



UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**The empowerment of women leadership: A case in the South
African pharmaceutical industry**

By

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the empowerment of women leadership, concentrating on the healthcare and pharmaceutical industry in South Africa. Global statistics highlight that women are under-represented in decision-making positions; especially in the pharmaceutical industry despite there being a high number of female employees. The aim of this study was to evaluate the data and determine which barriers hinder female employees from advancing into leadership roles in the pharmaceutical industry. The target population included female employees from a pharmaceutical company in South Africa and had a range of various levels of seniority, from management to entry-level employees. The technique of non-probability convenience sampling was selected for this study, with a sample size of 40 participants chosen from the population. The methodology of the study involved the collection and evaluation of pertinent data by utilizing a quantitative technique. The questionnaires were designed with questions that were closed ended using a 5-point Likert scale to test the agreeability of the respondents. To maintain good ethical practice, the questionnaires were personally administered to the Quality department at the pharmaceutical company in South Africa and anonymity was ensured. The study's findings have revealed that, even though women are still under-represented in the pharmaceutical industry in leadership positions, there are some initiatives in place to try to close the gap. The study discovered that whilst there are a significant number of initiatives in place to empower women at the pharmaceutical company in South Africa however more can be done, for example the implementation of mentorship programmes. In addition, the research undertaken found that the participants agreed that there are barriers in their home and work lives that they encounter which prevents their progression into advanced leadership positions. The study provides a contribution to the awareness and knowledge of gender-based leadership and the empowerment of women into leadership positions in the pharmaceutical industry.

Key words: effectiveness, empowerment, leadership, mentorship, pharmaceutical, organisational.

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CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

A vital role is played by the pharmaceutical labour force within healthcare systems, delivering the primary contact point to people, providing therapeutic information, and guaranteeing an uninterrupted source of medicines (Bukhari *et al.*, 2020). According to global pay averages around 65 percent, which is the majority of the workforce in healthcare and pharmaceuticals globally, is made up of women. However, the representation in leadership positions, distribution of wage, additional benefits, scientific standing, and access to certain occupations, is highly disproportionate (Weham, 2020). It is estimated that, internationally females make around 80 percent of pharmaceutical product buying choices, but the inside influence and decision making in the industry is not a true reflection of consumer purchasing patterns (Weham, 2020). By the year 2030 it is predicted that approximately 70 percent of the worldwide pharmaceutical labour force will comprise of females, according to The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) (Fleming, 2018).

In 1970, a negligible value of 9 percent of females were employed in the pharmaceutical labour force but in the last few decades a substantial development for females in the pharmaceutical and healthcare industry has been made. However, it still remains that not many females are represented in top leadership positions (Weiss *et al.*, 2018). It is the responsibility of CEOs and stakeholders to recognize why it is critical to make gender equity a pillar of company strategy as this will be of benefit to the organisation both economically as well as increasing their healthcare influence (Weiss *et al.*, 2018). Less than 30 percent of executive director positions at the leading companies are occupied by women. GSK, Mylan and Biocon are amongst the minority of the major pharmaceutical corporations to have female CEOs (World Economic Forum, 2020). This is despite the comparable figures of males and females entering the labour force with higher qualifications in medicine and science. Whilst there are a limited number of firms like Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer, where 40 percent of women are represented in executive committee roles, numerous companies have insignificant female representation (World Economic Forum, 2020). For example, at Bayer, women make up less than 10 percent of the senior executive team. Gender equity is necessary across a company for improved decision-making (World Economic Forum, 2020).

1.2 Background of Gender Equity and women in leadership roles

The definition of Leadership by Sashkin and Sashkin (2003), is the ability to transform individuals and organisations, with the intention of enhancing the organisation. Leadership styles are strongly linked with the general opinions and stereotypes of women in leadership positions (Sun *et al.*, 2016). Regardless of the various documented accomplishments in empowering women, there are still several matters concerning

female leadership, this ranges from a decreased amount of empowerment programmes, gender stereotyping, prejudice, and lower incomes (Gubbins *et al.*, 2006). In 2005, De La Rey (2005) noted that the South African labour force consisted of 41 percent of employees that are women, however 14.7 percent were in executive management positions and just 7.1 percent were company directors. It was further suggested that the statistics may be attributable to gender specific socialization practices and life experiences (De La Rey, 2005). Direct paths to leadership positions are accessible to men however women have to get to these leadership positions through following different paths. It is common for a man's career pathway to be more linear and continuous in nature as compared to a woman's career path. A this may commonly be disrupted due to bearing and caring for children, which can increase the timeline for them to reach executive positions (De La Rey, 2005). In the second quarter of 2021, 43.4 percent of employed South Africans were women, however of this 34.4 percent only 29 percent of board seats in the country's top 100 listed companies were occupied by women (Stats SA, 2021).

The impartial treatment of both genders corresponding to their needs is referred to as gender equity. This includes equivalent treatment or treatment which differs; though it must be equal with regard to human rights, responsibilities, and prospects (Forbes, 2017). In order to achieve gender equality, gender equity is used as the means, through the correction of gender discriminations and prejudices that excessively impact a certain gender, therefore improving financial results for everyone (Gubbins *et al.*, 2006). In 2021 the average South African women received a compensation of R72.44 to every R100.00 earned by men (The South African Institute for Inequality Studies, 2021) In the pharmaceutical industry there is constant growth, however for female representation they remain poorly represented in leadership positions and on senior level operational boards. A high quantity of leadership roles in international pharmaceutical corporations are occupied solely by males regardless of the plethora of proof to support why there is a need for women leadership within the pharmaceutical workforce (Legraien, 2018). Having more women in leadership positions are critical because leaders have an essential function in making important structural decisions, for example employment, promotions, income, and resource distribution which determines the gender makeup of staff (Carvajal *et al.*, 2012). To achieve gender equity in the pharmaceutical workforce it is crucial to comprehend factors that affect female involvement. The gender pay gap is another obvious policy matter in the pharmaceutical labour force as this is credited to direct prejudice against employees that are women (Carvajal *et al.*, 2012). The gender pay gap is inversely proportionate to the number of females graduating from higher learning institutions compared to males. Universally, females have a higher likelihood to be registered in higher education than males (World Economic Forum, 2021), despite this, due to the Covid-19 pandemic's weak labour market, males are 3.5 percent more likely to request for a salary increase (Konkel, 2021). Other notable factors which are evident is the lack of mentorship, lack of networking, less successful negotiation behaviours, and failure of companies to fulfil equal opportunity

regulations (Carvajal et al., 2012). There are multifaceted reasons for pursuing gender parity at the board level, inclusive of better decision making related to greater quality of work and in guaranteeing that pharmaceutical product advancement is reflective of society's needs collectively (Newman, 2014). In low-income countries for example, females usually carry a greater burden of illness as compared to males (Manzoor & Thompson, 2019). A necessity has been created for offering role models for individuals considering entering the pharmaceutical business world. The extent to which this will occur is dependent on the degree to which females are appointed to suitable positions as the public interest linked with the positions must reach the required target audience (Manzoor & Thompson, 2019). The financial implications are also noted in a study involving publicly listed companies. It was observed that businesses without women on the executive committees attained a mean 8.9 percent net profit margin, and businesses with a minimum of 25 percent of women executives averaged a mean value of 13.9 percent (Manzoor & Thompson, 2019). Investigators noted an underlying connection amongst diversity and economic achievement in larger corporations with greater transparency for decision rights and incentives (Manzoor & Thompson, 2019). The term homophily is related to the wants of persons in similar standings to link themselves with individuals from equivalent circumstances, gender, beliefs, and societal status (Blommaert & Brink, 2020). It is crucial for homophily to be challenged, to make the process simpler for females, previously disadvantaged people in South Africa such as black, indian and coloured individuals, as well as individuals from minorities and diverse upbringings such as LGBTQ employees to gain entrance to leadership positions. A fundamental shift is necessary to drive more diversity for women and other underrepresented groups to occupy leadership position especially in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields. Because of homophily, females who are omitted from these masculine social networks have less prospects to obtain knowledge and support from co-workers therefore are restricted entry to career progression (Blommaert & Brink, 2020).

The transition to the post-apartheid era, required the South African government to focus on transforming judicial structures, creating different frameworks and organisations to ensure the distribution of new policies (South African Human Rights Commission, 2006). The transition phase focused on shifting away from apartheid inheritances of racial discrimination, inequity, and abject penury, to enhancing the living situation of the neediest inhabitants of the country (South African Human Rights Commission, 2006). Apartheid's legacy entrenched constructs of inequality which subjected many women, particularly black females, to hardship (South African Human Rights Commission, 2006). A portion of the post-apartheid South African human rights vision and mission is devoted to achieving gender equality for every citizen. South Africa has ratified several international and regional implements, to promote gender equality (Gumede, 2012). In March 2013, the National Assembly approved "The Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill" in South Africa (De Vos, 2014). The Bill encourages "the promotion of gender

equality and facilitates the implementation of policies and programmes aimed at increasing the empowerment of women” (De Vos, 2014). The aim of the bill is to create conditions for a minimum of 50 percent of decision-making positions in South Africa to be occupied by females as well as improving their entrance to education, training, and development of skills (De Vos, 2014). Several institutions were founded to organize and examine the execution of the policies. In the democratic South African constitution these non- sexist and non-racial policies are articulated, acknowledging women as equal citizens with equal rights (Commission for gender equality, 2015). The South African government is interested in and working towards reducing the problem of inequality, as well as developing programmes and policies devoted to the empowerment of women. For South African black women and other individuals or groups that have been exposed to prejudice, empowerment is viewed as a suitable target and is considered a critical development in the effort to unshackle people from repressive constructs and attitudes (Commission for gender equality, 2015). It may be said that the government regards the notion of empowerment as a necessary statement of self-resolve and individuality (Commission for gender equality, 2015). In reference to the above, Ogato (2013: 359) notes that “women empowerment and gender equality is recognized as one of the building blocks in combating poverty and achieving sustainable improvement of livelihoods in a community”.

In South Africa, women particularly black women are lowly represented in positions of power in private sectors, and are regularly confronted by glass ceilings in industry, the unemployment rate is also higher for women (Commission for gender equality, 2021). Men are 12 percent more likely to secure employment than women and, once employed, they enjoy better basic wages, retirement fund and medical aid contributions, paid leave and financial incentives and rewards (Commission for gender equality, 2021). Male employees receive a 30.3 percent higher monthly compensation than females and a 28.8 percent higher compensation when paid hourly. In lower paying jobs women make up the highest concentration (Commission for gender equality, 2021). Women make up 97 percent of domestic workers of which the majority being black women, for instance. Across all occupations only 32 percent of all managers are women (Commission for gender equality, 2021). There are impediments faced by young women in accessing factors of production, such as capital and land, which makes them further impoverished. There has also been a decline in the participation of women in the informal sector which usually prospers with their contribution. The communications, mining, construction, and transport industries account for 30 percent of the gross output and employment, in South Africa yet there is only a menial quantity of women employed in these industries (Commission for gender equality, 2021). In South Africa, women in these industries continue to be represented inadequately and remain largely excluded from making a significant contribution to the country’s economic and developmental goals. A recent work force survey shows an economy where the labour market outcomes prevent the growth of employment, where around 11.4 million job seekers are predominantly youth and women with the percentage unemployed at 46 percent and 74

percent respectively, whereas male unemployment is at 39.4 percent (Commission for Employment Equity, 2021). The results for the 2nd quarter of 2021, Quarterly Labour Force Survey indicate that the labour market in South Africa was more favourable to men than women. It was also more probable for men, regardless of race, to be in paid employment than it was for women. The quantity of men employed is higher than women; the labour force participation rate of men is higher than women. In this period amongst black women in South Africa the unemployment rate was 41 percent in comparison to 22,4 percent amongst Asian women, 29,9 percent amongst coloured women and a much lower 8,2 percent amongst white women (Stats SA, 2021). In the second quarter of 2021, 66,9 percent of managerial positions were occupied by men in comparison to 33,1 of women (Stats SA, 2021). Around a third (30,1 percent) of South Africans were employed in elementary and domestic occupations (Stats SA, 2021). Men occupied just 5,5 percent of domestic worker jobs and women occupied only 11,9 percent of craft and other trade jobs (Stats SA, 2021). In 2019, the South African government for the first time ever achieved gender parity with women making up half of the cabinet (World Economic Forum, 2019).

