SADC Southern African Development Community

UK United Kingdom

UN United Nations

US United States

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION i

DEDICATIONS ii

ABSTRACT iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS v

Abbreviations and acronyms vi

CHAPTER ONE 1

1.1 Introduction 1

1.2 Problem statement 2

1.3 Aim 3

1.4 Objectives of the study 3

1.5 Research questions 3

1.6 Significance of the study 3

1.7 Scope 4

1.7.1 Subject coverage of the study 4

1.7.2 Study limitation 4

1.7.3 Methodology 4

1.8 Dissemination of research results 5

1.9 Conceptual clarifications 5

1.10 Demarcation of the study 5

1.11 Summary 6

CHAPTER TWO 7

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 7

2.1 Introduction 7

2.2 Challenges faced by women in managerial positions in public enterprise 7

2.2.1 The glass ceiling 11

2.2.2 Family responsibilities 11

2.2.3 More hindrances to females 12

2.2.4 Recruitment and promotion selection processes 14

2.2.5 Lack of mentoring 15

2.2.6 Organisational culture... 15

2.2.7 Gender, equity and empowerment .... 16 viii

2.3 Support structures and systems that women need to succeed 17
2.3.1 The Employment Equity Act 18
2.3.2 The Gender Bill on Equality and Women Empowerment 19
2.4 Strategies for promoting women to senior managerial positions and 21
2.4.1 Use of the media 22
2.4.2 Educating women 22
2.4.3 Uplifting the role of women in society through entrepreneurship 23
2.4.4 Enabling the political empowerment of women 24
2.4.5 Redesign mentoring programmes to focus on getting women into 24
2.4.6 Expunge subtle gender biases about what makes a leader from 25
2.5 Conceptual and theoretical framework 26
2.6 Critical mass theory 27
2.6.1 The origin of critical mass theory 28
2.6.2 The critical mass versus critical acts debate 31
2.7 The relevance of social learning theory to this study 31
2.8 Summary 33
3.1 Introduction 35
3.2 Research paradigm 35
3.2.1 Positivism 35
3.2.2 Post-positivism 36
3.2.3 Interpretivism / Constructivism 36
3.3 Research design 37
3.4 Data collection 38
3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews 39
3.5 Population of the study.. 40
3.6 Sampling technique 41
3.7 Validity and reliability of instruments 42
3.7.1 Validity 42
3.7.2 Reliability 42
3.8 Ethical considerations 43
3.9 Data analysis 44
3.10 Summary 44
4.1 Introduction 46

Part One: Data analyses of interviews with women who are not in management 46

4.2 Demographic profile of the respondents 46

Table 4.1: Personal Information 46

4.2.1 Distribution of the Participants by Age 47

4.2.2 Distribution of participants by race 47

4.2.3 Distribution of participants by qualification 48

Table 4.2: Work experience N=20 48

Table 4.3: Range of your monthly income 48

4.3 Challenges of mainstreaming women into managerial positions in public 49

Table 4.4: Challenges of mainstreaming women into managerial positions in public enterprise organisations 49

4.4 Support structures needed for women to be promoted 52

Table 4.5: Support structure you think is needed for women to be promoted 52

Table 4.6: Views whether women give their managers the support they deserve 54

Table 4.7: Type of support women give their managers 54

4.5 Recommendations to help managers improve on their management skills 55

Table 4.8: Recommendations 55

Part Two: Data presentation and analysis of interviews with women in managerial positions.......... 56

4.6 Demographic profile of the participants 56

Table 4.9: Personal information.. 57

4.6.1 Distribution of participants by age 57

4.6.2 Distribution of participants by race 58

4.6.3 Distribution of participants by qualification 58

Table 4.10: Number of years spent in the previous position or employer 58

Table 4.11: Number of years already spent in the current position or employer 58

Table 4.12: Rough estimation of personal income 59

4.7 Challenges of mainstreaming women into managerial positions in public 59

Table 4.13: State the way you were appointed to be in a senior position 59

4.7.1 Awareness of policy on gender mainstreaming in your organisation 60

Table 4.14: Awareness of policy on gender mainstreaming in your organisation 60

4.7.2 Views of women on promotion processes in their organisation 61

Table 4.15: Views of women on promotion processes in their organisation 61

4.7.3 Main challenges 62

Table 4.16: Main challenges faced by women in climbing to senior managerial positions 62
4.8 Support structures and systems that women have and need to succeed 64

Table 4.17: Views on in-service training on supervision or management was received 64
4.8.1 Reasons for not receiving in-service training on supervision or 64
Table 4.18: Reasons for not receiving an in-service training on supervision or management 64
Table 4.19: Availability mentorship program 66
Table 4.20: Views on the implementation of mentorship programmes 66
4.9 Recommended strategies to support women in senior managerial 67
Table 4.21: Recommended strategies to support women in senior managerial positions 67
5.1 Introduction 69
5.2 Summary of findings based on demographic data 69
5.3 Summary of research findings based on research objectives 70
5.3.1 Objective 1: Identify the challenges of mainstreaming women into managerial positions in public enterprise organisations 70
5.3.2 Objective 2: Analyse the support structure and systems that women have and need to succeed 71
5.3.3 Objective 3: Recommended strategies to support women in senior managerial positions ... 72
5.4 Future research 73
5.5 Conclusion 74
REFERENCES 76
APPENDIXES 84
Appendix 1: Interview Schedule for Women who are not in Senior Managerial Positions 84
Appendix 2: Interview schedule for the women in Management in Transnet 88

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study explores how women can be equipped to succeed in management positions in public enterprise organisations in South Africa using Transnet in uMhlathuze municipality in KwaZulu-Natal as an example. It is widely acknowledged that for any organisation to stay competitive in the ever-changing global economy, it needs to embrace all forms of skills development for everyone in its workforce irrespective of gender (Grant Thornton, 2017; Conradie, Lowies & Upton 2015). It is argued that the non-presence of women at leadership level is problematic given that businesses do better when they have a skilled diversified workforce and leadership of both males and females (Conradie, Lowies & Upton 2015). Grant Thornton (2017) argues in this regard that the fringe vision of groups is expanded when the group is diversified. Heterogeneous groups tend to enjoy advantages such as connections to broader networks, more legitimacy among investors and improved decision-making compared to homogenous groups or teams. In spite of these evident advantages of diversity, the speed of implementing transformation in this direction is excruciatingly slow (Borisova & Sterkhova, 2012).

At the political level, even though national governments are putting in place policies and legislations to mainstream women into top leadership positions, gender inequity is still a major problem as women still mainly occupy the lower management levels in both the public and private sectors (Conradie, Lowies& Upton, 2015). Similar views are shared by Women in The Work Place (2016) which reported that women remain less likely to be promoted to managerial positions. Fewer women make progress as leaders and they are less likely to be hired into more senior positions. The findings from the Grant Thornton International Business Survey Report reveals that there are no women in senior management in 4 out of 10 businesses worldwide (Grant Thornton International, 2007). This raises questions about the factors that may impact women’s career progression differently from those of men beyond the dominant issue of patriarchy. A study by Women in The Work Place (2016) argues that women have less access to critical resources such as people and opportunities that accelerate careers. This results in fewer women occupying top leadership positions in companies. This is especially pronounced for women of colour in South Africa who face another type of barrier to career advancement (Women in The Work Place, 2016).

Against this background, this study seeks to explore the support required by women in senior managerial positions in public enterprise organisations to become effective managers. In order to achieve this aim, the study sets out three objectives, namely to identify the challenges of mainstreaming women into managerial positions in public enterprise organisations such as Transnet; to examine the support structures and systems available to, and required by women; and to recommend strategies for promoting women to senior managerial positions and making sure they succeed.

1.2 Problem statement

Despite the adoption of race and gender equality policies in the workplace, women are still not well represented in senior managerial positions in organisations. For example, a study by Maseko (2013) reported that even though women in South Africa have been empowered with relevant skills since 1994, they are still disregarded in many different ways and are still poorly represented in senior managerial positions. Furthermore, in spite of the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998 and Affirmative Action which promotes mainstreaming and/or appointing more women into managerial positions, women are still being neglected (Maseko, 2013; Mkhize & Msweli, 2011; Baxter, 2007). Many studies in this regard actually document the marginalisation of women in the workplace especially in terms of women in managerial positions (see Cha, 2013; Saadina, Ramlia, Johari & Harin, 2016; Maseko, 2013). Even where women occupy such positions, they face challenges which compromise their performance (Maseko, 2013). This thus raises questions about the support women in managerial positions need to succeed. This is a gap in the literature on women empowerment in the workplace as many studies on the subject do not focus on the support systems available to women especially those in managerial positions. This is the research gap that this study seeks to fill using the case of Transnet in Umhlathuze Municipality as an example.

1.3 Aim

The main aim of the study is to investigate the support required by women in senior managerial positions in public enterprise organisations to become effective managers.

1.4 Objectives of the study

To achieve the above-mentioned aim, the objectives of the study are to:

- Identify the challenges of mainstreaming women into managerial positions in public enterprise organisations such as Transnet;
- Examine the support structures and systems available to, and required by women; and
- Recommend strategies for promoting women to senior managerial positions and making sure they succeed.

1.5 Research questions

- What challenges militate against mainstreaming women into managerial positions in public enterprise organisations such as Transnet?
- What support structures and systems do women have and need to succeed in managerial positions in public enterprise organisations such as Transnet?
- What strategies can be proposed to promote women to positions of senior management in organisations and for them to remain effective?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study seeks to expand the frontiers of knowledge on how women can be empowered to become effective in senior management positions both in the public and private sectors. The proposed recommendations of the study shall have policy implications as they will useful to the government of South Africa in addressing challenges faced by women who are yet to be promoted to senior positions. Lastly, 4 the study will be of enormous value to national and international debates on the substantive representation of women in leadership positions both in the public and private sectors. For example, the study will contribute to the implementation of policies that support the promotion of all genders to senior managerial positions in the workplace and across organisations (Grant Thornton, 2017).

1.7 Scope

The study was only conducted at Transnet in Richards Bay among women who are employees and those who were junior managers.

1.7.1 Subject coverage of the study

The study focuses on the factors responsible for women not being promoted to senior managerial positions in their workplaces at a similar pace and level as their male counterparts. It also explores the availability of structures that can support women in this regard.

1.7.2 Study limitation

The limitations of this study are as follows:

- The questions that were asked were a bit sensitive to the participants, as a result some were reluctant to provide accurate and reliable answers;
- The management was reluctant to participate in the study and as such, junior managers were allowed to answer the questions that were meant for senior management officers;
- The study could not be conducted across the Transnet branches in the entire KwaZulu-Natal province due to time limitations.

1.7.3 Methodology

The study used qualitative research method for data collection from a sample of women who were under the supervision of junior managers as well as those who were junior managers at Transnet, uMhlathuze municipality.

1.8 Dissemination of research results

The results of this study will be disseminated through a thesis that will be submitted to the University of Zululand Institutional Repository (UNIZULU IR). Furthermore, part of the research will be disseminated through conferences, seminars and as chapters in peer-reviewed books as well as peer-reviewed journals. As a way to give back to community and Transnet in this case, I shall undertake to share the findings of this study with respondents and the Human Resources Department of the organisation where I work as part of knowledge sharing to enhance gender equity practices within the organisation.

1.9 Conceptual clarifications

The following terms are used in these ways in the study:

Tooling: it is defined as the process of providing necessary tools that enable high production and sustainability. In this study, it is defined as the process of equipping women with necessary skills and experiences for managerial positions in organisations.

Woman: It is defined as the female human being, as distinguished from a girl or a man. In other words, a woman is an adult female.

1.10 Demarcation of the study

Chapter one: Introduction

This chapter outlines the background to the study, problem statement, aims, objectives, research questions, motivation for the study, research methodology, significance of the study and anticipated dissemination of research findings.

Chapter two: Literature review

The chapter provides a literature review based on the objectives of the study with the following themes in mind – the factors responsible for the poor representation of women in positions of leadership in public enterprise; the existing and required support structures and systems for women to succeed in such positions.

Chapter three: Research methodology

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology of the study. This covers the research population, sampling methods, data collection instruments, ethical considerations and the data analysis methods.

Chapter four: Data Presentation and Discussions

This chapter presents and analyses data obtained through interviews.

Chapter five: Summary, conclusion and recommendations

Chapter six presents the summary and conclusions of the results of the study as well as recommendations for further research.

1.11 Summary

This chapter has provided a background to the study. It has outlined the research problem, research objectives, research questions as well as the scope and limitations of the study. It provides a definition of terms as well as the structure of the study. The next chapter provides a detailed review of literature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided the background to the study while this chapter contains the literature review and the theoretical framework upon which an investigation of the support required by women in management positions is discusses. The literature addresses challenges faced by women in managerial positions in public enterprise organisations, available and required support structures and systems for women and strategies for promoting women to senior managerial positions. The last part of this chapter examines the theoretical framework of the study.

2.2 Challenges faced by women in managerial positions in public enterprise organisations

It must be noted that research into women and leadership/management is an ongoing phenomenon, mainly because traditionally, leadership has been concerned with the study of political leadership, of "great men" who defined power, authority, and knowledge (Klenke, 1996). Leadership, as Sandler (1993:193) puts it, "has been generally associated with men and with male styles of behaviour, and because women have not been in leadership positions in great numbers, the mental image of a leader held by most people is male". These ideas show that women are still under-represented in senior management positions in both private and public enterprise organisations in South Africa (Conradie, Lowies & Upton, 2015). Between 2013 and 2014, approximately 21% of South African businesses did not have women in senior management positions (Conradie, Lowies & Upton, 2015). It can be argued that the reason for under-representation of women in senior management positions is because of South Africa's unique political and social history which promotes the likelihood of individual differences in opinions of managerial stereotypes across race and gender. In addition, the preceding apartheid system operated a race and gender hierarchy based on unequal power relations. A study by Booysen (2007) shows that white women were not any more privileged in managerial positions than African women as they were both demoted to either the domestic sphere or typical 'female jobs’ in the workplace such as secretaries and nurses. At the same time, the top, best paying managerial positions in the economy were reserved solely for white men and black men were largely given jobs that required little or no skills (Booysen, 2007).

In post-apartheid South Africa, it can be said that white men still control top and senior management positions, followed by white women and black men in that order. The group at the bottom of the order in terms of managerial positions in South Africa are black women (South African Department of Labour, 2009). Up to 61.1 percent of top managers are white men who also account for 47.4 percentage of senior managers followed by white women who comprise 12 percent of top management positions and 18 percent of senior management positions. In addition, black men only comprise 10 percent of top management positions and 12 percent of senior managerial positions. Contrary to what many people assume, black women, Indian women and coloured women are the most underrepresented groups on all levels of management and the professions (Department of Labour, 2009). Only 4 percent of senior managerial positions are black women who also occupy 5.4 percent of senior managerial positions (Department of Labour, 2009).

The problem of not employing and promoting women to senior management positions is not only experienced in South Africa; it is also experienced in other African countries. For example, a study conducted in Ethiopia by Horan (2014) reports that in most patriarchal societies, women professionals are considered to be mediocre compared to men. For this reason, they are denied positions in management and as such, leadership and administrative roles in the society (including religion and governance) are exclusively reserved for men (Horan, 2014). Even the right of choice in respect to entry to conjugal unions is denied to women. While it is known that such discriminatory practices exist in these countries, the prevalence and cultural value systems and norms that perpetuate them are not fully understood (Horan, 2014). In spite of debates on these issues, women remain largely outside formal leadership roles due to various factors (Horan, 2014).

Traditional barriers have persistently hindered women from obtaining positions of leadership (Bartol et al., 2003; Hoyt, 2005). It can be said that with the globalisation of business practices, opportunities, technologies, and cultures, women face new and different challenges that vary depending on the environment in which they operate (Horan, 2014). It is widely reported that in many African countries (Ethiopia, South Africa, eSwatini (Swaziland), Zimbabwea, Mozambique, Uganda, just to mention a few), the societal status of majority of the women is low (Hirut, 2004; Mukuria et al., 2005). In these countries, women are denied equal access to education, training, and gainful employment opportunities, and their involvement in policy formulation and decision making processes has been minimal (Horan, 2014). There is no doubt that women do play vital roles in society in all the activities I which they are involved. Regrettably, these women are unable enjoy the fruits of their labour and suffer from political, economic, societal, and cultural marginalisation (Horan, 2014).

In addition to African countries, the exclusion of women from many senior management positions is also experienced in the Western world. For example, a study by the US Department of Commerce (2011) confirms that the issue of poor women representation in managerial positions is a global problem. The study reveals that even though women have made historic contributions in the areas of accounting and nursing, there are still very few of them in management positions in these fields. In most science and technology fields, women are very few in number (US Department of Commerce, 2011). According to Meaza (2009) and Xu (2008), the reason women are few in managerial position in tertiary institutions and other organisations is because they lack resources and support for promotion.

For his part, Kochanowski (2010) argues that women are more committed to house work and care for children than men. Women also prefer to work part-time compared to men who prefer to be permanently employed. Other factors which hinder women from managerial positions is that they often fall sick and pregnant and take family leave. It can therefore be said that as long as women are committed to domestic and family work, promotion to senior management positions will remain a major issue for them (Kochanowski, 2010). According to Eagly, Johanessen-Smith, and van Engen (2003), the reason only 1% of senior managerial positions are occupied by women is that they lack of role models and mentors. Furthermore, Dominici, Fried and Zeger 10

(2009) argue that family obligations responsible for women’s underrepresentation in leadership positions.

Scholars worldwide argue that even if women’s official involvement in the highest leadership positions today is limited, their critical roles in times of wars and peace as community organisers and activists I s well documented (Meaza, 2009). Yet, despite their strengths, contributions and demonstrated leadership abilities, it has never been easy for women worldwide to be promoted to senior managerial positions.