1.3 Problem statement

A huge challenge in South African culture is obstacles for women. Naicker (2013) states that women in South Africa are commonly separated by race, language, culture, class, education, and urban-rural classifications. In the past, it was the norm for many women to be omitted from the public eye and were pushed into marriages and parenthood, due to cultural factors. Household tasks continued to be the daily life for these women, while men worked and were the sole breadwinners. Gradually women entered the workplace with some eventually becoming the primary breadwinners yet owing to challenges like gender discrimination and inequalities women are often undermined (Naidoo, 2013). In South Africa, some women, typically residing in rural areas, are still deprived of the constitutional right to access land owing to the domination of traditional and cultural practices (Commission for Gender Equality, 2020). This statement is backed by Kristina Bentley (2004) who discovered that in rural zones, women were more vulnerable if they were not married to a male head of a household, having reduced access to livelihoods, assets, and decision-making roles (Commission for Gender Equality, 2020). Research conducted indicates that women are the victims of the main types of bias, where they are perceived as not as capable or comfortable in positions of leadership or are often found displaying traditionally masculine behaviours, which are frequently required by these roles (Naurert, 2011). This puts them at risk of being regarded as inappropriate or arrogant. Therefore, females obtain a gender typecast, centred on the position which they adopt when contending with males for leadership positions (Naurert, 2011).

It has been stated by Hojgaard, (2002) that traditionally social conventions, concerning gender and leadership, have disregarded females, with top level executive roles perceived as a male sphere of influence. Males in comparison to females have improved entrance to leadership positions and encounter less pushback in succeeding in their roles. Typically, descriptors identifying with men include logical, assertive, analytic, self-confident, and motivated, while women are often depicted as delicate, emotive, supportive, and instinctive (Coleman, 2002). Cultural background may have an influence on this, as Tsai (2011) proposes that there is an interrelationship between culture and leadership. A significant role is played by culture in influencing styles of leadership as it may affect and validate the manner in which individuals and groups act at various levels. Females in leadership roles are required in the healthcare and medical industries and there is an abundance of evidence to encourage that. The necessity of a gender equivalent labour force is highly recognized however gender gaps in international healthcare are obvious. In spite of being the greater part of the healthcare workforce globally, females are not embodied in decision-making and top-level leadership roles (Manzoor & Thompson, 2019). The gender gaps emphasize the separation in the area of universal healthcare where females distribute worldwide healthcare, but males take control of it (Manzoor & Thompson, 2019). A Global Health 50/50 report reveals that 69 percent of international healthcare corporations are led by males, and that 80 percent of board chairmen in global healthcare are men (Manzoor & Thompson, 2019). This indicates that 25 percent had gender equivalence at the senior-management level and only 20 percent had gender equivalence at the board level (Manzoor & Thompson, 2019). In global healthcare women are primarily found in poorly paid and often voluntary positions creating a huge challenge to global healthcare policies (Newman, 2014). According to a recent Pharmaceutical Technology analysis report around 95.7 percent of pharmaceutical companies compensate males more than female employees (Pharmaceutical Technology, 2022). The median pay gaps in the pharmaceutical industry were averaged and weighted by the size of the company to create an indicator therefore the higher volume of employees in a company, the greater the impact to the average. The statistics were founded on reportage from every pharmaceutical company in the United Kingdom with a head count of 250 employees or higher. Only two out forty-six companies that participated had a higher median hourly pay value for women than men, in addition it was found that women were employed in 64.8 percent of the lowermost compensated jobs in the industry (Pharmaceutical Technology, 2022).

The idea of gender equality is a complex because it may be inclusive of equivalent compensation for jobs of identical worth; the same access to duties; and a manageable work-life stability, amongst additional contributors (Coron, 2020). Furthermore, the manner in which these are currently occurring and how they could progress in the future differs, corresponding to different occupations and seniority levels. These factors alone create difficulty for companies to execute the appropriate strategies. It may further indicate that 'equality' cannot always be compared to 'the same' because programs must be designed to suit different

requirements; consequently, this can indicate equivalent treatment or treatment that is not the same (Coron, 2020). Tackling gender-based concerns involves different answers for several challenges as women are recognized as a previously disadvantaged group. There are attempts being made for the reduction of gender inequalities, which requires acknowledgment, while concurrently there must be an awareness that there is still a substantial journey ahead. In addition to a large quantity of females opting outside of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) areas or occupations at the initial phase, businesses must assist in addressing this through promoting an inclusive atmosphere in which female employees may feel empowered, acknowledged, and comfortable (Legraien, 2019). There is a necessity to determine how added stresses that numerous female employees encounter with trying to balance their personal lives and work (Sandle, 2021). It is common for women to still assume the primary childcare duties and domestic obligations which can have a negative effect on development of their career (Sandle, 2021).

Companies can implement changes in the work setting with the intention of creating recruitment tactics that have higher inclusivity (Adams–Harmon & Greer–Williams, 2020). Using impartial assessment of resumes, performance appraisals based on measurable metrics and creating specialized mentorship programs to educate and inspire women to aspire towards top leadership roles are some of the necessary steps in trying to guarantee gender equity in the labour force (Malik *et al.*, 2016). Certain industries, like healthcare and pharmaceutical portray change management challenges. Even though leaders may have a sound understanding of the barriers to matters like gender equity on a rational level and concur that changes need to take place, this shift is sluggish and inconsistent (Malik *et al.*, 2016). A crucial element in the process for rectifying these issues is recognizing what may be concealed and unconscious, such as biases that hamper progress (Malik *et al.*, 2016). At every level of the organisation, individuals need to desire change, together with their personal, highly established habits. Changes to one’s behaviour and attitude are bent and confined through socialization internal and external to the work environment making them somewhat complicated to modify (Malik *et al.*, 2016).

1.4 Rationale for the study

In order to achieve optimal patient care in the pharmaceutical labour force, the topic of gender diversity and inclusion needs to be addressed. There is a need for more gender equity in the pharmaceutical industry and deliberating over the main initiatives and programs that are necessary for progression towards this agenda. Considering that the quantity of females in leadership positions in the pharmaceutical industry are so limited despite the high percentage of workers globally is disadvantageous to society. This is due to it being an industry with focus on bettering the lives of people and women are often recognised as global agents of change. To have leadership that is more diverse has benefits in all domains of humanity, be it of

monetary value to company, innovation, or the progression of previously disadvantaged groups (Forbes, 2017). Even though the home and workspaces might seem like separate domains, they are both connected in the manner by which they impact the lives and prospects of women (Segalo and Fine, 2020). It is common for formal education to be a prerequisite for acquiring fruitful professions, and the access to education for a woman is highly dependent on the beliefs and financial circumstance of her family. Earlier studies indicate that transformation in women's educational and economic contribution may cause changes in larger societal structures, traditions, and beliefs (Dhanaraj and Mahambare, 2019). A study was conducted amongst Maasai women in Tanzania by Dutt and Grabe (2017), the ways that women confronted traditional gender ideology was examined through the participation in a basic education programme. The increase in consciousness of the women concerning their rights enabled transformations in their ideological views about opportunities and suitable roles, resulting in higher political involvement. The gender socialisation theory, states that women are raised to be more nurturing and empathetic towards people, some companies with a higher percentage of women in top management roles display superior environmental such as the development of eco-friendly products and packaging and pledges to waste reduction (Burkhardt & Nguyen, 2020).

1.5 The Background of the study

The study's aim is to examine the empowerment of women leadership at a pharmaceutical company in South Africa. The objective of the study is to determine obstacles that may possibly have an effect on women leadership at the pharmaceutical company in South Africa and how the obstacles may be overcome, whilst additionally making recommendations for added strategies that may enhance the empowerment of women in the workplace. A quantitative method was chosen as the approach for the study in the form of an employee engagement survey for the collection of primary data. In the study the respondents in the Quality department at a pharmaceutical company in South Africa were approached in their free time, briefed about the nature of the study, and invited to take part in the research; when they had consented, the paper-based questionnaires were personally distributed to the respondents. Respondents were prompted via email about the completion of the questionnaire and the due date. At the conclusion of each workday, the respondents were visited, and all completed questionnaires were collected, email notices were mailed preceding the specific, collection times.

Data was collected in the Quality department using questionnaires to assess the opinions of female employees on the empowerment of women at a pharmaceutical company in South Africa. The questionnaires comprised of two sections. The first section intended on gathering demographic characteristics, for example the marital status of the respondents and whether they have children, this helped

the researcher when analysing the results as the women in the chosen population are from different cultural backgrounds and may have diverse experiences. The second section was designed to gain an understanding of the beliefs that the women had about empowerment programs at the pharmaceutical company in South Africa, the challenges that they believed affected female employees leadership progression and what can be done to overcome these challenges. For the purpose of this study, the different elements that affect women as leaders or potential leaders were examined in the questionnaire. The questionnaire contains a set of 30 items about various aspects of women empowerment and leadership. The individual dimensions of self-confidence, the role of the company in enabling women leadership, mentorship, and family responsibility are represented in the questions presented. Some of the other elements included are attitudes towards female leadership and additional pressures that women face outside of work that prevent them from progression in their careers. The questions were designed to assess the “global aspects” of equity and women empowerment and can be applied to any industry. The questions are closed ended and did not require a lot of time to answer, simply assessing whether the responder agrees/disagrees with the statement. A Likert scale was utilised for these questions to assess opinions, attitudes, or behaviours where respondents indicated their level of agreement with the statements.

Non-probability was utilised in the study where not every female employee at the pharmaceutical company in South Africa was given the chance to participate. A convenience sample was used inclusive of women in the Quality department who happened to be most accessible to the researcher. The ideal response was achieved and consisted of sample set of 40 participants; this is a good reflection of almost the entire female population of the department. This sample set consisted of female employees in the laboratory as well as office-based employees in the Quality department. The primary occupations of the participants include chemical analysts, laboratory technologists, microbiologists, document reviewers, pharmacists and other quality and validation personnel. The employees possess different skillsets and are from different functional areas, but their education levels are in a similar range with most roles requiring tertiary education.

1.6 Research Objectives

The research should have the ability to accomplish the subsequent objectives:

- To evaluate initiatives or programmes to empower women into leadership roles in the South African pharmaceutical industry.
- To determine if women have sufficient role models for their career development into leadership roles.
- To determine what are the barriers that women face, that hinders them from occupying leadership positions and how these barriers can be eradicated.

1.7 Research Questions

To acquire a profound understanding of the study, the following research questions were recognised:

- What programs or initiatives are in place in the South African pharmaceutical industry to develop and empower women into leadership positions?
- Do women have sufficient role models for their career development into leadership roles?
- What are the barriers that women face that hinders them from occupying leadership positions? And how can these barriers be eradicated?

1.8 Dissertation Structure

Chapter One

With Chapter One, the study's topic was briefly described to provide the purpose of the dissertation. This chapter presented an outline of the research, inclusive of the context of the subject with the problem statement being identified, indicative of the potential reasons for these problems, as well as emphasising their implication. The study's purpose was summarised together with the associated underlying objectives which provided guidance to aims that needed to be accomplished. The main research questions were expressed, this assisted in understanding the manner in which the problems required solving. The proposition of why the research questions stood relevant was given, followed by the reasoning of this study where the investigator revealed why it was essential to explore a research area of this type.

Chapter Two

In Chapter Two the literature review that is associated to the topic on the empowerment of women in the pharmaceutical industry was covered. It delivered the various concepts and theories relevant to the area of research identifying other studies that have been performed in the past. A significant assessment of existing literature is performed looking to clarify in what way do the research questions correlate with existing research findings.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three concentrates on the study's methodology employed to gather and evaluate the pertinent data by utilising a quantitative technique, where the respondents supplied the necessary data by completing a questionnaire answering 5-point Likert scale type of questions testing their agreeability. This chapter pursues the opinions of respondents working in the Quality department at a pharmaceutical company in South Africa, with useable data, of benefit in creating significant conclusions in this study.

Chapter Four

Chapter Four offers the results and discussion of the findings in this study, expressing the responses of the respondents from the questionnaire. The findings are established in distinct but interconnected groups recognised as impediments or enablers to women aspiring towards leadership. The groups consisted of mentorship, self-confidence, family responsibility and the role of the company in enabling women in leadership. Altogether the themes blend to offer a clear answer to the study's questions, the findings are discussed relative to the literature review and associated theories.

Chapter Five

Chapter Five serves as the last component of this study, the applicable recommendations and conclusions are provided in this chapter as a summation, also indicating the opportunity for potential studies in the future. The chapter emphasises in what manner, the study replied to the research questions and the accomplishment of the objectives acknowledged, additionally delivering a feeling on how the research tried to address the low representation of women in leadership as well as indicating how other ambition gaps were to be solved empowering women into higher positions.