Women around the world are faced with similar problems even though they may have unique cultural situations. In western countries, cross-cultural studies on women as managers have found a growing common trend in women's enrolment in leadership positions and found that women managers worldwide share a number of similarities including stereotyping, lack of role models and lack of access to training (Stead and Elliot, 2009). Research on women in top management positions in three Arab Gulf countries (United Arab Emirates, Oman and Bahrain) found that the challenges faced by those women included discrimination at work, cultural taboos, negative attitudes towards working women and lack of confidence and trust in women managers (Wilkinson, 1996). Research identified several inhibiting factors for women that include organisational factors, such as personnel systems/traditional career paths, male employee attitudes and women's own attitudes (Cooke, 2007). Culture rejects that women should lead and exercise their positive leadership role.

Shahine (1997) argues that despite the growing leadership role of women in society, traditional beliefs and practices limit the career advancement of women. Traditional beliefs are reflected in associating leadership abilities with men and not women, in questioning the effectiveness of the few women who have reached positions of leadership, and in the negative attitudes about women in leadership positions with a common belief that in order for them to be effective leaders they need to adopt characteristics that are not naturally associated with women, such as assertive behaviour, commitment and motivation. A number of factors hindering women from progressing to senior management are discussed below. 11

2.2.1 The glass ceiling

It is believed that the ‘glass ceiling’ represents a hidden difficulty for women and other minority groups, which prevents them from moving into senior management (Broadbridge & Weyer, 2007). These ceilings manifest when women and other minority groups endure struggles to obtain equal access and opportunity (Alahmadi, 2011). Burke *et al.* (2006) found that women normally populate half of the work force in developed countries, however, the glass ceiling hinders them from moving into middle- and senior-level, management positions. This could be long working hours, and male-dominated networks, which could, in particular, be the reason for the under-representation of women in the higher education sector. The literature shows that “a glass ceiling does exist and its mission of operation is substantially to exclude women from top level positions of management” (Ziegler, 2003:5). It is evident from the literature that women will take time to climb the ladder to senior management positions due to the limitations imposed by the glass ceiling.

2.2.2 Family responsibilities

It is widely believed that family responsibilities such as like taking care of children usually hinders women from progressing to senior management positions (Wood & Newton, 2006). The findings of a study by Alahmadi (2011) show that working long hours in the office is an indication of being determined and dedicated. Liff and Ward (2001) also revealed that mothers and young wives are unable to break into senior management positions because of the time they commit to caring for their family members. Some women decide not to have children and husbands in order to create opportunities for promotion (Lukaka, 2013).

While fewer women are taking pregnancy or childcare leave, 32% still leave their jobs once they have children. Also, once a woman has children, she is much more reluctant to go back to the workplace and part with loved ones. For these reasons, employers still prefer men over women (Baxter and Wright, 2000). Lee-Gosselin, Briere and Ann (2013) highlight the fact that women make up a large number of junior managers in the South African public service, yet, as the ranking’s go higher, there are fewer women in high level managerial positions, such as Deputy Director General and Director General. Yam (2008) finds that women have great household commitments and family responsibility, even when working outside the home because women are still expected to be the primary caregivers.

In China, many women sacrifice their career advancement for their husband's success and by so doing, "they realize their own value" (Lee and Koh, 2001:21). Women can pursue their professional dreams only after fulfilling their culturally accepted roles, an expectation nearly impossible, considering at what age this would be happening (Malovi, 2014). Support should be given to women to succeed in their careers while their families are also best taken care of. Greenhaus and Powell (2006) as well as Grzywacz and Bass (2004) suggest that when organisations are supportive of families, they provide employees with opportunities to perform well at work or in the family, which enables employees to experience gains at work (such as positive moods or a sense of fulfilment), which in turn help them perform better or be more satisfied. When culture is conducive to work, family matters become less negative according to Wayne, Randel and Stevens (2006). Blair-Loy (2009:21) argues that "childbearing and household management play major roles in women's lives and pose dilemmas in trying to fulfil career goals and to maintain family harmony". Even some in American society still criticise "women who seek a family life and a successful career" as their professional ambitions are not considered fully feminine (Dean, Bracken and Allen, 2009: 241).

In the past, black women were expected to be responsible for the well-being of their families as opposed to obtaining an education (Phendla, 2008). Stereotypical assumptions about the gender differences between men and women make it difficult for women to obtain the opportunity to be placed in senior leadership positions. The traditionally defined model of leadership assumes that good leadership is essentially masculine (Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

2.2.3 More hindrances to females

A study by Herbst and Conradie (2011) shows that the higher education sector in South Africa, as in many other countries such as Australia and the UK, is facing major transformation challenges that require extraordinary leadership. According to Adler and Izraeli (1994), the myth of women's unwillingness does not have any support from research in which men’s and women’s willingness to be expatriates have been measured. Appelbaum, Audet and Miller (2003: 47) prove that female employees find the work environment unwelcoming and very threatening due to cultures that are dominating it directly or indirectly and that discriminating against females. Oakley (2000) points out that these invisible barriers for women include corporate practices, such as training and career development, promotion policies and compensation practices. Even when in higher positions, women have to keep proving themselves as capable leaders. Curry (2000) states that women who ascend into higher leadership levels must often contend with culturally engrained views of self-assurance and confidence as unacceptable female qualities.

Other studies, such as Mazibuko’s (2006) and Zulu’s (2009) have also found that lack of mentorship and formal preparation, in the form of professional development programmes, appear to have been major constraints for women, but only before and after assuming senior management positions (Tsoka and Mathipa, 2006). Inequalities remain and women are still a disappointing minority in top positions within the HE sector and in parliament in particular, and are more likely to work in the lower paid, lower status, less reliable informal sector, and then get left behind with the progress of economic growth and trade (Shidiye, 2013). Amongst the factors that contribute to a lack of power for women are personal and psychological barrier and climate issues (Ramphele, 2008). A study on women in the UK and Greece showed that some women choose not to seek leadership positions because of the perceived stress caused by a conflict of roles (Mitroussi and Mitroussi, 2009). Lee (2003), Greenhaus and Powell (2006) and Greenberger (2007) have all highlighted cases of discrimination and sexual harassment of women managers who have spearheaded organisational policies and legal reforms to help ensure that women are duly processed for promotions, pay and partnerships. Tsoka and Mathipa (2006: 324) argue that poor self-image can hinder women in progressing to management positions. They argue furthermore that hindrances also arise from the following: less career orientation as a sign of less interest in women as leaders; lack of assertiveness as a habit more associated with women than men; less confidence as an argument that women, unlike men, generally lack the will to achieve; poor performance: a myth used as an excuse for employing fewer women in demanding occupations; discrimination: as a sign of low interest in the recruitment of women into 14 leadership positions; and demotion: as a form of punishment thought to suit women better as they are perceived to be lazy and arrogant.

2.2.4 Recruitment and promotion selection processes

Further reasons why women are not well represented in leadership positions could include the following – lack of commitment from CEOs, lack of powerful sponsors to champion women's causes; lack of commitment to women's advancement by some companies (Cummings, Dinoflo & Kohler, 2011). Elmuti, Jia and Davis (2009) believe that there is a serious shortage of women who are qualified for promotion to senior managerial positions. This could result in the low numbers of women ascending to leadership positions and women not being motivated or inspired to be part of leadership programmes or even applying for leadership positions in their companies. All over the world, female senior executives, and especially female CEOs are extremely rare in large corporations (Oakley, 2000). Bernardi, Bosco and Vassill (2006) emphasise that corporate policies and practices in training and career development, promotion, and compensation are often identified as major components of the glass ceiling that prevent women from making it to the top. Women are generally given the easier tasks in the company and the harder and more strategic work is given to males. According to Akpinar-Sposito (2013), female managers generally tend to be concentrated in lower management positions and have less authority than men. Furthermore, Goodall and Osterloh (2015) argue that men tend to exaggerate their abilities, whereas women have less self-confidence, which leads to a confidence gap.

According to Yakowicz (2014), a study conducted by North-western University and the University of Chicago, asked male and female managers to recruit people to handle simple mathematical tasks. The applicants had equal skills, but managers of both genders were more likely to hire men. According to Pew Research Center Social & Demographic Trends (2015), women still have to do more than men to prove themselves. As a result, women have to work extra hard, outperform and over exceed set standards in order to prove their competence. When trying to navigate through the hidden expectations for job promotion, women's limited, natural relationships with men at the top inhibit their abilities to secure senior placements (Schwanke, 2013).

In some companies, pregnant women are perceived as “less authoritative and more irrational, regardless of their actual performance”, while mothers are often seen as less committed to work than non-mothers (Eye Witness News, 2013). By contrast, fathers are not only viewed as equally competent as men without children, but also significantly more committed to work. As a result, while mothers are often penalised for their family commitments, fathers tend to be “recommended for management training more than men without children” (Eye Witness News, 2013).

2.2.5 Lack of mentoring

It is believed that women lack adequate mentorship which is something that can reduce job stress and also contribute immensely to the success of a company (Arifeen, 2010: 6). A study by the National Gambling Board that explores the perceptions of female managers in South Africa reveals that female managers still perceived entry into male-dominated top management levels (the so-called 'old boys' network') in the gambling industry as a challenge (Jonkheid & Mango, 2008). The study further points out that “communication with especially older senior male colleagues 'from the old school' was sometimes experienced as stressful” (Jonkheid & Mango, 2008:11). Specific initiatives to empower female staff were either limited or non-existing or not supported by senior/top management unless clear mandates, policies and strategies were approved and in place. The study suggests that relationships with female colleagues within the same organisation were sometimes strained, “due to jealousy and competitiveness”, which proves females are still experiencing challenges even when they have access to these positions. This shows that, in an environment where growth is not promoted and females are not motivated, fewer females will be seen in leadership ranks.

2.2.6 Organisational culture

Organisational structures can interfere with and inhibit female advancement since the structures in the workplace are very male dominated and include ‘old boys networks' (Schwanke, 2013:1). According to Kirai and Mukulwa (2012), organisational structures impede women's entry to and advancement in the workplace especially in terms of job recruitment, job assignment, mentoring, retention, and training, how work and family are balanced by employees, as well as promotions and reward systems. Duflo (2011:32) suggests that policies should address gender imbalance in "rights, resources, and voice," and recommends that institutional structures be overhauled to promote equality, and that specific measures, such as girls' scholarships and quotas for women in parliament, be adopted. In some companies, some females are not given opportunities or platforms of motivation, support and a chance to share their ideas. This view is supported by Jakobsh (2012) who states that corporations may further demotivate women by sponsoring explicitly male-only gatherings which is a barrier to women in terms of developing rapport with their colleagues, potential clients and male bosses. According to Tlaiss and Kauser (2010), the anti-female nature of organisations and institutional discrimination, such as limited access to networking processes, lack of mentoring and limited training and development opportunities, have contributed to women's low career progression. Concerns about organisational barriers in management development remain challenging and deserving of additional research.

2.2.7 Gender, equity and empowerment

The South African White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service and Affirmative Action spells out the target of 30 percent of women in decision-making levels, as well as the special measures to be implemented in reaching this target of women representation in the management. According to Jonkheid and Mango (2008), the current emphasis on gender equity has resulted in the imbalances of the past now being actively addressed. Equity in the workplace has especially been promoted through a more representative appointment of women in junior and middle management positions; equity in responsibilities and equal empowerment; as well as rights and opportunities in the workplace for both genders. There has therefore been, overall, a fairer treatment of women and a future is being created for them in organisations through appropriate, personal development and exposure to training programmes. There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women (Annan 2005). The process of empowering subordinates has been variously described as a method of increasing autonomy, personal control, accountability and self-esteem (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010).

The South African Act, which seeks to give effect to section 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), insofar as the empowerment of women and gender equality is concerned, also has to establish a legislative framework for the empowerment of women, align all aspects of laws and implementation of laws relating to women empowerment, appointment and representation in decision-making positions and structures, as well as to provide for matters connected therewith. The United Nations principles on women empowerment seek to do the following:

- Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality;
- Treat all women and men fairly at work - respect and support human rights and non-discrimination;
- Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers;
- Promote education, training and professional development for women;
- Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women;
- Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy;
- Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

2.3 Support structures and systems that women need to succeed

According to Ngcobo (2016), while the education of a man often benefits only one person, educating a woman is usually for the benefit of the nation. It is believed that when women are gathered together in a group they share their experiences about how they can improve their weaknesses (Kayi, 2013). The need for specific structures to improve women representation in organisations and institutions is linked to the notion that men think that they are better leaders than women, with Black women often experiencing discrimination, aggression or harassment when seeking leadership positions in the education sector (Lumby and Azaola, 2011). According to Jones and Palmer (2011: 190), women still struggle to find their voices and positions within male-dominated professional cultures. Even though South Africa 18 occupies the second position in Africa in terms of women's representation and participation in politics, they still represent only 24% of decision-making positions in both the public and private sectors (Maseko, 2013).

In 1994, several legislative initiatives were proposed to address issues related to the poor representation of women in managerial positions in South Africa. These highlight the need for the emancipation of women from all forms of oppression as a necessary condition for the full attainment of freedom in the society (Mandela 1994). Tshabalala-Msimanga (2009) reports that South Africa has moved drastically from 17th to 3rd place in the global ranking of women in Parliament, following the 2009 elections. This is probably due to constitutional changes that have spurred women to professional advancement (Person, Saunders and Oganesian, 2014). The South African Constitution includes the following provisions and purposes:

- Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law;
- Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms;
- To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken;
- The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

The legislative support structures in place in South Africa are discussed below.

2.3.1 The Employment Equity Act

The introduction of Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (EEA) by South Africa has led to greater equity in the workplace. The purpose of the Act is to achieve equity in the workplace by:

- Promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination;

- Implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce.

The Act seeks to ensure that no person may be unfairly discriminated, directly or indirectly, against an employee in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds, including race, gender, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth. However, a study by Gobind (2013) regrettably reported that the Act has failed women since they are faced with rising rates of unemployment exacerbated by the challenge of competing with other women who are similarly classified in the same group. The employment equity challenge lies not only in the competition for work but also in being the supplier of work as well as in economic growth.

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (2011:24) states that statistics “show a similar pattern in other parts of Africa, including Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe”. The organisation states that “the highest proportions of women are in the lowest academic positions and the lowest occupational levels in support departments”. This shows that South Africa, as a country, could do more in developing and empowering women in leadership. In a study of women leadership in South Africa, Chiloane-Tsoka (2010: 1) finds that, despite having a South African Constitution that entrenches equal rights, discriminatory practices, structural inequalities, cultural factors, prejudices and traditional patriarchal societies are still alive and well in the South African business environment; while women dominate the teaching profession in South Africa, few of them occupy school management positions.

2.3.2 The Gender Bill on Equality and Women Empowerment

In 2003, the bill on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment was introduced in South Africa. The aim of this bill was to establish a legislative framework for the empowerment of women; to align all aspects of laws and implementation of laws relating to women empowerment, and the appointment and representation of women 20 in decision-making positions and structures; and to provide for matters connected therewith. The bill gives effect to the letter and spirit of the Constitution with regard to:

- The equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms by every person;
- The promotion of equality, specifically gender equality; and
- The values of non-racialism and non-sexism, contained in section one of the Constitution, facilitate compliance by designated public bodies and designated private bodies, with the country’s commitments to international agreements, including:

i. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (December 1979);
ii. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (September 1995);
iii. Millennium Declaration and Development Goals (September 2000);
iv. Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (July 2004); and
v. SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (August 2008).

- Align all aspects of the laws and the implementation of the laws relating to women empowerment and the appointment and representation of women indecision-making positions and structures;
- Facilitate the development and implementation of plans and strategies by designated public bodies and designated private bodies for the promotion of women empowerment and gender equality, and the submission of those plans and strategies to the Minister for consideration, evaluation and guidance;
- Provide for the implementation of measures to achieve a progressive realisation of a minimum of 50 per cent representation and meaningful 50 percent participation of women in decision-making structures, including Boards, by designated public bodies and designated private bodies, as contemplated in section 7;
- Provide for the implementation of gender mainstreaming by designated public bodies and designated private bodies as contemplated in section 8; and
- Provide for the development and implementation of public education programmes on practices that unfairly discriminate on grounds of gender as

contemplated in the applicable legislation and in international agreements in order to promote gender equality and social cohesion. Source: (Nations, 2005)

An Institutional Cultures and Higher Education Leadership Conference report urges universities to address the issue of institutional culture in terms of gender-based power constructs, subtler forms of discrimination and implementation of gender-based policies. These were described as forms of barriers to women's progress to senior management positions (HERS-SA49 2015). In the higher education sector, there are very few women in leadership positions especially in key leadership positions such as university vice-chancellors and registrars (South Africa Democratic Teachers Union, 2014).

According to De Klerk and Radloff (2010), the challenge facing universities is to respond quickly to the national imperative to facilitate transformation both in terms of day-to-day institutional practices as well as perceptions, attitudes and mind-sets. Young girls are encouraged to step forward with what they learnt at school and take advantage of the skills that they have similar to that of boys. It is believed that this will enable them to reach their future career goals. It is believed that this will expand young women's horizons, broaden their knowledge and begin to challenge the stereotypes in our educational systems (Santos, 2015).

2.4 Strategies for promoting women to senior managerial positions and making sure they succeed

It is important for international organisations to develop codes that mandate and facilitate the promotion of women to senior managerial positions. In this regard, the rights, knowledge, abilities and managerial capacities of women need to considered to be the same as those of men (Fallahi & Rahpaymaelizehee, 2015). The proposals by Fallahi and Rahpaymaelizehee (2015) in this connection are outlined below.

2.4.1 Use of the media

The use of media is considered an effective way of giving new figures of people represented in organisations. Today, television and radio are greatly used as means of communication among people. They have crucial effects on peoples' lives such that governments can use them to promote knowledge about the role of women in senior leadership positions through training programmes, movies and TV shows. The role of women in top management position can also be featured in books from the elementary to high school level as well as in universities. This can serve as a way of promoting gender equality in the minds of the young and to prevent them from adopting negative traditional social attitudes towards women. In the same way, newspapers can be used to highlight the importance of having women in top management positions (Fallahi & Rahpaymaelizehee, 2015).