1.9 Chapter Conclusion

Chapter One has delivered an outline and emphasized the background, research problem and the initial literature review. The following chapter will deliver a comprehensive analysis on leadership as well as women empowerment.

Chapter TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The entire study was introduced by the first chapter, through affirming the aim that needs to be attained and research questions to be answered at the end of this study during the conclusion component. Various different sources of literature have been researched to respond to the chosen research questions, though a theoretical framework was utilized to further elucidate the subject area. The second chapter will provide an insight on the topics of empowerment, as well as the different leadership styles, traits, and theories, furthermore, differentiating between gender leadership. To shed light on the subject matter, chapter two examines preceding concepts and research conducted on gender typecasting, leadership styles and the numerous obstacles that hamper the development of women toward leadership positions. The study will similarly analyse the barriers that are faced by women in the pharmaceutical industry. The idea of leadership that is inclusive of both genders appears to be gaining impetus worldwide proving the increasing necessity for transforming companies if they were to continue to be feasible in trying economic situations where leadership is under scrutiny. Several philosophies and ideas have been established concentrating on alternate solutions which are expected to speak to these challenges.

2.2 Definition of Leadership

Leadership provides an advantage to a business, setting it apart from competitors, one may develop into a leader through signifying model characteristics whereas a manager is only viewed as a function according to Nizarudin (2017). A Leader may be a manager but not vice versa. The characteristics and behaviours used when directing, guiding, managing, and motivating a team is referred to as the leadership style (Germano, 2010). Good leadership can also be a source of motivation for employees to improve performance and innovation. Leadership styles may be vastly different or hold similar traits and values. Various theories and frameworks have been examined by researchers in the past which allows for improved identification and understanding of the different styles of leadership (Moccia, 2012). Leadership is multifaceted in today's Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous (VUCA) environment according to Bennett and Lemoine (2014). A leader's priorities include keeping abreast of technological advancements having market knowledge of competitor's products and awareness of opportunities or threats in the industry. Ethics relates to the principles of behaviour that is deemed right; ethical leadership influences people to make the right decisions through ethics claims Kapur (2018). Ethical leadership is more than a legal obligation or moral responsibility it must be an organisational priority to uphold the reputation and the performance of the company.

2.3 Leadership Styles

2.3.1 Authentic Leadership

There are principal values that display the authentic leader's consideration and appreciation for their subordinates. The leader allows for interaction with their team so that their character may be seen. Their strong morals and values permeate through to all areas of the company (Klenke, 2004). Ethical behaviour is promoted using this style and is expected by employees in the pharmaceutical industry (Mukherjee, 2016). Employee behaviour is clearly defined as either acceptable or unacceptable as authentic leaders transfer their personal values and attributes to the company thereby removing any ambiguity from the mind of employees (Sparrowe, 2005). They demand that fairness and integrity are taken seriously and have no tolerance for any deviation from the correct procedures. The authentic leader is regarded as an honest and caring person that is willing to engage with concerned employees (Klenke, 2004).

Leaders who are authentic have a self-awareness, they know their strengths, weaknesses, and are in control of their emotions. It is an ongoing journey in the quest for self-actualisation as the world is constantly changing (Klenke, 2005). The mission and goals of the company are put ahead of their own. Their interests are results driven and not for monetary gain, power, or status (Klenke, 2005). Authentic leaders do not hide their emotions and are vulnerable to create a connection with employees. Effective communication in a direct approach is key to successful outcomes, driven by a high empathy quotient (Klenke, 2004). This style of leadership works well in the healthcare industry as the needs of the patient comes first. Medicines need to be produced at the highest possible standards with no shortcuts. Leadership must continuously seek new knowledge for the betterment of themselves and the organisation. Authentic leaders are “those individuals who know who they are, what they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others’ values, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, resilient, and of high moral character (Avolio *et al.*, 2004).

Avolio *et al.* (2004) states that authentic leaders are “those individuals who know who they are, what they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others’ values, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, resilient, and of high moral character”. Authentic leadership draws upon and encourages the combination of optimistic emotional capacities and a constructive ethical environment, to enable the development of better self-awareness, an internalised ethical perspective, rational thinking, and interpersonal transparency between the leader and followers, nurturing more positive growth for the follower (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008).

2.3.2 Transformational Leadership

Research is often dominated by the transformational and transactional leadership styles, in these two important leadership styles followers are inspired and motivated by their leaders through their natural ability to garner respect and admiration (Ebrahimi *et al.*, 2017). These abilities have also been displayed in the charismatic leadership style, where the emphasis is on delivering special consideration towards the subordinate through the stimulation of critical thinking. Although this style of leadership depicts commendable characteristics, there is doubt as to whether efficiency increases occur as an influence (Ebrahimi *et al.*, 2017). A study by Sahibzada, Kakakhel & Khan (2016) observed a strong positive correlation among the effect of the leader's idealised influence and inspirational motivation, which are the two components of transformational leadership and the job satisfaction of the employee. Transformational Leaders are honest, have outstanding communication skills, high levels of self-awareness, high levels of empathy, lead with unpretentiousness, and take responsibility for their actions (Seidman & McCauley, 2011).

Due to the charismatic vision articulated by transformational leaders, followers could gain knowledge about their colleagues and the company, this can increase their self-confidence, enabling higher team spirit, and create an enjoyable work environment (Yue *et al.*, 2019). This style of leadership initiates a change in people and systems. The perfect outcome would be the creation of valued and constructive changes in employees with the target being the development of subordinates into leaders (Seidman & McCauley, 2011). When carried out in an authentic manner, transformational leadership will increase employee motivation, boost morale thereby improving the overall performance (Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe, 2001). There needs to be a connection of the subordinate's individuality and character to align with the mission and identity of the business (Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe, 2001). The leader serves as a role model for subordinates inspiring them as well as challenging them to take greater accountability for their work. The leader must understand the employee's strengths and weaknesses for the alignment of functions which optimise individual performance (Green & Odom, 2003).

Individualised consideration is needed for leadership to act as a mentor and listen to the concerns and needs of employees. Leadership must provide empathy and support and keep communication open (Green & Odom, 2003). The extent to which the leader challenges norms, chooses risks and considers their subordinates thoughts is known as intellectual stimulation (Green & Odom, 2003). Research and development are at the forefront of pharmaceutical businesses as the goal is to provide affordable healthcare for all people therefore intellectual stimulation is critical to a company's success. The extent to which the leader expresses an idea that is attractive and inspires subordinates is known as inspirational motivation

(Seidman & McCauley, 2011). Those leaders that possess this may challenge subordinates with elevated ideals, shared hopefulness around future plans for themselves and the organisation and provide meaning for their job functions (Seidman & McCauley, 2011). By using idealized influence, the leader becomes a role model for good ethical conduct, gaining employee admiration and confidence. Though, the information around the “black-box” by which transformational leadership affects the happiness of employees and their work life needs further examination (Akter *et al.*, 2021).

2.3.3 Visionary Leadership

A visionary leader is a leader that realizes the potential for the manner in which a business should be and then takes the necessary measures to bring the idea to fruition (Kahan, 2002). The visionary style of leadership involves moving the company forward towards innovation and creating a new business trajectory as stated by Kahan (2002). Unfavourable situations and transitions require the traits of a visionary leader, organisations envision the type of leader they want on board then brings them in to lead. Visionary leaders are favourable towards innovation. Visionary leaders move past the status quo and bring in new initiatives or acquisitions. Visionary leadership is all about change and change means risk-taking (Kahan, 2002). The pharmaceutical industry relies on innovation which includes acquiring other businesses. This comes with risk; however high risk can lead to high reward. Visionary leaders obtain their inspiration from anticipating what a firm should develop into in the future, consequently, they put additional energy into developing novel periods of invention and progression. It was stated by Liao *et al.* (2019), that a visionary leader realizes the possible future of their visualisation with the inspirational capability of seeing conceivable changes and applying the appropriate energetic leadership skills. It was found by Gleeson (2016) that there are changeable experiences and viewpoints on the method and qualities required for visionary leadership, these are dependent on the environment that is necessary for the empowerment and success of a team. A good leader hears the voices of team members and ensures that people are treated fairly (Taylor *et al.*, 2014). The leader will be placed in situations where they need to fight against old systems, organisational politics, and external pressures (Kahan, 2002). Due to them changing old systems not everyone will be on board with their ideas or like them, especially people used to a certain way or in the past have benefitted from such systems (Taylor, *et al.*, 2014). Visionary leaders need to possess self-control and discipline to effect position change and form as an inspiration to employees by their enthusiasm for the vision (Kahan, 2002).

2.3.4 Situational Leadership

The common understanding of situational leadership is that the leader, must alter their method of leadership based on the situation (Thompson & Vecchio, 2009). The situational leadership theory states that the same leadership style will not work in different situations (Thompson & Vecchio, 2009). The leadership style selected, and competency of the subordinate is related to this, forms the basis of situational leadership (Thompson & Vecchio, 2009). There is a major role that is played by the situational leadership style around employee performance, where the presence of moral and detailed instruction and consideration of the leader may increase the positive influence on the performance of the employee (Ferdianto *et al.*, 2019). The style is split into four types: S1: Telling - Leaders who constantly supervise their employees, always giving instructions on how and when the tasks need to be executed. S2: Selling - The leader gives direction which is controlled, they are more willing to engage and permit dialogue between themselves and the subordinate S3: Participating - The subordinate is allowed an opinion and participates in establishing how the task is carried out. S4: Delegating - There is minimal involvement in decisions made by the leader and the responsibilities of task completion falls onto the designate carrying out task (The Center for Leadership Studies & Training Industry Inc, 2016). Situational leaders according to Long and Spurlock (2013), can make use of various styles of leadership, dependent on diverse influences, such as their surroundings, resources, and the followers involved. Through this approach they are likely to improve their customer and worker satisfaction, as a result the business profit could be positively affected (Ferdianto *et al.*, 2019).

In the pharmaceutical industry there are different departments with varied levels of education and skill (Mukherjee, 2016). S1 and S2 can be applicable to employees that work in manufacturing and packaging as skills and educational requirements are at a minimum there is a high staff turnover, and most are employed on a contractual basis. S3 and S4 can be applicable to the Finance, Quality and Engineering departments as individuals are required to be at a professional level. The developmental level of the subordinate indicates to the leader the suitable style to use. With D4, the subordinates have high competence and commitment for task completion and are sometimes more competent than the leaders. This can be seen in the laboratory as analysts are sometimes in their position longer than the supervisor or possess advanced degrees. D3 includes high competence and variable inconsistencies in commitment towards task completion. In D2 there is some competence in task completion but low commitment. Lastly with D1 there is low competence and high commitment, subordinates do not possess the skillset to make decisions, but they will figure out ways to complete the tasks (The Center for Leadership Studies & Training Industry Inc, 2016).

The leader needs to be aware of their own cultural views and assumptions, most importantly they should commit to change when necessary. High emotional intelligence is key to being an effective leader adopting the situational style and they should be able to influence subordinates by exemplifying good behaviours (Amanchukwu *et al.*, 2015). The leader should be a virtuous teacher and create a setting conducive to the sharing of knowledge and experiences with each other (Amanchukwu *et al.*, 2015). Communication should be clear, and messages must be understood by everyone. The leader should be aware of their own feelings and purpose. They should possess the ability to process emotions, increase self-awareness and self-management. They should also be able to seek and choose perspective. The situational theory has a tendency to favour women leadership where their competencies for coaching and mentoring are sometimes inadequate. Experienced subordinates that are male often find the association to be pleasing and meriting (Amanchukwu *et al.*, 2015). However, this claim is not conclusive as additional factors must be taken into consideration as variables like capability and commitment cannot be quantified, causing subjective assumptions (Amanchukwu *et al.*, 2015). It has been stated by Nuryanti and Rahmawati (2016) that situational leadership motivates workers to make improvements to their job performance, as followers are more likely to eagerly carry out tasks when there is a feeling of loyalty to the company, and they feel comfortable with the leader and the work environment. On the other hand, Nasereddin and Sharabati (2016), believe that there is no appropriate leadership style universally that is appropriate for every company or companies even in similar industries.