Furthermore, the United Nations is very crucial in promoting women's roles in top management positions across the world. The UN usually holds various seminars and workshops on this issue particularly in developing countries that are less familiar with this subject using media. Similarly, NGOs play an important role in organising training workshops for senior managers and creating awareness on these issues. In order to overcome barriers to top management positions, women themselves should have high expectations even before starting their careers and aim to rise to the levels they desire.

2.4.2 Educating women

Education and skills development is one of the most important and sustainable interventions needed to assist women effectively and to influence the future of young girls effectively. Given that women account for more than half of the global talent pool, the future competitiveness of a country will increasingly depend on how well it educates its young women. Blue Rose Compass, an NGO focused on working solely in conflict regions and on specifically educating women and girl refugees in Africa and the Middle East has highlighted the large the gap in education and gender parity in the global labour force. While girls have a higher graduation rate from secondary schools in the Middle East than in Africa, the Middle East has by far the largest 23

Gender Parity Gap by not creating an enabling environment for women to enter the labour force (O’Neil & Domingo, 2017; Fallahi & Rahpaymaelizehee, 2015).

The development of sound educational systems should thus be at the core of any government’s strategy to raise the quality of life of all its citizens. That said, in conflict states, it is necessary to look at education in relation to the needs of the specific state (i.e. in terms of economic growth and job creation). However, how this can be achieved in particular in war-torn states where day-to-day survival is often the primary priority and education a mere luxury is a difficult question. Financial investment in the education of females is one of the answers but is insufficient. Equipping young women with managerial skills is vital (O’Neil & Domingo, 2017; Fallahi & Rahpaymaelizehee, 2015). The aforesaid can be achieved through the following: equipping young women with the technical and leadership skills to effect change organisations and institutions; building systems that make young women accountable for the success of their organisations and institutions; instilling a culture of managing among women; and actively investing in women’s adult education by improving the quality, integrity and accessibility of education and training institutions

2.4.3 Uplifting the role of women in society through entrepreneurship

The disturbance of established norms can have unintended positive effects on the status and role of women in their societies. New roles hold new opportunities. For example, women’s social and economic responsibilities may increase when they are obliged to take over the responsibility of supporting their households (O’Neil & Domingo, 2017; Fallahi & Rahpaymaelizehee, 2015). Often this requires learning new skills that enable women to perform jobs previously held by men or that prepare them for entrepreneurial income-generating activities. This can help women achieve greater financial independence and lead to long-term changes in the gendered division of labour.

However, care should be exercised during the implementation of programmes to ensure the women truly see the fruits of their labour. In many African countries, women have taken the lead farming role, but the men pick up the pay check. Basically, the women are doing the work, learning new skills and feeling empowered but they are not capitalising on their work financially. In Somalia, women who had traditionally helped support their families through the sale of agricultural products, expanded their sales to include livestock and other products when the men were away fighting. When the men returned after the conflict, the women continued to work in these new areas because for various reasons many men were unable to work (O'Neil & Domingo, 2017; Fallahi & Rahpaymaelizehee, 2015).

2.4.4 Enabling the political empowerment of women

The political empowerment of women is regarded as the main route to improving their status as it provides them with a voice within key decision-making processes. History has shown that strong women leaders have the fortitude to propel countries (and by extension, the businesses that operate within those countries) onto a positive trajectory. An example of conflict-induced gender inequality is Sierra Leone. This inequality is attributed to a long-standing history of conflict marked by a history of colonialism and heightened by the civil war of 1992. Sierra Leonean women are today among the most marginalised in the world – socially, economically and politically. However, the country has made progress since the end of the civil war, bolstered by post-conflict reconstruction programmes and donor pressure. Collectively, these efforts offer new opportunities for women's progress and promises developments in neighbouring post-conflict countries (O'Neil & Domingo, 2017; Fallahi & Rahpaymaelizehee, 2015).

2.4.5 Redesign mentoring programmes to focus on getting women into managerial positions

Some companies have recognised the importance of mentoring and have instituted formal sponsorship programmes for women. Women with good leadership skills are mentored for the benefit of organisations and institutions. Senior leaders should look for high performers who might get passed over by other talented individuals who are not well represented in senior managerial positions (Carter & Silva, 2009). Men are perceived to have always had senior mentors which makes it easy for them to be promoted to senior management positions. Moreover, men's mentors are more likely than women's to be CEOs or top executives, and they use their power to open doors for their mentees. For their part, women's mentors, are often more junior than the men's, and simply help them to become more self-aware and offer career advice (Ibarra, Carter & Silva, 2010).

Women's broad informal networks might sometimes compensate for the lack of a heavy-lifting mentor, but they tend to provide fewer career returns than men's. Everyone has professional contacts and social contacts – think LinkedIn and Facebook – with some degree of overlap between the two groups. Since men still hold most top positions, on average, the overlap between play and work tends to be higher for men than it is for women. They can play golf on the weekend with the same manager who will guide them through the corporate labyrinth during the week, to cite the stereotype. The split among the two distinct kinds of networks that is more typical for women means that it takes more time for enough senior colleagues to get to know a woman personally which makes them sponsor someone that can vouch for her readiness all the more essential (O'Neil & Domingo, 2017; Fallahi & Rahpaymaelizehee, 2015).

How can a society and business best move the needle? They can make a significant difference by overcoming gender stereotypes in hiring and revamping talent identification processes to eradicate subtle but pervasive gender biases in expectations of what makes a leader; overhauling assignment processes so women get on the path that leads to the top; and re-engineering mentoring programmes so they create sponsors for women in strategic roles. The gender imbalance in leadership positions in the private sector continues to disappoint and frustrate leaders who have put considerable money and effort behind various initiatives to advance women and yet rarely get breakthrough results for their investments.

2.4.6 Expunge subtle gender biases about what makes a leader from performance management and succession planning processes

How can biases in talent management systems be eliminated? Senior leadership, HR departments, managers and employees must develop and embrace a broader perspective of what makes an effective leader and become proficient in recognising leadership potential in 'non-traditional' candidates. A catalyst assessment of talent management systems found that companies that fail to guard against gender bias often rely on stereotypically feminine or masculine characteristics in job descriptions and performance appraisals. A more inclusive talent management system should gauge employees on actual results and potential, not simply characteristics subject to biased perspectives (Warren, 2009).

2.5 Conceptual and theoretical framework

A theoretical framework is defined as a guide that researchers use in a broad field of research by expounding on an essential principle in regard to the research subject (Imenda, 2014; Khan, 2010). Moreover, theoretical frameworks are also important in providing clusters of suppositions, ideas, and procedures of clarification (Neuman, 2000). It is regarded as an organised illustration of how concepts relate to each other (Awang, 2014). Imenda (2014) believes that a theoretical framework is the application of a theory, or a set of concepts drawn from one and the same theory, to offer an explanation of an event, or shed some light on a particular phenomenon or research problem. Thus, it could refer to, for instance, the set theory, evolution, quantum mechanics, particulate theory of matter, or similar pre-existing generalisation such as Newton's laws of motion, gas laws, that could be applied to a given research problem deductively.

Similarly, Ocholla and Le Roux (2011) consider a theoretical framework as that part of a research proposal or study that sets out to describe the research question (hypothesis) and the line of inquiry and methodology used to answer it. They explain further that a theoretical framework is quantitatively geared towards improving clarity, correctness and usefulness in research. They also claim that it refers to the agenda, outline, and theoretical construct of a research approach and that it normally precedes the literature review. Thus, concepts and constructs are used at a theoretical level while variables are used at the empirical level as explanations or interventions. As such, theories are generalisations about variables and the relationships amongst them.

According to Ngulube (2015), there are seven main characteristics of a theoretical framework:

- It serves as a basis of a research plan;
- It situates the researcher within a scholarly discourse and links the study to the broader body of literature;
- It provides a frame within which a problem under investigation can be understood (Bryman, 2012:20);
- It shapes the research questions and helps to focus the study;
- It allows the researcher to narrow the project down to manageable size;
- It offers a plan for data collection; and
- It operates as a tool to interpret research findings.

It can be said that a theoretical framework used for any study should have several of these characteristics to be a good analytical framework around which to build the study. As such, the aforementioned characteristics of the theoretical framework demonstrate that it is possible to apply theoretical frameworks in addressing the research objectives, research questions and a problem statement of any study.

2.6 Critical mass theory

This study uses Childs and Krook's model of Substantive Representation of Women in Politics as its theoretical framework. Although it focuses on women's political representation, the model holds resonance beyond women's representation in politics to women's representation in all aspects of public life including in the private sector. Essentially, the model holds that in the now globally accepted drive to mainstream women into all aspects of public life, attention should begin to move away from numbers (descriptive representation of women) to quality (substantive representation of women). Therefore, central to this thinking is the debate on critical mass (numbers) of women versus critical acts (the quality of outcomes of a few women) who make a difference. This is coming in the light of growing realisation that having more women representation in politics or public and private organisations does not automatically equate to quality outcomes or these women making a qualitative difference compared to men. Therefore, the contribution Childs and Krook makes in their model is that a focus on the quality of women's representation will raise new questions around not only the type of women representative and how they become women's representatives, but also around the conditions under which these women representatives do their work. In terms of outline, the researcher shall undertake a brief overview of the critical mass theory, the critical mass versus critical acts debate and the substantive political representation of women.

2.6.1 The origin of critical mass theory

The notion of a critical mass was borrowed from nuclear physics, where it refers to the quantity needed to start a chain reaction, an irreversible turning point, a take-off into a new situation or process (Dahlerup, 1988). In that light, the term 'critical mass' infers that the size of the minority is crucial and that to women in politics a fundamental change may happen long before they reach the 50 (or maybe 60) percent of the seats. It is argued that it takes a certain minimum representation, for example, 30%, before the minority, here women, are able to make a substantial difference in politics (Dahlerup, 1988). Critical mass theory has played a significant role for women politicians themselves as well as for those advocating increased representation for women in politics, most recently for the many who advocate introducing electoral gender quotas (Dahlerup, 2005). When critical mass theory was introduced in the 1980s, its primary purpose was to be applied to situations where women had not reached 30% in parliaments or local councils. Dahlerup (1988) demonstrates need for major changes until women's representation had reached a critical mass, because having only small numbers of women in politics tends to be tokenistic. As such, the move from a small to a large minority is significant. Thus numbers, or rather percentages, count (Dahlerup, 1988).

The theory of critical mass is widely used to understand the relationship between the percentage of female policymakers and the passage of legislation beneficial to women as a group. In that light, women's political representation is considered ‘critical mass’ (Childs & Krook, 2008). Critical mass theory is popular in politics, business, education, and law as it provides solutions to the challenges of gender representation. It has gained popularity and traction in real-world debates and researchers have begun to query its legitimacy and helpfulness. It is believed that the strength of the theory relates to the insight it provides on policy outcomes from groups with a certain percentage of women or minorities (Broome, Conley & 29

Krawiec, 2010). It is often credited for its effectiveness in addressing the low representation of women in politics and workplace environments.

Over the past twenty years, critical mass theory has gained wide currency among politicians, the media and international organisations in regard to measures that bring more women into political office (Grey, 2006; Krook, 2005). However, gender and politics scholars have become increasingly sceptical of the concept as they have discovered other relationships between the numbers of women elected and the passage of legislation beneficial to women as a group. One scholar finds, for example, that women make a difference – and, indeed, perhaps a greater difference – when they form a very small minority (Crowley, 2004). Another scholar observed that an increase in the proportion of women elected actually decreases the likelihood that individual female legislators will act on behalf of women as a group (Carroll, 2001). These developments have precipitated a crisis of confidence in critical mass theory leading many to question its continued utility and relevance as a concept in research on the substantive representation of women (Childs, 2004; Saweret et al., 2006).

Kanter, (1977) identified three main problems of the poor representation of women in senior positions in both public and private institutions. He argues that women tend to function as token individuals in organisations due to performance pressures which require them to overachieve or limit their visibility. They also tend to experience token isolation, a situation that forces them to remain as outsiders or become insiders by being a ‘woman-prejudiced-against women’; and lastly, role entrapment, which obliges them to choose between alternative female stereotypes like the mother, the seductress, the pet or the iron maiden. This makes it very difficult for women working together in the same institution to generate powerful alliances (Kanter,1977:966). The absence of better representation of women in organisations is thus capable of creating a counterculture that leaves, they will always be left as tokens with women with little choice of accepting the culture of male domination (Kanter, 1977:231). This kind of tokenism becomes self-perpetuating: rather than paving the way for others, it reinforces low numbers of women, leaving outside intervention as the only means for increasing their presence (Kanter, 1977: 998). 30

Kanter (1977) argues that these situations can still change in the transition from a skewed to a tilted group. With increases in relative numbers, minority members are potential allies that can form coalitions, and can affect the culture of the group. By contrast, it is also believed that with an increase in relative numbers, minority members can also begin to become individuals differentiated from each other' (Kanter, 1977). Women in tilted groups can evade performance pressures and token isolation which had previously prevented them from forming coalitions with other women, as well as escape role entrapment, so that they can pursue interests that may not conform with female stereotypes (Childs & Krook, 2008). Kanter (1977) believes that change ultimately depends on the choices of individuals regardless of the minority status of the gender. In this regard, she is of the view that even when the number of women remains low, the presence of 'feminist' or 'women-identified-women' can reduce performance pressures, token isolation and role entrapment if the particular women involved form coalitions (238).

Notwithstanding, Kanter acknowledges that two tokens can easily be divided and kept apart by a large group of people. Minorities are also easily overcome by large groups. For example, Kanter (1977) demonstrated how proportions affect the abilities of tokens to fulfil their roles as employees where job performance is related to economic efficiency and assessed daily by superiors in the job hierarchy. This contrasts with legislators, whose job priorities remain the prerogative of individuals and political parties and are judged on a multi-year basis by voters (Bratton, 2005).

Given her lack of an explicitly gendered lens, Kanter leaves the role of men in these situations under-analysed. While she recognises that men who are not used to interacting with women are often "more confused than hostile", she also notes several who are "openly angry" and simply do not know how to interact with a woman who is not their wife or their secretary on the basis that they went to "all-male technical schools" (Kanter, 1977:42). Yet these reactions cannot be understood without a prior theory of patriarchal gender relations, and in glossing over them Kanter underplays the potential for backlash against women in occupations "normatively defined as men's work" (Yoder, 1991:188). 31

2.6.2 The critical mass versus critical acts debate

Childs and Krooks (2009) explore how critical mass theory and critical acts view the effectiveness of the representation of women in parliament or any institution. Critical acts are considered as representatives of women who initiate policy proposals on their own and/or embolden others to take steps to promote policies for women regardless of the numbers of female representatives. Critical acts include the recruitment of other women, the introduction of quotas for women, and new equality legislation and equality institutions. Critical acts depend, crucially, on “the willingness and ability of the minority to mobilise the resources of the organisation or institution to improve the situation for themselves and the whole minority group” (Childs & Krooks, 2009:138). It is argued that in critical acts, numbers do not really matter because what makes a difference for women is not the action of all the women in parliament but the action/activities of a few women (and even men). In that light, if we can get the best from women’s representatives, efforts should be focused on concerns such as which women become representatives, how they become representatives and the conditions (structural and physical) under which they work and how these impact on their performance (Childs & Krooks, 2009). In a nutshell, critical acts conclude that small numbers of women may join together in legislative caucuses to promote common goals with great success.

By contrast, critical mass theory suggests that women are unlikely to have an impact until they grow from a few token individuals into a considerable minority, or ‘critical mass’, of all legislators (Childs & Krook, 2006). The theory proposes an alternative approach focused not on *when* women make a difference, but on *how* the substantive representation of women occurs, and not on what *women* do, but on what *specific actors* do. Notably, critical mass theory believes that women should be many in law-making chambers and will thus be able to make an impact on one another and promote legislation related to women’s issues.

2.7 The relevance of social learning theory to this study

The relevance of any model is measured by its capability to achieve the desired goal (Dlamini, 2016). The model chosen adopted in this study, which examines the representation of women in senior management positions in Transnet in Richards

Bay, highlights the need for both genders to be well represented in senior management positions in both public and private organisations. Critical mass theory is appropriate to the study because there are very few women who are members of senior management at Transnet company. As Kanter (1977:208) has observed, where the ratio of a minority group to a dominant group becomes 35:65, the members of the minority group have the potential to become allies, to form coalitions and to affect the culture of the overall group. Similarly, Martin, Knopoff and Beckman (1998:433) argue that “if an organisation has an unusual prevalence of women, this may make visible some phenomena that would surface less frequently and less obviously in a more conventional, male dominated setting”. They suggest that if an organisation has at least 15-22% of women at the highest levels, a different set of emotional norms might emerge.

Several studies have shown that critical mass theory has the potential to bring about change in any organisation (Honour, Barry and Palnitkar 2003; Dahlerup 1988). Dahlerup (1988:296) pointed out that “the willingness and ability of the minority to mobilise the resources of the organisation or institution to improve the situation for themselves and the whole minority group” is crucial for change. This means that small numbers of women can recruit other women to introduce quotas, legislation and other initiatives that support women in high-profile positions. Furthermore, Ely (1995) has argued that a critical mass of women in organisations is necessary for enduring change, especially in relation to attracting further women, but the level at which women are appointed and the power they exercise at those levels are more important than just having a balance of numbers between men and women. The study also considered the theory because few women are certainly being embraced by many organisations as a useful starting point by feminist researchers who have examined the influence of women in legislative institutions and political parties (Studlar & McAllister, 2002).