2.4 Emotional intelligence and leadership

Greater interpersonal relationships are essential for effective leadership, determined by the ability of the leader to understand subordinates' emotions and feelings. Gender inclusive leadership is dependent almost entirely on the manner in which feelings are directly or indirectly applied to affect logic and judgement (Ara, 2018). Failure to manage employee emotions effectively costs businesses severely as this forms the basic mental image of the company. Through the management and organisation of emotions, there is likely to be an increase in employee performance. The primary goal of an organisation is to satisfy their customers however this can only be done efficiently if employee emotions are managed. The different ways in which emotions are handled often separates men and women in filling various roles (Ara, 2018). The common belief is for men to regularly be aggressive and blunt in their attitude in relation to their positions while women may approach duties through controlled hostility and anger towards transgressors (International Monetary Fund, 2017). The gender distribution of emotional labour has an impact on the suitability of female leadership in overseeing sentiments in the workplace as women are often thought to be more sympathetic, generous, courteous, and encouraging (Ara, 2018).

Ara (2018) deduced that there was a directly proportionate relationship between the value of emotional labour and expressing one's true feelings, with thoughtful behaviour consistent with work requirements. These interpretations indicate the necessity to regard emotional intelligence as a notion for allowing leaders to understand emotional labour. The essence of emotional intelligence in delivering success of personal as well as company progression is recognised by Rahman & Haleem (2018), where the company defines the degree of collaborative relations among the leaders and followers. For leaders to add value to the organisation, they must display the capability to ascertain self and additional emotions and feelings that have an influence on decision making (Ara, 2018). The communication between managers, employees, organisations, and customers in service organisations, has a substantial influence on the entity's achievements (Fasihzadeh, Oreyzi & Nouri, 2012). The quality of the collaboration among managers and subordinates is determined by the psychological role of emotional intelligence, which also has an effect on the performance of teams in improving competitive advantage. This indicates that personnel displaying higher emotional intelligence comprehend the feelings of colleagues and have the capability to balance the interests of fellow employees and the company mutually. Women often display a certain component of emotional intelligence different to men suggesting more disparities in leadership styles (Ara, 2018). It was observed by Rahman *et al* (2018) that various areas of research cover emotional intelligence pointing out that top level managers that possess a higher amount of emotional intelligence display a more optimal job performance. Emotional intelligence as a result develops into a support for developing and improving leader-subordinate associations. According to Nabih *et al* (2016) applying one's emotional intelligence delivers a significant connection between emotionality and work fulfilment. The evidence points out that successful management of emotional intelligence delivers good leadership and content workers who take pleasure in wholesome interpersonal relations. Taboli (2013) establishes that one of the main features of the association among the follower and leader is emotional intelligence and individual characteristics. To develop cohesive teams and have an open atmosphere it is necessary to have an understanding of oneself and of others, allowing both the leader and followers to share their ideas and thoughts. The organisation depicted by Zakieh & Aminilari (2013), is a collection of people with emotions that can be incorporated into different social abilities, subject to being flexible. It is important to understand how women utilise emotional intelligence for processing emotional information to achieve leadership suitability. Leaders who manage emotions wisely are expected to accrue improved labour efforts for attaining business success.

2.5 Leadership Theories

Leadership theories enable us to have a clear understanding of how and why certain individuals become leaders. Contingency theories focus on different variables in specified settings that will determine the style of leadership which best suits the situation. Fred Fiedler first introduced the idea that the influence of the

situation has a direct impact on defining leadership accomplishment in the 1967 book, "A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness" (Miller, 2004). "The Essentials of Theory U" by Otto Scharmer is a change management system enabling leaders to shift awareness from their ego towards strengthening their capacity in connecting with the highest future possibilities (Scharmer, 2016).

2.5.1 The Great Man theory

The Great man theory of leadership is founded on the principle that leadership is inherited thus holding the idea that true leaders are gifted with these traits upon their birth (Stephan & Pathak, 2016). A clear example of this theory involves the idea of kingship and monarchies, where governance passes down to specific characters. In the world of business, traits play a crucial part in recognising good leaders, however these traits are not the only determining factors in defining leadership (Tadesse, 2017). Researchers claim that there are numerous considerations for a reasonable view to be understood. Inherent abilities come together and offer a range for complete leadership skills which progresses as time passes. This occurs with trial and error or repetition and practice, dismissing the common belief that leadership positions are exclusively for males (Amanchukwu *et al.*, 2015). The title of this theory can be viewed as misleading, as it has the tendency to highlight maleness in leadership, with females dismissed from leadership positions from the start, some however may say that it implies the inclusion of both genders (Amanchukwu *et al.*, 2015).

The trait theories differentiate leaders from non-leaders emphasising individual qualities and characteristics as the selection criteria (Northouse, 2016). This concept was founded during the initial phases of leadership studies and remains under inspection for appropriate factors. There is uncertainty as to whether female leadership can gain momentum in the philosophy (Northouse, 2016). Various traits have been cited by researchers such as extroversion, sociability, and some degree of assertiveness as formidable forecasters of good leadership (McKinsey & Company, 2018). Researchers noticed that scrupulousness and extroversion were found to be positive variables of self-efficiency in leaders, as individuals are willing to adhere to a leader that has self-assurance in chasing specified objectives (Alsubhi *et al.*, 2018). Although these variables are important attributes to leadership, another prerequisite to effective leadership is the capability of managing emotional intelligence (Alsubhi *et al.*, 2018). Even though it has not been empirically proven at this stage, there may be some importance in establishing a connection between traits and behavioural theories, for them to be utilised efficiently if applied in the correct situation (Northouse, 2016). A lot of tasks in the workplace are masculinely shaped and biases may arise when feminine gender roles are conflicting with the position of leadership. It is rare to see females having significant control and power to make decisions under these unsuitable conditions (Fitzsimmons, 2012).

In general individuals are not accustomed to experiencing females displaying their power outwardly, especially in societies that are dominated by men and patriarchy. There is doubt surrounding the capabilities of women and complying to the socially and hierarchically established order regarding this becomes important (Northouse, 2016). Women that are employed in a male-dominated setting face challenges due to them being obligated to alter their attitudes to a more masculine mindset if their management is to be deemed appropriate (Horsford & Tillman, 2012). One of the most significant barriers experienced at an organisation, preventing gender equality in management positions is the progression of modern sexist beliefs (Oedzes *et al.*, 2019). Some studies have discovered that the major barriers in the career progression of women were unbalanced work life schedules, social networking, the perceptions of subordinated concerning women in leadership positions, and other personal influences (Delgado-Iglesias *et al.*, 2019). With regard to the motivation around women leaders being able to advance in their professional careers, the factors of influence were, the potential leadership capability of the women considered, ongoing support from family and friends, good mentorship initiatives in the workplace, transformational mindsets of leaders at the organisation. (Maheshwari & Nayak, 2020).

The deficiency of women leadership indicates that their capabilities are being wasted in typecasts that lead to companies missing out on good pipeline of talent for future leaders. However, some companies are recognising the necessity for adding diversity to their leadership teams with charismatic leaders who can inspire followers and put others interests first (Horsford *et al.*, 2012). The necessity in recognising a workforce with higher diversity, is expected to deliver leadership capable of altering the company's ability to tackle commercial challenges (Horsford *et al.*, 2012). The empowerment of women through the advancement of knowledge and power may equilibrate traditional beliefs and actions that often hinder career progression (Northouse, 2016). Countless obstacles occur due to social orientations that restrict the proficient development of females into leaders at their companies. Open discussions are key to changing social insights for establishing women capabilities, interests, and their male colleague's eagerness to work collectively with them especially in areas of leadership (Northouse, 2016).

2.5.2 Using Theory U as modern method of leadership for 21st century leaders

Fielder's Contingency Model requires the style of leadership to be classified as either relationship-oriented or task-oriented (Daft, 2014). Relationship-orientated leadership focuses on people, by establishing mutual trust between the leader and subordinate as well as mutual respect and openly listening to their needs. Task-oriented leadership is executed in accordance with successful task completion by providing transparent directions and setting high standards of performance (Daft, 2014). Once the leader is aware of their style, the situation must be analysed and they must determine if the task structure, leader and member relations,

and position of power are favourable or unfavourable (Daft, 2014). The style of leadership is determined using a questionnaire which is referred to as the least preferred co-worker (LPC) scale. The scale is comprised of a set of 16 bipolar adjectives along an eight-point scale. Some of the examples of the bipolar adjectives used on the LPC scale are “happy or unhappy”, “supportive or hostile” and “efficient or inefficient” (Daft, 2014). When the least preferred co-worker is described using positive concepts, then the leader is relationship-oriented, as they are cognisant of people’s feelings. If negative concepts are used to describe the least preferred co-worker, the leader is considered task-oriented, as they value task completion more than people (Daft, 2014). Theory U makes use of using an open mind, heart and will approach for co-creating rather than putting people in boxes like Fielder’s Contingency Model. An open mind is defined by the ability to set aside one’s ‘voice of judgment’ as this hinders human creativity and presence. An open heart is created by defeating the inner voice of cynicism to be your authentic self, one must be vulnerable for this to occur. A fundamental part of Theory U requires one to listen to understand instead of just to reply. This is carried out by listening to oneself, others and to what emerges from the collective (Scharmer, 2016).

Downloading

This classification system used in Fielder’s Contingency model is like Scharmer’s (2016) concept of ‘Downloading’. People who behave unconsciously, tend to ‘Download’ their routine behavioural approaches in solving practical situations. From this view, the world is visible through a lens limited by old thinking habits and nothing new can enter the mind. As you move along the left side of the ‘U’ from Downloading to ‘Seeing’ there is a feeling of awareness awakening, the feeling is more apparent when habitual judgment is suspended so that reality can be seen with fresh eyes (Scharmer, 2016).

Mental Models

Mental models are described as an interior depiction of what has an effect on the leader’s opinions, actions, and the relations that they share with others. These consist of the thoughts and beliefs held by people about their expected behaviour towards specific systems in the world (Daft, 2014). Fielder’s Contingency Model bases the leadership style on fixed mental models while Theory U encourages suspending these mental models as a successful leader must be able to adapt to a changing world (Scharmer, 2016). Being able to see the system as a whole, instead of separate elements is called systems thinking. This allows leadership to observe patterns over a period, focusing on the qualities of rhythm, movement and direction that accomplish the performance of the whole (Daft, 2014). With movement down the U, you approach “Sensing” where the moment of awareness deepens when our perception is redirected towards sensing from

the whole field. There is boundary between observer and observed that is removed opening a space for cognitive thinking which enables the system to perceive itself (Scharmer, 2016).

2.5.3 The classification of situations in Fielder's Contingency Model vs Theory U

Fiedler's Contingency Model classifies situations regarding three key elements. These elements are task structure, position of power and the quality of leader-member relations (Daft, 2014). Leader-member relations is composed of the group atmosphere, attitudes, and acceptance of the leader. There needs to be faith in leadership, respect between the leader and subordinates, and high confidence in the leader for a favourable outcome. Task structure involves the degree to which tasks are successfully completed by the group regarding detailed procedures and transparent goals (Daft, 2014). A high level of structure is deemed advantageous to the leader. Position power can be described as the degree of formal authority that the leader holds over subordinates (Daft, 2014). Position power is elevated when the leader has the authority to plan and serve direction towards the work of followers.

Fiedler's Contingency Model states that task-oriented leaders have a higher efficiency in risky circumstances, either being highly favourable or unfavourable. This is due to tasks being clearly defined and the leader exercising extreme control over subordinates, the leader does not have to be liked for task completion, they just need to provide enough direction (Daft, 2014). Situations that are moderately favourable are preferred by relationship-oriented leaders. When situations are not dire, or where tasks are not as clearly defined, the leader may act more pleasantly, relying on their personality to influence others (Daft, 2014). They will not exercise too much of authority and less time will be spent supervising subordinates. Fiedler's Contingency Model suggests that a leader with superior social skills can enable the group environment to be more positive in nature, leader-member relations will be improved, and tasks become more clarified thereby creating greater structure (Daft, 2014).

It is inconclusive if Fiedler's Contingency Model is effective in every situation, for example when the task is highly defined and leadership choices are limited, apart from leaders with bad personalities. In addition, an unfavourable situation is more likely to improve if a task-oriented leader is put into power according to Fiedler's Contingency model. Following a certain level of improvement, the situation might now suit a relationship-oriented style leader (Miller, 2004). The model also does not consider medium LPC leaders, that may be more effective than the leaders scoring either high or low scores. These mid scoring leaders could provide a balance for the welfare of relationships with a concern for job completion more efficiently allowing adaptation to various situations (Miller, 2004). In contrast Theory U can be applied in every aspect of both business and one's life.

2.6 Self-Awareness

Having awareness of the inner facets of one's nature is referred to as self-awareness. This includes personality traits, feelings, morals and perceptions, and the realisation of how one's behaviours impact and influence others. The leader that possesses high self-awareness has a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and is cognizant of their influence on followers from behaviour and interaction (Daft, 2014). Being self-aware also enables the leader to gain knowledge about their self by interacting with others and by a meaning making process that affects the manner they view themselves. There is relational transparency whereby the leader can communicate openly about their feelings and ideas to followers. Through looking inward and engaging in self-awareness you also improve your understanding of other people's perceptions (Daft, 2014). This is highly applicable to Theory U and some extent to the relationship-oriented leadership style in Fielder's Contingency model.

2.7 Personal Mastery and Presencing

Author Peter Senge introduced an important concept known as personal mastery (Daft, 2014), which is an important aspect of Theory U. Personal mastery entails understanding oneself in a manner that enables good leadership and allows you to achieve the desired results. There are three main qualities, namely clarity of mind, clarity of objectives and organising to achieve the objectives (Daft, 2014). Having clarity of the mind involves committing to the truth of the current reality. The leader seeks the truth in exposing mental models which causes limitation to their thoughts, and they are prepared to make changes that challenge the standard way of doing things.

Leaders will break down the denial of reality in both themselves and others to seek the knowledge enabling a profounder understanding of systems. Clarity of mind allows the leader to deal with reality, which increases the opportunity to accomplish favourable results (Daft, 2014). Otto Scharmer mentions that 'Presencing' is the realisation that future potential is completely dependent on all individuals together (Scharmer, 2016). Presencing begins with detaching by 'letting go' and moving to a new inter subjective attachment or 'letting come', realising a social consciousness past predisposed beliefs, extending outwards towards others (Scharmer, 2016). During the expedition down the left side of the 'U' there is movement towards, reducing the complexities of real-life, suspending one's judgments and leaving behind the completely ego-oriented approach for truth (Scharmer, 2016). The moment of being aware continues to expand as we release the old and find a connection to the foundations of our actuality and of what needs to emerge. Leaders should be aware of their priorities for objectives to be clear. The end result is the focal point for clarity of objectives, and this motivates the leader (Daft, 2014). They have a clear vision and determination for achieving that particular future (Scharmer, 2016).

Fiedler's Contingency model provides a means for further philosophies that do not have one best style of leadership as their premise. However, for a leader to be successful today's VUCA environment, self-reflection and examining blind spots is vital. A lot of leaders possess blind spots which are things that they are oblivious to or fail to identify as problems (Daft, 2014). The blind spots inhibit their efficacy in leading. For example, displaying a direct and aggressive style, as seen in task-orientated leadership in Fielder's Contingency Model, will not be efficient in most organisations today. Theory U proposes that the same individual in the same situation undertaking the same thing can cause a completely different outcome dependent on the internal place from where that action originates (Scharmer, 2016).

Fielders Contingency Model is not flexible and does not consider an individual's potential for adapting to new situations either from education and training or changes in their personal life (Miller, 2004). Using the LPC score as a measure of relationship is simplistic, and the measurements used in determining the favourability of the situation do not involve much reasoning. The model also does not make allowances for behavioural change with time. The nebulosity of the parameters used in the LPC scale makes it subjective and free from context (Miller, 2004). An example of this is 'supportive' could have various meanings. Being critical of someone's work can be considered as supportive, but an egotistical leader may not see any criticism as being supportive.

Frequently a gap forms between one's vision and the present situation which can serve as a source for creative energy (Daft, 2014). To achieve their objectives, one needs to organise, as this forms a way to bridge the discrepancy between the current reality and the vision of an improved future. To be an effectual leader, current activities need to be reorganised to let the vision pull reality towards it. Leaders that achieve personal mastery acquire the need for accepting both the vision and the reality concurrently and to close the gap by moving toward the dream (Daft, 2014). This is unlike the leadership approaches used Fielder's Contingency Model where a leader is placed in a situation that has fixed expectations not requiring a vision beyond the limited scope. Moving towards the right side of the 'U' you approach 'Crystallizing' where consciousness continues to manifest as one envisions, and let come the future that needs to arise. The relationship between the system and self begins to change through the thoughtful process of inversion (Scharmer, 2016).

Moving further up the right-hand side of the curve you reach "Prototyping" where the awareness continues manifesting as prototypes are enacted to explore the future (Scharmer, 2016). The relationship between oneself and the system persist in the inversion process as the prototyping progression is directed by the situation of being in dialogue with the universe in contrast to being directed by the observing self (Scharmer, 2016). The journey ends as you reach the 'Embodying' state, the new practices and infrastructures are embodied. The relationship between oneself and the system finish the inversion by embedding and

executing the new. There is a movement away from the observing self now making use of the greater ecosystem (Scharmer, 2016). In terms of Fielder's Contingency Model this could mean a shift from a task-oriented leader to a relationship-orientated leader having more empathy for people.

2.8 Good Leadership Practices for 21st century leaders

Organisations in the 21st century require leaders to give clear direction as well as behaving and acting in an effective way whilst implementing an evolving strategy. The correct leadership capability must be in place to monitor the mission, vision, values, culture, strategy, and goals of the organisation by means of a leadership framework. A leadership framework is beneficial for efficient and effective strategy execution (Charan, Drotter & Noel, 2000). In these times it is necessary to have leaders that have higher self-awareness, emotional intelligence and that can utilize various styles of leadership in the applicable circumstances. These are the characteristics that are required in order to create a performance-enhancing organisational culture. Additionally, the leaders must take their morals to an advanced level of awareness for the creation of an organisational culture that is constructive, ethical, and considerate (Knight *et al.*, 2019). It creates a shared language and leadership practices throughout the company and there is unambiguousness in performing activities at every level. Consistency and clear expectations create trust and enhanced succession planning which will lead to better retention rates and improved engagement (Charan, Drotter & Noel, 2000). Everyone has their different opinion about what inspirational leadership, may entail however the reality is sometimes unexpected for example, many inspirational leaders are introverted (Farrington, 2019). Letting go of outdated ideas about what leadership entails will allow more capable individuals to feel confident enough to be inspirational leaders themselves. The ability to successfully manage diversity and inclusion is an important area for leaders to function outside their ego and self-gain, in complete awareness to create an inventive, productive organisational culture (Plaister-Ten, 2017). It was suggested by Kimmelman (2010) that there are eight steps for leading transformation, "increase urgency, build the guiding team, get the vision right, communicate for buy-in, empower action, create short-term wins, don't let up, make change stick."

Vision

A collective vision creates a boundary for action with focus on the future and built on people's strengths. Visioning engages and motivates employees, provides meaning and purpose to team efforts so they may look beyond self-interest (Charan, Drotter & Noel, 2000).

Performance orientated

Results focused with priorities effectively set, with diligence. Application of situational analysis and fact-based decision making, open to considering alternatives (Charan, Drotter & Noel, 2000).

People Development

Leaders nurture the development of every employee by serving as role models by inspiring, educating and delegating. Sharing of knowledge provides substance to a vision and informs action. Employees should be mentored into leadership roles with succession planning (Charan, Drotter & Noel, 2000).

Team Building

Creating a team with trust and support with relationships focused on leading and learning. Acting collectively leads to higher productivity and motivation. Togetherness is displayed in acceptance and appreciation of diversity as well as positive methods for alleviating conflict (Charan, Drotter & Noel, 2000).

Communication

Proper communication skills require listening to understand instead of to speak, considering other opinions, open-minded attitudes with the end goal being finding common ground in diversity (Charan, Drotter & Noel, 2000).

Ethics

Each element in the company must be consistent ethically. Leaders must be proactive in outlining what employees should do. The leadership framework must look forward and act pre-emptively. Regularly examination is necessary, and it should be updated based on organisational and employee needs (Kidder, 2001). The leader's ethics should always align with that of the organisation. To be an inspirational leader is progressively more significant as aiming for an inspirational attitude leads to better commitment, gratification, output, and a lower attrition rate (Kidder, 2001). There are changes that have raised inspiration to the front of many businesses' agendas. A shift in focus has been noticed, where a major source of competitive advantage is occurring from the shift from product to customer experience, even in companies that are more product focused (Kidder, 2001). Changing the nature of work is vital to organisational success, where employees need to self-motivate to achieve superior levels of work and share the passion with other colleagues at the organisation. One needs to consider the millennial generation where employees are often

inspired because they believe in the mission and values of the company, as compared to monetary rewards and promotions. The millennial generation particularly, “what’s in it for me?” at a company has a higher likelihood to be defined by learning and engagement instead of traditional motivators (Kidder, 2001). In order to attract and retain the best talent, creating inspiration, either through leadership or by investing in employees, is essential. Compensation may have been the main driver for baby boomers’/generation x however this does not hold true for the generation that followed. The millennial generation employees are inspired to work more productively and efficiently if they are in a comfortable and nurturing workspace with the hope of progression in the company (Nabi *et al.*, 2017). It was found by Setiyani *et al.* (2020) company branding, and flexible shifts and team building activities may cause increased motivation to work harder. Transformational leadership was also found to be of the three most significant predictors of happiness in the workplace among millennials. A reason for this could be that millennials are said to be employees who are driven by leaders who inspire others and would be in an organisation that serves to create a positive impact in society (Brousell, 2015).

2.9 Ethical leadership in the 21st century

Ovarhe (2016) pointed out that in the past an autocratic style of leadership was preferred with one person making all the decisions in comparison to the clear, collaborative, problem solving approach used by leaders today. Technology has rapidly evolved, allowing people and businesses to connect in an instant. Globalisation and innovation are key to the longevity and success of the business. Leaders must be able to lead diverse teams playing to the strengths of individuals. Kidder (2001) believed that the focal point for leadership in the 21st century is creating and growing a culture based on good values in the business environment. Leaders are the most influential part of an organisation, and their values directly impact the organisational culture. The ideal principles and values should be modelled by them in order to influence all tiers below. These values should be in accordance with the mission, objectives, and vision of the organisation (Moccia, 2012). The ethical leaders should unceasingly evaluate the needs and expectations of their followers, inspire, and direct them to reach and materialise the common mission and vision (Brimmer, 2007). Research has discovered that ethical leadership is relevant to follower results like employee commitment, work gratification, eagerness to report difficulties to superiors, working overtime for the completion of tasks. As well as comfort in voice behaviours such as constructive suggestions for simplification of standard procedures and views of the organisational culture and environment at large (Brown *et al.*, 2005).

To build trust, humility is necessary, the leader needs to be aware of their limitations and remind everyone to do the same. An environment of modesty and unpretentiousness lets the team members know that it is a

safe space free from judgement, creating a microcosm for idea generation leaning on each other for support (Klenke, 2005). The strength and confidence that the leader has in employees acts as source of strength to carry out their duties. Reave (2005) has noted that one of the highest priorities of workers is justice amongst co-workers. Fairness in the workplace motivates employees as it ensures that high performance shares a directly proportionate relationship to recognition and reward (Moccia, 2012). Corporations are reflected by their employees, so it is important for the leaders behind the processes to be ethical for the high standards of products to be upheld. Organisations impact the community in a direct or indirect manner, as well as the environment. Leaders should evaluate the consequences of their actions as this could damage the brand and goodwill of the company (Green & Odom, 2003).

Ethical behaviour is related to actions, with a leader displaying characteristics such as morality, truthfulness, integrity, and upright administration practices whilst generating returns (Paliwal, 2006). Ethics has a positive effect on decision-making and institutional culture. There is an alignment process integrating the business ethics with mission, vision, values, strategies, and goals (Paliwal, 2006). Accurate, contemporaneous, and objective recording of information is the key in the maintenance of high standards of integrity and transparency (Mukherjee, 2016).

The ability of a leader to share power and increase their accountability empowers their team and creates respect and admiration. Ethical leadership is necessary in creating transparency of the company's business philosophy and effective communication of the correct practices, principles, and values (Effron, 2017). The leader needs to set the example and model the principles for employees to follow willingly. Hertz (2006) pointed that if a company a century ago, utilised child labour to cut down production costs, they would have a competitive advantage; in the 21st century they would risk being shut down by such a policy. People need to feel comfortable in raising issues. The two fundamental challenges are the employees feeling futile, as if voicing concerns are not worth the effort or nobody's listening (Effron, 2017). The other is being afraid that raising issues will lead to harsh reactions and consequences. The reaction of the leader should be that of openness absent of annoyance. There should be a willingness to engage and work on solutions. Leaders who are approachable, wanting input from the team demonstrates a regard for the opinions of others, this models ethical behaviour and leads to the increased likelihood that employees will speak up in the future even in tough situations preventing unethical behaviour to rectify problems (Effron, 2017).