Based on the above, this study examines the gendered impact on large organisations of women’s presence and practices in senior management where women constituted a ‘critical mass’. The researcher noted with concern that gender equity in organisational settings still remains subtle and, despite the efforts applied by women, the voice of women remain unheard. This has implications for gender 33 equity at senior levels. In mainstream organisation, there has been a tendency to equate gender with women or what it is to be female or feminine, and to conceive of organisations themselves as being gender neutral. From such a perspective, the problem of gender inequity has been addressed, according to Meyerson and Ely (2003), in three main ways: firstly, fixing the women, secondly, creating equal opportunity, thirdly, celebrating the feminine. It is argued that fixing the women has to do with focusing on minimising the differences between men and women by giving women access to opportunities such as education and training to enable them to compete as equals in the workplace.

The principle of creating equal opportunity means the elimination of structural and procedural barriers to women’s advancement and recognising that “differential structures of opportunities and power block women’s access and advancement” (Meyerson and Ely 2003, 131). The last principle is celebrating the feminine which is a strategy that emphasises and values management skills that women are more likely to acquire and practise such as nurturing and caring (Meyerson & Kolb, 2000).

2.8 Summary

This chapter has analysed the literature on the challenges faced by women in leadership. The chapter has spelt out those challenges that women are faced with and the hindrances to presence of women in top management positions. The literature has highlighted the structures that can assist in the promotion of women to senior management positions. Additionally, strategies that can be used to promote women to management positions have been discussed in detail.

The chapter also has demonstrated that critical mass theory can be used as an analytical tool to understand change in politics and organisations in order to balance representation of men and women. In particular, this new approach allows for more careful study of the ‘critical actors’ in women’s substantive representation. Male or female, these legislators can be identified as those who initiate policy proposals on their own and often – but not necessarily – embolden others to take steps to promote policies for women, regardless of the number of female representatives present in a particular institution. Attention to these actors offers new opportunities for exploring the legislative behaviour of women – and men – who mobilise on behalf of women as a group, and thus for identifying various possible paths to the improved substantive representation of women’s concerns. The next chapter will focus on the research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the methodology employed in the study is described in detail. The chapter begins with a definition of research methodology which is considered as a plan of action (Kumar, 2014:122). It outlines the research design, target population, sampling, research instruments data collection instruments.

3.2 Research paradigm

Social researchers use research paradigms to define how they view and perceive the whole world (Mertens, 1998). Research paradigms are used by researchers to investigate the core theme of their research project in the discipline of their curiosity and are used as core essential outlines where scientists systematise their remarks (Babbie, 2010; McKerchar, 2008). Research paradigms guide the process of inquiry and forms the basis for the practice of science by directing the researcher towards appropriate research methods and methodologies, depending on the nature of the phenomenon being investigated (Clarke, 1999). There are three main types of research paradigms, namely positivism, interpretivism/constructivism and post-positivism (Pickard, 2013; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). The three main research paradigms are discussed as follows.

3.2.1 Positivism

In positivist research, researchers consider boffins as eyewitnesses of social truth (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). It can be said that the societal ecosphere is usually studied by means of data gathering method (Mertens, 1998). Oakley (2000) argues that positivist research considers objectivity as the truth and subjectivity as lies. Positivism as a type of research paradigm is widely used and well established in universities worldwide. It strives to investigate, confirm, and predict law-like patterns of behaviour; commonly used in natural sciences, physical science, and to some extent, in the social sciences, especially where large sample sizes are involved. In a nutshell, the focus of this research paradigm is on the objectivity of the research process (Creswell, 2014). This paradigm was not used in this study because this is not a quantitative study.

3.2.2 Post-positivism

The post-positivist research paradigm is used to challenge the traditional belief of the exact reality of knowledge. It can be said that post-positivism admits that people can never be "optimistic" when learning their behaviour and movements (Phillips & Burbules, 2000). It also admits the influence of values and theories in research. It advocates rigorous methods of qualitative data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2007). This paradigm is typically dependent on the types of research questions asked by the researcher, with an intention that each research method can assists where the other is weak. Post-positivism is used to address bias in research (Wildemuth, 1993). This study was unable to use this paradigm as it is both quantitative and qualitative in nature.

3.2.3 Interpretivism / Constructivism

When using an interpretive paradigm, scholars consider individuals and the meanings they attribute to the world as well as their perceptions as fundamental data sources (Mason, 2002). Interpretivist researchers argue that entities struggle to understand the universe they reside in. This is in order to understand the historic and traditional locations of the people targeted (Creswell, 2014). It can be said that interpretivism seeks to comprehend the whole research framework at the macro and micro environments. One of the advantages of interpretivism is its philosophical way of making people adapt their conditions, and applying those adaptations to understand their area and influence their behaviour (Creswell, 2014).

This study is qualitative and interpretivist in nature as it seeks to explore, describe, and analyse the meaning of individual lived experiences on the reasons why women are not well represented in the managerial positions in organisations or institutions. The study wants the views of women how they perceive it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others (Patton, 2002:104). The study was qualitative as it involves in-depth analysis of data as MacMillan and

Schumacher (2006) has pointed out that projects that seek to understand participants' views, attitudes, opinions and actions depend on qualitative techniques. The interpretive paradigm is adopted for this study as it was found to be effective in probing daily experiences (Henning, 2004). The study gave participants an opportunity to relate their experiences using their own expressions to ensure effective representation of the data. Moreover, this paradigm afforded the researcher an understanding of what women say generally concerning their experiences with regards poor representation of women in the managerial positions in organisations and institutions.

3.3 Research design

Research designs are approaches of inquiry which are either qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods that provide specific direction for procedures in a research study (Creswell, 2014). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) called them strategies of inquiry. In other words, the research design is used to guide and direct the collection and analysis of data. The research design ensures that the study fulfils a particular purpose and that the research can be completed with the available resources (Durrheim, 2006). It is used as a plan for data gathering and analysis in ways that makes it possible for the researcher to answer whatever question(s) he/she has posed. The research design ensures that the research touches all aspects of research, from data collection to the selection of the techniques of data analysis (Flick, 2009). In that regard, the research design was used by the researcher as a master plan that gave her some guidance on choosing a research method, sampling technique and statistical procedure for data analysis and interpretation of research findings. The current study employed qualitative approach which used interviews to collect and analyse data and draw conclusions therefrom.

The study employs a qualitative research method to get peoples' insights, and describe the challenges facing women in leadership positions and what they require to succeed as managers. A qualitative research method is most appropriate for this study as it aims to "describe a situation, phenomenon, problem or event; the information and if analysis is done to establish the variation in the situation, phenomenon or problem without quantifying it" (Kumar 1999:10). It provides novel insights into the support women in senior managerial positions in public enterprises require to become effective managers. Insights from the subjects of inquiry are interpreted bearing in mind the ontological and epistemological considerations that underlie qualitative research. It is based on this that a qualitative approach was adopted as it accommodates the subjective nature of interpretivism. This research approach aims to make meanings and understand people's world based on their views and the meanings.

Interpretivist epistemology recognises diverse interpretations and meaning making systems in the world. According to Wissink (2009: 7), "knowledge about the world is not given by the senses immediately, but by the human interpretations of it. In order to understand the world, one must investigate how people give meaning to the world around them even when an external reality would exist, it will only be meaningful when human perceptions of it are studied." The use of interpretivist epistemology is justifiable for the study because the experiences and interpretations of the senior female managers is what forms the basic findings of the study.

A case study approach is also adopted in this study given its focus on the particular case of women in managerial and non-managerial positions in Transnet. A case study is justified in this context because it helped the researcher to generate an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of women's representation in a specific organisation, Transnet (Yin 1994).

3.4 Data collection

There are three main data collection instruments namely questionnaires, interviews and observations (Pickard, 2013). The current study used semi-structured interviews to obtain a deep understanding of the subject-matter and due to the complex nature of the phenomenon under study.

Obtaining access to the research field can vary to a considerable extent depending on the kind of cases being investigated (Johl, & Renganathan, 2009). For example, firms or organisation with sensitive information in most times are difficult to access and also find it problematic to release the information required (Creswell & Plano-

Clark 2007). In most cases, access is denied due to sensitive and unauthorised areas, and also to some people who have something to protect or have busy schedules (Neuman, 2011). Thus, approval to collect data might be gained through individuals in authority (gatekeepers) to provide access to study participants at a research site (Creswell 2013; Neuman, 2011). Gaining access to the research site also requires writing a letter to inform the participants about the extent of time, the potential impact, and the outcome of the research (Creswell 2003:65). It was helpful that the researcher is an employee of Transnet and is in a senior management position. The researcher obtained ethical clearance and letters of introduction from the University of Zululand which were used to get permission for the research at Transnet in Richards Bay (see Appendix A).

A data collection technique allows us to systematically collect information about our objects of study (people, objects, phenomena) and about the settings in which they occur. In other words, it is the way in which empirical evidence will be harvested from the source. It normally refers to questionnaires, interviews, observations, just to mention a few (Pickard, 2013). Because the study is qualitative, data was collected via semi-structured interviews with open-ended and closed-ended questions. The data collection technique is briefly described below as follows.