Unrealistic performance objectives and goal settings can encourage people to make compromising choices to achieve targets (Moccia, 2012). Once the risk of failure is sensed the employee goes into a loss prevention mode, afraid of mistreatment from an angry boss or job loss. It is not uncommon for workers in high pressure industries to cut corners on the way tests are conducted just so reports can be completed, and results released (Mukherjee, 2016). This has led to the dismissal of many skilled individuals whose tunnel

vision did not consider that their choices in the moment would lead to consequences not worth the short-term goals. Leadership needs to ensure that employees have sufficient resources, realistic timelines, the necessary skills for task completion and genuine support and guidance (Moccia, 2012).

Leaders must ensure that everyday activities are carried out with ethical considerations and procedures should be designed keeping ethics in mind (Efron, 2017). Employees displaying positive ethical behaviour should be celebrated. Companies with good organisational culture, recognize employees for coming forward and doing the right thing even when a shortcut method would have been simpler. Focusing on the reason for the business and the reinforcement of the good things done by employees will lead to ethical decisions becoming the 'norm' of the company. Employees that are compensated in a fair way with fair workload distribution are more likely to perform in an ethical manner as they see worth in their action (Mukherjee, 2016).

Leaders need to acknowledge that they are held to higher ethical standards compared to lower levels of staff due to them being the models of the company's written and directed standards. If they lead in a manner of instruction such as "do as I say" but not "do as I do", employee will see this as a double standard and not comply (Efron, 2017). Leaders are often perceived as distrustful until proven otherwise, so they should be vigilant about their intentions, as well as how their behaviour might be interpreted. Despite not being able to control every possible misinterpretation, leaders who are aware of the people and work environment will make calculated choices in the manner that they react to stressful situations (Moccia, 2012).

Leaders who make unethical choices for selfish reasons unwillingly find themselves and the organisation on the front page for a scandal resulting from their poor leadership (Efron, 2017). There is the greater need for scrutinising leadership actions as they have a direct on the reputation of the company. A lack of accountability and consequence for unacceptable actions by people in power creates unethical behaviour (Mukherjee, 2016). It may be the managers encouraging misconduct and influencing the choices of the team for higher output. Employees often emulate the way leaders conduct themselves especially those that they look up to as they have achieved success in the company or worked there for years. Controls need to ensure that the company is not creating incentives for unethical actions from employees (Moccia, 2012).

Kaptein *et al.* (2005), states that the first action in the installation of a good ethical policy is the establishment of a code of conduct. This will clearly and precisely articulate the values, principles, and standards of the company. The code of conduct is available on the website for all stakeholders and policies are clearly displayed around the manufacturing site in numerous ways (Moccia, 2012). The code of conduct creates a sense of fairness and transparent understanding of the rules as well as the repercussions for employees and leaders to align themselves. Communication must be conducted in a clear and effective

manner to avoid misunderstandings when dealing with conflicts (Effron, 2017). It must take place in a language that everyone understands and is fluent in making sure that ambiguity is avoided in the message. Respect is very important in being a leader, team members must be treated with respect and fairness to increase productivity (Moccia, 2012). It is a common practice for managers to take credit for their subordinate's work when providing feedback to senior management this practice is unethical and discourages future initiatives from employees (Effron, 2017). There should be a simplified way for sending feedback and complaints to minimise the incidence of harassment, abuse and other unethical or dangerous activities taking place in the workplace. The whistle blowing policy forms a protection for employees that feel afraid once they expose the person or people involved in unethical behaviour (Ray, 2006).

Leaders need to set the correct example for their followers and unethical behaviour should be discouraged no matter what the situation is. They must be genuine and open to dealing with difficult news. The way in which the team is treated must be fair and free from favouritism. The setting of precise, quantifiable, time-based goals prevents shortcuts (Mukherjee, 2016). There needs to be transparent communication of rules and unacceptable behaviour for all staff. Ethical behaviour should be rewarded and will set the tone of the business going forward. Employees should not be afraid to come forward when they witness unethical behaviour (Effron, 2017).

2.10 What makes for a great leader in the pharmaceutical industry?

The pharmaceutical industry faces challenging problems increase in difficulty as time passes due to demands and regulations. Healthcare modification and advancements in technology, government policies, and customer expectations are transforming relations with important investors and affecting processes in unexpected ways (Center for creative leadership, 2014). Individuals in the pharmaceutical industry are required to work long and stressful hours at a substantial personal expense to deliver on the promise of high-quality health to patients. Consequently, it is important for leadership in the pharmaceutical industry to be equipped with both practical and tactical skills to succeed in their role, as well as extraordinary social skills (Iyer, 2020). Self-awareness is considered to be one of the most significant interpersonal skills. An individual that is self-aware understands the impact of the way in which they communicate, the results of their actions, their character, their goals, and their motives (Iyer, 2020). However, finding a leader that possesses self-awareness is often a challenge. Only 19 percent of women and 4 percent of men in general management positions demonstrated proof of high self-awareness according to the Hay Group (PharmaExec.com, 2020). These low percentages are an indication that many leaders lack empathy which is highly concerning. Once people become more aware of what makes them who they are, they are better able to understand the differences between themselves and others, and what makes each of us unique.

Emotional intelligence is created by the convergence of self-awareness and empathy. The higher the self-awareness is in an individual and the greater empathy they possess, the better their emotional intelligence (Iyer, 2020). Thus, leaders that display higher levels of emotional intelligence have greater interpersonal skills. Around the globe in the pharmaceutical industry, various researchers claim that there is a combination of leadership styles. Partha S. Mukherjee, the director of analytical development at Bristol-Myers Squibb, encouraged the situational-leadership style, as well as the transformational style, observing that “transformational leaders have integrity; are excellent communicators, self-aware, empathic, they lead with humility, take accountability, and they inspire by emotional intelligence” (Mukherjee, 2016).

In the pharmaceutical industry there are exclusive behaviours that distinguish a Quality leader compared to leaders in different industries. The capability of motivating and engaging with personnel in an extremely regulated setting is imperative (Mukherjee, 2016). The method undertaken in decision making may influence the health of patients and caution should be exercised. The manner in which the significance of quality and manufacturing compliance is articulated to the C-suite in a business context is also highly important (Mukherjee, 2016). The primary duty is to link each employee to the company’s purpose, which in the pharmaceutical industry is associated with improving public health. It is important to establish a connection between the daily activity of each employee and the company’s purpose (Iyer, 2020). It needs to be approached in a manner that makes sense to the person, in a way that they think about each day. If there is culture based on failure and fear then employees will often try to hide their errors, blame other colleagues, or not work at their optimal level every day. Quality is at the heart of a pharmaceutical organisation and its commitment to achieving zero product defects. Strict quality controls are in place in ensuring that products from manufacturing facilities released to the market follows all the appropriate quality and regulatory standards. Failure to do so or incorrect laboratory results can lead to batch recalls or even patients getting sick from adverse effects and contraindications (Mukherjee, 2016). In terms of a safety and compliance perspective this is an extremely dangerous culture as leaders in quality must be clear about the course undertaken and communicate it to everyone at the organisation. There needs to be a level of flexibility and inclusion of everybody’s ideas as well as transparency of the awareness that compliance is compulsory for everyone and establish that there are penalties if employees ignore this and take shortcuts (Iyer, 2020). It is important for leaders to have an understanding of the underlying feelings that have an effect on their subordinates, members of the team should be seen and cared for as individuals. If team members are provided help in managing unsettled feelings, they will be in a better position to direct their energy towards providing a more productive service, as a result there may be better output for the company as well as patients (Royal Pharmaceutical society, 2015). Strong leadership advocates for knowledge and skill advancement initiatives for both themselves and their subordinates. This is necessary to acquire the relevant skillsets, information, and experience that they require to keep up with future business needs, grow

their individual potential, and gain equal knowledge from their accomplishments and failures (Royal Pharmaceutical society, 2015).

2.11 Empowerment

According to the feminist viewpoint, empowerment has an emphasis on the transformation of power types that occur and inflict adverse effects on the lives of women. There is also focus on local perspectives and individuals, considering women as dynamic agents of their lives and progress (Bisnath, 2001). The mainstream development discourse regards empowerment as the focus on increasing the contribution of women to attain human development and economic success (Bisnath, 2001). The idea of empowerment gained popularity during the 1970's according to Bisnath (2001), given life through feminists and women's groups, identifying the importance of self-transformation and women's agency. The definition of agency is "the ability to make purposeful choices, which involves envisioning and purposefully choosing options" (Mngomezulu, 2009: 24). Kabeer (2005:14), defines agency as essential to empowerment, due to it representing the capability to dynamically apply selections, putting these choices to use "in ways that challenge power relations". Agency rejects the top-down methodologies towards progress and stresses societal inclusion and involvement of women in disadvantaged situations and populations (Malhotra, 2003). To possess agency requires dynamic participation throughout the course of transformation instead of a beneficiary. Empowerment was with the plea for governmental liberation in civil rights and women's movements (Bisnath, 2001). The application of empowerment in social services developed after attempts to create efficient amenities for disadvantaged groups like persons of colour and females (Sahay, 1998). The goal was to tackle individual and societal challenges moulded and shaped by helplessness due to lack of power (Sahay, 1998). Bisnath (2001) states that the concept of empowerment was utilized by women's organisations to frame and support the fight for parity and social impartiality by the transformation of financial, governmental, and societal constructs at state and global stages. During the 1970's, empowerment was regarded as an essential pursuit of social reform to support those that were excluded to identify and jointly claim their human rights (Luttrell *et al.*, 2009).

Malhotra *et al.* (2002) believe that one of the most significant considerations in empowerment is a woman's accessibility to resources and their capacity to possess control and power speaking to their requirements. The focal point of empowerment is displayed in women's ability to control their own fate. In line with that, for women to gain empowerment, they must have equivalent competences for schooling and healthcare as well comparable access to opportunities and resources like employment and land (Malhotra *et al.*, 2002). They need to have the agency to utilise the rights, through leadership prospects to make tactical selections and influential decisions (Malhotra *et al.*, 2002). Despite women being the motivators of their personal

empowerment development journey, there is relational influence of power that people, predominantly men, may use that impacts the process of empowerment. In relation to this, power may be considered, the combination of agency and resources; thus, for a woman to attain empowerment, agency and access to resources must be gained (Malhotra, 2003). For agency to be exercised by women they must live in the absence of the worry of intimidation and aggression, recognising alternate options (Malhotra *et al.*, 2002). Malhotra (2003:2) states that, “there could be an improvement in gender equality by various measures, but unless the intervening processes involved women as agents of that change rather than merely as its recipients, we would not consider it empowerment”. Consequently, agency comprises of the ability to communicate tactical selections as well as controlling resources and decisions which affect life outcomes.

From the feminist viewpoint, on the knowledge and conceptualisation of empowerment, a person that is empowered possesses the agency and power to change hierarchical constructs that lead to oppression. The notions of independence, liberation, and self-determination are concepts of empowerment raised by the feminist’s perspective (Bisnath, 2001). In the mainstream development discourse, the concept of empowerment has been changed especially regarding the goal of concept and the usage (Mayoux, 1995). Global development agencies started to use it in separately from a feminist agenda with the intent of improving the decisions and output of women (Luttrell *et al.*, 2009; Bisnath, 2001). Mainstream development agencies regard participation and empowerment as a tactic to improve the ability of the underprivileged, but not altering the current condition, while experts in alternative development go all-out for social upheaval (Mayeux, 1995). The United Nations (2011) states that the empowerment of women to improve their capability is vital and the key objective of progress. The prerequisite for empowerment is the complete participation of women in expressing, executing, and assessing choices that control the well-being of people (United Nations, 2011). Desai (2010:4) proclaims that empowerment has developed into “mobilising grassroots women, encouraging their participation and giving them voice in predetermined development strategies without giving them the power to challenge existing narratives of development and to articulate new alternatives”. It is important to view the tasks performed by men and women in the workplace with equal value, to achieve gender equality and the economic empowerment of women in the business world (International Labour Organization, 2019).

A substantial amount of the gender pay gap predominantly across high income countries continues to be a mystery (European Commission, 2020). The global gender wage gap continues to persist at about 20 percent despite there being an increased universal support for the ideal that equal work should result in equal pay (International Labour Organization, 2021). The ILO Global Wage Report 2018/19 has stated that, the gender pay gap in higher income nations is wider for women at the top of the income and skills scales (International Labour Organization, 2019). It is often thought that education is a noteworthy explanatory

source of the gender pay gap however on average this is not the case. The reality is that women employed in identical professions are systematically compensated at a lower rate than men, despite having equal levels of education and sometimes even exceeding the education levels of male colleagues (International Labour Organization, 2019). Reducing the gap on gender pay has significant financial and societal benefits, such as “increased female participation in the labour market, entrepreneurship and women moving into higher paid and higher-skilled jobs” (International Labour Organization, 2019).

2.12 Gender imbalances in the South African workplace

The South African constitution assures parity before the law; therefore, it would be a common belief that the country has shifted beyond gender equity as an ethical imperative. It has in certain aspects, however instead of supporting diversity as a fundamental belief, often diversity is imposed because it is instructed by the law and corporations pursue the applicable scorecard points. Despite the strides that women in South Africa are creating in the work environment, extra effort must be done in corporate South Africa to successfully alter boardrooms. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, progress on equality between men and women in the world of work was stalling, and in some cases reversing (International Labour Organization, 2021). Gender gaps with respect to key labour market indicators had not narrowed in any meaningful way for over 20 years. Deeply entrenched disparities in societal, political, and monetary systems were exposed by the COVID-19 which has confirmed the value of the exclusive skills that women offer societies (International Labour Organization, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected women in numerous negative ways. Approximately 44.3 percent of women globally were employed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in comparison to 70 percent of men employed (International Labour Organization, 2021). Around the world, women make up around 70 percent of the workforce in the healthcare and social work and food services sectors (International Labour Organization, 2021). In addition to this they provide voluntary work in community disaster response initiatives at the centre of crisis response (International Labour Organization, 2021). They provided essential services, endangering their own well-being and safety to save the lives and take care of others throughout this global emergency. The vulnerability of working families was exacerbated during the crisis due to the lack of satisfactory pay-equity agendas, societal protection, and care schemes. Even prior to pandemic women were compensated less than men for equal work, they were inadequately represented in high-paying and decision-making positions, yet they provided more than 75 percent of the total voluntary care work worldwide (International Labour Organization, 2021).

The variance concerning the typical remunerations of males and females, irrespective of their seniority is known as the gender pay gap (Bain & Company, 2017). Equal pay differs from the gender pay gap and is

related to safeguarding that there are no unfair wage differences amongst personnel performing ‘work of equal value’ (Bain & Company, 2017). It is not a legal requirement in South Africa to disclose gender pay gaps, however reporting these statistics is a chance for businesses to establish tangible solutions towards the pledge to diversity, equality, and inclusion. Developing and fostering female talent is critical in ensuring suitable representation by women at every level. In accordance with the 2020 ‘PwC’s Executive directors: Practices and remuneration trends report’, the gender pay gap amongst male and female executives differs according to the type of industry and is wider for large-cap companies listed on the JSE (PWC, 2020). The gender pay gap has the greatest significance at 45 percent, for large-cap firms, a slight progress of 39 percent is noted at medium-cap firms and for the small-cap firms a 25 percent pay gap was observed (PWC, 2020). The differences in pay gaps among different industries range from a low 7 percent in finance to a substantial 34 percent in the real-estate (PWC, 2020). In the working world violence and harassment still continue to occur for countless women, these acts of harassment go outside of physical workspaces into virtual spheres. The mandatory global lockdowns since the beginning of the pandemic also played a part in the increased susceptibility of women becoming victims of gender-based violence, as various nations reported an increase in the incidence of domestic and gender-based violence (WHO, 2020).

As of 2018 in South Africa, 41.6 percent of households were headed by females, which amounts to an estimate of 6.1 million people in the country according to Stats sa (Eye-Witness News, 2018). The Top Employers Institute runs an international certification program which identifies superiority in the area of human resources (Bain & Company, 2017). According to their statistics, in South Africa, 94 percent of certified companies reported their involvement in detailed diversity initiatives which were put in place to assist the progression of women into senior management positions (Bain & Company, 2017). Some of these initiatives range from on-site childcare services (9 percent), working on a flexi-time basis (64 percent), nursing areas (25 percent) and reduced working hours (26 percent) (Bain & Company, 2017). McKinsey researchers deduce that companies that have a higher gender diversity are 15 percent more probable to outperform the national industry average (McKinsey & Company, 2018). In the year 2017 there was no representation for women in senior leadership roles for 31 percent of businesses in South Africa (McKinsey & Company, 2018). The newest census on women in leadership conducted by Businesswomen’s Association of South Africa (BWASA) shows that 22 percent of board directors are females, however only a mere 7 percent are executive directors (PWC, 2020). According to the BWASA census Women make up 10 percent of CEOs in South Africa, and if only Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) listed companies are considered then this quantity falls to 2.2 percent (PWC, 2020). In general, the proportion of women in senior leadership positions has been comparatively low, with a minimal increase in representation from 26 percent in 2004 to 28 percent in 2017 (PWC, 2020). With regard to the other countries in Africa, South Africa is on par, as 29 percent of senior leadership roles filled by women, this percentage is more favourable

than certain established countries, like Australia (23 percent) and the UK (19 percent) (PWC, 2020). Nonetheless, in South Africa the percentage of female CEOs (10 percent) is inferior to the worldwide median of 12 percent (PWC, 2020).

Studies indicate that representation matters and its highly necessary for previously disadvantaged groups to have their opinions considered, not only as a token but instead as a powerful body. One of the simple and cost-effective measures of employee advocacy is the Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS), with a good score being between 10-30 and a brilliant score being greater than 30 (Bain & Company, 2017). A challenge is posed to companies with a low eNPS score due to three main reasons: The performance of the company is negatively affected; it intensifies the threat of talent leaving, and it discourages prospective employees from wanting to work for the company (Bain & Company, 2017). The complete eNPS for South African women is negative 4 as compared to a score of 8 for men, therefore women in South Africa are considerably less likely to endorse their corporation as a great company to be employed at (Bain & Company, 2017). A steady trend in the workplace is occurring in spite of the basis of constructive influence supporting gender equality. The South African constitution and the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998 intention is to encourage the involvement of women in both private and public sectors. It is now a requirement in the JSE for boards to publish their strategy for gender diversity and, if voluntary targets are in place, they must report on the development in achieving them (Bain & Company, 2017). In South Africa there are a higher number of female graduates than male, and studies demonstrate that in a corporate setting South African women display the desire to prosper (Bain & Company, 2017). This result is substantial due to the gender inequity at senior and executive levels, given that 46 percent of individuals entering the workplace are women, but women make up only 7 percent of executive directors on boards (Bain & Company, 2017). These figures might be elucidated by the lack of self-confidence among women in junior and middle-management roles, in them rising up the corporate ladder. Researchers discovered that at this level women on average, are 11 percent less self-confident than men (Bain & Company, 2017). With the disparity in self-confidence among men and women evidently occurring in middle management, studies find that women with no aspiration for senior leadership roles make the choice after working for more than two years and not prior to being employed by the company as is generally mentioned (Bain & Company, 2017). The most common issues as mentioned by women as motives for their lack of career aspiration are the misalignment with job ambitions, the absence of self-confidence and the failure to balance their occupation and domestic duties which women are almost twice as likely as men to experience (Bain & Company, 2017).

2.13 Barriers preventing women from advancing into leadership positions in South Africa

There are two major forms in which barriers to women leadership in senior positions appear, namely barriers which are located in society as a whole and barriers that are related to a corporate setting (Kalysh, Kulik & Perera, 2016). The barriers are additionally divided into groupings to elucidate their relevance in the area of female leadership in their personal lives. The barriers are not limited to only senior roles but trickle down to every management level. The barriers appear to suggest that they are encountered prior to women assuming management positions, however they may occur concurrently, at any time and are basically sporadic. Disaggregating the barriers allows for further understanding of these difficulties, offering focused analysis of each obstruction in the management ladder. The healthcare sector in particular is unique in that the majority of the personnel employed worldwide comprise of women, but the channel for management roles is not in proportion to the large employee base. Some of the factors that influence this are job-related isolation, underlying prejudices, and power dynamics predominant in the healthcare industry (Kalysh, Kulik & Perera, 2016).

2.13.1 Sociocultural and legal barriers

There are various structural barriers in countries around the world such as Saudi Arabia, social activities which are perpetuated by typical customs and ideals which dismiss women in certain public settings largely influence structural barriers to women leadership advancement (Alsubhi *et al.*, 2018). In Saudi Arabia prevalent gender and socio-cultural norms, concerning women's professional selections or choice to go to work, and opinions notably affects the admission, insights and accomplishments of women who aim for management roles in private healthcare (Alsubhi *et al.*, 2018). The expectancy of the various roles of women in the household must play has often prevented highly capable and gifted female employees from taking on higher positions. To this day women are still often thought of to be better in the household (International Labour Organization, 2017). In certain nations, there are laws in place restricting women's movement, the industries in which they may be employed and the times in which they may be at work, these factors may influence companies' recruitment decisions and the career progression of women (Alsubhi *et al.*, 2018). Women, Business and the Law 2018, states that 29 of the 189 economies studied, women are lawfully prevented from being employed for the equal nightshift periods as men (World Bank, 2018). South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa are the common regions in which these restrictions are in place whereby 63 percent and 55 percent of those economies, respectively, have these laws in operation (World Bank, 2018). In the healthcare and pharmaceutical industry, these rules would cause a major constraint for career development, due to many hospitals, plants and pharmacies having to operate for extended hours, or 24-hour operations at manufacturing plants, requiring workers to be on call or work

various shifts. This might lead managers and supervisors to subconsciously examine female personnel's commitment to their career therefore the unintentional consequence remains the same: impaired career development (Kalysh, Kulik & Perera, 2016).

Intensely entrenched social customs means that South African women feel that they are going “against the grain.” when they desire to attain leadership positions. Only 58 percent of respondents in the 2017 Bain South Africa Gender Mainstreaming Survey believed that their communities desire equivalent opportunities for men and women (Bain & Company, 2017). A high value of respondents (63 percent), think that the men whom they are close to do not have an issue with women making more money than them (Bain & Company, 2017). The insight differs greatly amongst race groups and, so too will the degree to which different women experience social burdens. Research reveals that the opinions held by close relatives strongly affect the ambitions of a woman. In the 2017 Bain South Africa Gender Mainstreaming Survey, 80 percent of woman respondents agree that their relatives back equal job opportunities for males and females with very little difference amongst the racial groups (Bain & Company, 2017). The women who stated that they have no aspiration for senior leadership roles are nearly three times as probable to say that their relatives do not consider equivalent occupational prospects for males and females (Bain & Company, 2017). This indicates that women still carry a disproportionate and hefty burden regarding the balancing of their work life and family responsibilities with social norms, that remain in place to maintain that women be the main caregivers in the household. The independency between societal, organisational, and personal factors that affects career progression can be seen in **Figure 1. Table 1.** highlights the significant recommendations to increase gender diversity in the South African workplace.

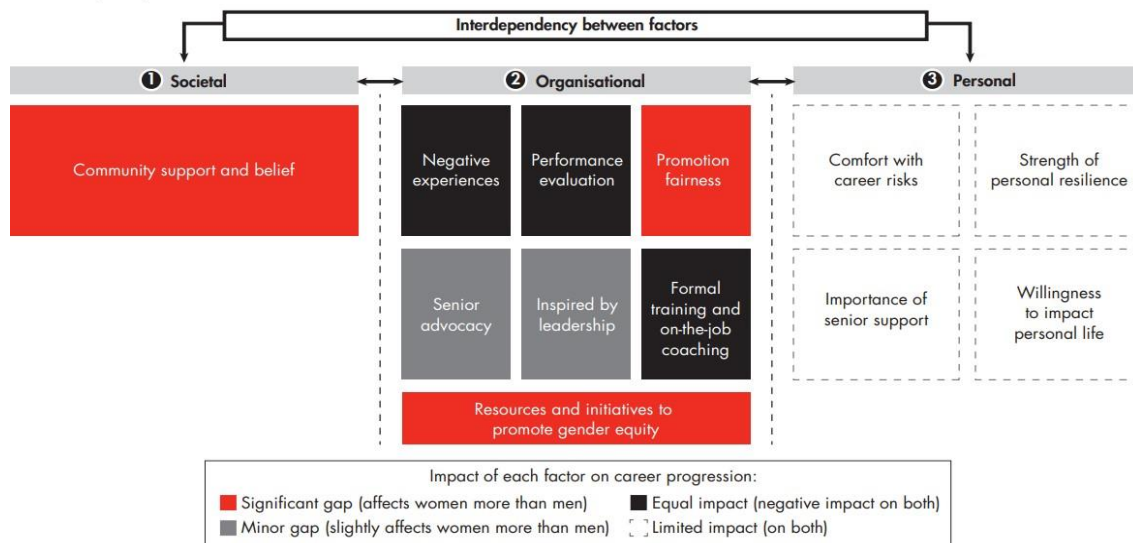


Figure1. The impact of each factor on career progression (Bain South Africa Gender Mainstreaming Survey, 2017 :6).