3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

An interview refers to a short-term, secondary, social interaction between two strangers with the explicit purpose of one person obtaining specific information from the other (Hammond & Wellington, 2013:170; Neuman, 2003:267; Richards, 2015:47. According to Aina (2002:84), in an oral questionnaire, the interviewee answers the questions orally during face-to face interactions or through the use of technology such as telephone. Interviews allow participants to debate their interpretations of the world in which they live and to express how they perceive situations from their own points of view (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007:349). The study used semi-structured interviews based on written lists of questions and topics in a particular order although some questions arose during the interviews (Pretty & Vodouhe 1997).

The researcher used interviews because the respondents were more willing to talk than to write and this enabled the researcher not only to explain more explicitly the purpose of the investigation but also to make some adjustments relating to the kind of information sought at any given time. Interview schedules normally have structured, semi-structured and unstructured questions which make it easier for the researcher to gather information that would be useful in achieving the research objectives (Pickard, 2013:45). The data was conducted among women who are not in senior management positions in order to create an enabling atmosphere to receive information about their perceptions and thoughts on the reasons why they are not promoted. The researcher also conducted interviews with women in senior management in the company to know what they require to become more effective managers. This gave the researcher more insight on the strategies that are required to improve the opportunities for women to be promoted to senior management positions and to remain effective.

Semi-structured interviews allow the inclusion of open-ended structured questions. The researcher seeks for the permission to interview and to record the conversation where notes are taken at the same time. This is line with Mugenda and Mugenda’s (1999:87) observations of the various advantages of note taking during research interviews in terms of better data analysis given the accessibility of the information and the ease of classification. Secondly, it allows for the accurate capture of the interview discussion. The study employed the use of semi-structured interviews due to the benefit and the strength of both types of data collection methods (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999:87).

3.5 Population of the study

A study population represents the total collection of all units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to make specific conclusions (Hammond & Wellington, 2013: 173). In other words, a population is an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects and members that conform to a set of specifications set in the investigation (Neuman, 2011). According to Neuman (2011), the population specifies the unit to be sampled, the geographical location, and the temporal boundaries of the population. In this study, the population included women who are working at 41 management levels in Transnet in Richards Bay, uMhlathuze Municipality, South Africa. The total number of women who are not in managerial positions is 40 and the number of those in management in general is 24. From the 24 participants who are in management positions, 9 are women and 15 are men. The study targeted at least half of the women employees who are not in management positions which is 20. The 9 female participants who are in the management positions were used as key informants. Therefore, the total number of respondents for this study was 29.

3.6 Sampling technique

Sampling is the statistical process of selecting a subset/sample of the population of interest for the purpose of making observations and statistical inferences about the population (Banerjee, 2010). The number depends on the truth required, population size, population heterogeneity and availability of resources. The sample size for this study was 35 respondents. The study employed both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Probability sampling is the type of sampling that refers to whether or not each unit in the population has an equal opportunity to be a part of the sample (Pascoe, 2014). This implies that in a probability sampling every item in the sampling frame has an equal chance of being included in the sample. There are several different types of probability sampling which include simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling, multi-stage sampling, area sampling, and multi-phase sampling (Pascoe, 2014). This study used simple random sampling to select the 20 respondents from the 40 women in non-management positions in the organisation. For the group to be interviewed, non-probability sampling techniques was employed.

Non–probability sampling is used when it is very difficult to determine who the entire population is or when it is difficult to gain access to the entire population (Pascoe, 2014; Sarantakos, 2013). Goddard and Melville (2004), Fin et al (2000) and Pascoe (2014) listed various types of non-probability which include accidental sampling, purposive sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling. The current study used some elements of purposive sampling. The study grouped women according to positions they hold at work, for example, those who are working as administrative officers and managers. Those managers that can be reached more easily were first approached and their help was solicited through referrals from their peers that were difficult to reach.

3.7 Validity and reliability of instruments

In research, validity and reliability are of major concern to data quality control measures as they help to establish the truthfulness, credibility and believability of findings (Ndunguru 2007, Neuman 2011). The researcher needs to categorise how measurements will be done based on the instrument used. In this regard, the instrument is validated either through face or content in order to get rid of unnecessary materials that are not needed. Moreover, the instrument needed for collection of data must have evidence of degree of validity and reliability before use (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

3.7.1 Validity

According to Neuman (2011), validity means truthfulness. In other words, it is about how well ideas are reflective of actual reality. It can be said that validity clearly shows the exact research findings as accurately as possible what is really happening in the situation. Validity is necessary to confirm whether the research instrument measured what it is design to be measured. For the purpose of the study, the research instrument was matched with the operational subject area. The researcher measured the accuracy of validity by giving the supervisor and eternal examiners to test the accuracy and reliability of the research findings. The essence of this was to make sure that the research instrument measures what it was expected to achieve. Various methods were employed to ensure that validity of the findings was achieved in this study, which include: confirmation of the research instruments with related studies and professional expert suggestion on the instrument, and conducting the pilot study to test the validity of the instruments.

3.7.2 Reliability

The term reliability refers to the degree to which a measure can give dependable and unchanging results in a measurement process (Neuman 2011: 208). Neuman (2011) also argues that for a research tool to be dependable, it requires reliability and dependability. In other words, reliability shows that instruments are without bias and/or error free. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) posit that when there is consistency with the measuring instrument bringing results without any change that can be termed reliability. The researcher had to conduct a pilot study before the main data collection commenced. Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) are of the view that conducting a pilot study gives advance warnings about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols may not be followed, or where proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated. The study took advantage of using a pilot study in April 2018 to determine whether the interviews would be effective, reliable and valid before the actual study. It was used to examine various aspects of the research which include population, research questions and host of others.

The current study used both closed-ended and open-ended questions. For reliability, simple and direct words that could be easily understood by the respondents and would promote effective communication were used.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations stipulate that research is not supposed to infringe on the rights of the target population (Hammond & Wellington 2013). The researcher confirms that she bore in mind the rights of the participants during data collecting. The researcher was mindful of the participant’s rights to safety, informed consent, protection from disclosure of information and respect for their privacy and confidentiality (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The researcher ensured the truthfulness of the research process by following the principles of research integrity namely, exactness in data gathering and processing, application of suitable research methodology, appropriate interpretation of data, accurate reporting, and non-fabrication of data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

The researcher complied with the research principles and policies of the University of Zululand including the avoidance of plagiarism. In addition, the researcher never created any conflict between her and the participants; never offended anyone during data collection and after; and ensured that participants are not at risk, they are secured and safe. There has never been any harm that affected the participants during the process of research. The researcher was guided by the University of

Zululand ethical clearance approval (with reference number UZREC171110-030) during data collection including protecting the rights of those involved in the research process and the securing of informed consent as well as letters of introduction and permission.

3.9 Data analysis

Data analysis is the logical technique and synthesis of data that involves the application of one or more statistical techniques. One of the advantages of data analysis it that it gives meaning to data collected during research in a way that permits the researcher to accurately answer the research question (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006). In most cases, data is organised in detailed form and is categorised. In this case, data is interpreted in single instances and patterns must also be identified. In the process of data analysis, data is synthesised and generalisations are made (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

The data collected from interviews were analysed using content analysis which can be defined as words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes or any message that can be communicated (Neuman, 2011). Content analysis involves logical groupings of the data with similar messages (Kumar 2014). Open-ended questions were scanned to determine words or phrases that are frequently used by respondents. The qualitative data analysis involved reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes and finally representing the data in tables or discussion (Creswell 20078). The study found content analysis as a suitable approach for collecting and organising information systematically in a standard format as it allows the researcher or analyst to draw conclusions about the characteristics and meaning of the recorded material (Alreck & Settle, 1995: Neuman, 2011).

3.10 Summary

This chapter described the research design and methodology of the study in detail. This includes the research paradigm, research approach, study population, sampling procedure, data collection procedure and instruments, data analysis, pilot study, validity, reliability and research ethics. The chapter highlighted some salient issues that are vital to the present study. Firstly, the main theme that appeared in the chapter was that qualitative methods are required for a study of the challenges facing women to be promoted to senior managerial position. The use of semi-structured interviews enabled the study to unveil unbiased insight and issues of validity and reliability were discussed. The next chapter presents the research findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION: WOMEN WHO ARE NOT IN THE MANAGERIAL POSITIONS AND THOSE IN THE MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to report the results of the data analysis by which the raw data of the study was transformed into meaningful facts. This chapter is divided into two parts with the first presenting data from the semi-structured interviews with 20 women who are not in managerial positions in Transnet in Richards Bay. The second part of the chapter presents an analysis of the semi-structured interviews with the 9 women who are in managerial positions. The women who were in the managerial positions were 9 in total and all of them were interviewed. The chapter begins with the demographic information of the participants.

Part One: Data analyses of interviews with women who are not in management

4.2 Demographic profile of the respondents

Respondents were required to respond to structured questions relating to personal information such as their age, race, qualifications, work experience and range of income. These structured questions were meant to determine the relationships between the demographic characteristics and the challenges experienced by women that lead to poor representation in management positions.

Table 4.1: Personal Information Variables of Biographical Data:

N = 20

Age

Variables	**Frequency**	**Percentage %**
31 – 40	10	50%