Table 1. Displaying recommendations to increase gender diversity in the workplace (Bain South Africa Gender Mainstreaming Survey, 2017).

Align as a leadership team around business case and support for gender equity	Strengthen career path for women in mid-management	Ensure checks are in place to identify biases in reporting and processes	Apply a zero-tolerance policy and increase awareness of negative experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set gender equity goals and cascade through the organisation to reduce “mid-management permafrost” Identify the priority issues and dedicate resources Create momentum by tracking, reporting and communicating wins Apply consequences and rewards; link improved gender mix with compensation for ExCo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect women with a formal mentor Champion a range of different career paths for men and women Encourage on-the-job coaching and training Define and mobilise retention plans for women in high-flight-risk positions Roll out the Thriving tool in HR and with mentors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge existing promotion and assessment process Be transparent with promotions and evaluation data Equalise pay to send a strong message Include unconscious bias in core leadership training curriculum Encourage women to do work with people outside their team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create space for individuals to share negative experiences and how the experiences have impacted them Routinely communicate code of conduct, apply consequences, create ombudsman channels Challenge formal view on “networking” Encourage women to network with each other
Diagnostic determines where to differentially spend your time based on what matters most			

2.13.2 Conflict between work and family life

Considering the social viewpoint and the historical allocated separation of labour, women shine in certain domestic areas which are exclusively selected in their care and that any nonconformity may cause an objection (Almaki *et al.*, 2016). The historic and traditional obstacles manifests in market limitations and societal customs of which often supports masculinity, therefore additionally enhancing the gender leadership disparity (Lantara, 2015). This is apparent in the values placed by certain companies regarding reward schemes established relative to time worked in the aftermath of inflexible agendas and seniority, greatly disadvantaging women (Lantara, 2015). In traditional communities it is common for women to take up extra domestic responsibilities comprising of nurturing their offspring, spouses, and other family members (Reilly *et al.*, 2016). Due to these domestic roles weighing down heavily on women, men are inclined to believe that the addition of further occupational duties will cause too much of strain on the women rendering them unable to perform the household tasks competently (Lantara, 2015). Research undertaken in the United Kingdom of women’s underrepresentation in medical leadership discovered that societal expectancies about maternity was one of the most common themes that influenced the career advancement of women (Boylan *et al.*, 2019). With regard to “maternal identity” there is a societal and cultural expectancy for a woman to become a mother, this is an additional indicator of a noteworthy barrier for women and balancing work and life (Reilly *et al.*, 2016). Women are thought of as accountable for household matters and devote extra time weekly on chores in the house (Boylan *et al.*, 2019). Women might

be challenged with either sacrificing their vocation or family goals at various phases in their professional and private life, this typically occurs as early as the mid-career timeframe when career progression as well as reproductive ambitions are on a collision course (Reilly *et al.*, 2016). The challenges of work-life balance, often allows for inadequate time with the family and may adversely affect choices surrounding motherhood (Boylan *et al.*, 2019). The choice in having children is only the start of the struggle for many professional women. The environment that workers are confronted with every day is crucial to worker engagement, output, and employee preservation (Lantara, 2015). Hostile or uncomfortable work settings and the absence of flexibility greatly increases the decision for women to opt out, predominantly when there is a conflict in household duties. The culture of the company similarly has an effect on the decision of women to return to their workplace after giving birth and the length that they decide to continue working for the company (Lantara, 2015). There is an ongoing need for making practical childcare solutions accessible for employed parents. Difficult work schedules and working outside of major metropolises may be challenging for employees with babies or toddlers that require extra care (International Finance Corporation, 2017). If a person were to succeed in these circumstances, it is vital to for them to have partners that are sympathetic, with flexible occupations, prepared to travel and be able to be apart through the childrearing ages (International Finance Corporation, 2017). Gender dynamics propose that females are more likely to become the ‘trailing spouse’ who may move, partake in homebased work, or performs all the domestic duties in the household due to the career choice made by their partner. To address this barrier, it is important to ensure that men, as co-workers and partners, are conscious and involved regarding work-life pressures (International Finance Corporation, 2017).

2.13.3 Occupational Segregation, Skills and Gender Pay Gaps

Often corporate culture and policies are inclined to glorify masculinity, favouring decisions made by men therefore preserving gender discrimination. Advancement to senior positions often involves not just competence and knowledge, with male favouritism posing restrictions on females that aspire for leadership roles (Reilly *et al.*, 2016). It was observed by McKinsey & Company (2018) that procedures for advancements could be obscurely planned making allowance for bigotry and manipulation by male leaders. Consequently, females are faced with needless pressure to bend to forced interactions. Obstacles arise when females realise the unseen authoritative expectations as the terms for their progression to higher positions, often seemingly connected to their limited relations with upper-level male directors (Reilly *et al.*, 2016). Occupational segregation and gender pay gaps are the two main factors that additionally intensify admission to leadership roles (Reilly *et al.*, 2016). If it remains unaddressed, gender pay gaps, may deter women from remaining in the labour force. If women make an exit from the workforce, especially in the middle of their careers, it may cause more delays or prevent chances for future entry into leadership roles (Reilly *et al.*,

2016). Choosing a practical vocation in healthcare may not guarantee an automatic shift into an impending senior leadership role; the attainment of precise knowledge and skills for leadership and management success is a significant aspect (International Finance Corporation, 2019). Many of the female leaders that were interviewed for a study conducted by the International Finance Corporation obtained MBAs or had worked in the private sector without previous practice in the healthcare industry prior to starting their own businesses or present roles. The women depended on their business management abilities and perspectives to effectively go into the market and field. Other female leaders started their careers as clinicians, pharmacists and scientists but eventually realized the necessity for experience in overseeing revenue creation and managing strategic expansion to progress towards senior leadership roles (International Finance Corporation, 2019). Several senior leaders have supplemented their scientific and medical education with MBA's or management training to enhance their profit and loss skills. The high representation of females in the healthcare sector, has resulted to what one may consider as devaluing of skills of these female healthcare workers, considering this occupation to be an extension of their duties as care givers in the household and communities (International Finance Corporation, 2019). Occupational segregation influences the gender pay gap since female employees have a higher probability of being employed in the lesser-paying fields in the healthcare sector. However, statistics indicate that unsolved gender pay gaps are observed in every specialty even in identical occupations, males are receiving a higher remuneration. Gender pay gaps upon admission to a position and at mid-career roles may become intensified with time and can impact employee retention (International Finance Corporation, 2019).

Women experience various negative interactions, the lack of inclusion and sexual harassment amongst other discouraging factors hamper their career progression, particularly those in junior and middle management roles (Reilly *et al.*, 2016). A problem that needs to be addressed is that women often feel like they are not part of the company, due to the disrespectful behaviour or criminal actions like sexual harassment which they are subjected to (Reilly *et al.*, 2016). The marginalisation predominantly affects employees at subordinate levels, deterring women from rising up the company's ranks (Reilly *et al.*, 2016). Supporting female employees, particularly at the level of middle management, safeguards that their efforts and hard work receives recognition and is attributed to them. These women, often feel side-lined, overlooked or merely tired from trying to get their performance noticed (Reilly *et al.*, 2016). Consequently, advancements usually only occur after lengthier periods and the damage to self-confidence is echoed in the deterioration in advocacy scores by females after some years into their working life (Reilly *et al.*, 2016). Research shows that majority of the women feel that they do not have the backing of senior-level leaders, which is required for the achievement of their maximum potential (International Finance Corporation, 2019). Despite the percentage increasing with seniority, for women that feel like they have senior leaders supporting their career development, the progress originates from an exceptionally low base. With less than 40 percent of

females in non- management, junior management and middle management roles think that they have the required career progression support (International Finance Corporation, 2019).

2.13.4 Unconscious Bias and the Imposter Syndrome

An astounding 71 percent of female participants in a “Women in Healthcare” study conducted by Rock Health in 2018, mentioned “underselling skills” as the biggest obstacle to advancing their careers, Self-confidence with a value of 55 percent was the second highest barrier (Rock Health, 2018). When these barriers are considered collectively, they may be seen as constituents of ‘Impostor Syndrome’. Impostor syndrome is a term used to define an individual’s sense of doubt in themselves, ineptitude or absence of qualification concerning their performance at work or other tasks (Rock Health, 2018). These apprehensions may be heightened in work situations where male co-workers are likely to be promoted at faster rates and are usually the majority in management and leadership roles (Boylan *et al.*, 2019). In workplace cultures that are unconsciously biased, females may have feelings of inferiority and experience discouragement from pursuing advancements or management roles, especially if they are considered as too opinionated. Further forms of prejudiced conduct include undisclosed gender pay gaps, microaggressions, and uncertain communication that can wear down the self-confidence and career progress of female personnel, especially when there is minimal female presence (Boylan *et al.*, 2019). Sometimes the main challenge in confidence, is where the employee may feel that they are too young for a particular role even in situations where they have not been blocked by fellow employers or colleagues (Lantara, 2015). Women excessively depend on their capability, due to affinity bias being against them. This is highly relevant as it proposes that males often use their peer network to sponsor and support the development of their careers, whereas females might depend more on previously acquired knowledge and established capabilities (Lantara, 2015). This could serve as an explanation as to why women regularly do not seek out new prospects and advancements into leadership roles, except if they are confident that all the prerequisites are met.

2.13.5 Lack of Networks and Female Leadership Role Models

The deficiency of women in leadership positions that can assist newer female employees as role models and mentors in the pharmaceutical industry continues as a problem in organisational management. Around 50 percent of female respondents in a survey conducted by Rock Health noted the “Ability to Connect with Senior Management” as an obstacle to advancing their careers (Rock Health, 2018). A lot of research has been conducted surrounding the corporate value that gender diversity adds to boards, but female directors additionally act as significant and observable role models for female personnel. The representation of females on boards, in the C-suite allows a greater number of subordinates to aspire towards those positions

as well as connecting them to leaders. It also enables junior staff to acquire knowledge from the vast experience of female leaders (Rock Health,2018). The deficiency of females in leadership poses as a difficulty especially when an individual finds themselves as the only women in the area, irrespective of their position at the firm. Research conducted by McKinsey & Company discovered that these women are highly more probable to encounter microaggressions and be “on guard”, in addition to experiencing pressure to complete tasks and feeling isolated from the familiar ‘boys club’ (Mckinsey & Company, 2018). There is also the additional psychological weight of ensuring that the female employee is executing her job effectively, as to not harmfully influence her reputation or compromise the future pathway for other women to have admission to these roles. This is deemed as ‘Emotional Tax’ by the gender research organisation, Catalyst. When likened to women with other female co-workers in comparable roles, women that are the “only one” are 1.5 times more probable to resign from their jobs (Mckinsey & Company, 2018).

Additional obstacles faced by women in their path towards leadership comprise of the numerous prejudices commonly experienced in male-dominated society, the undesirable viewpoints of subordinates, and the overall risk aversion in females (Einarsdóttir *et al.*, 2018). The resultant of this is the drop in self-confidence with time. Additionally, the presence of hierarchies often generates unique status structures at each level, which results in the appearance of obstacles affecting the advancement of women towards leadership positions (Robbins *et al.*, 2017). A common barrier detected is related to female subordination towards fellow women in leadership. This barrier is referred to as the ‘Queen Bee Syndrome’, providing an additional obstacle, where individuals that have been promoted display tendencies to separate themselves from their subordinates that are women (Almaki *et al.*, 2016). This issue is usually experienced in industries and organisations with a small number of senior women in leadership. The leader might experience jealousy or view their fellow female subordinates as a threat and as a result they will not offer support, guidance, or cooperation (Almaki *et al.*, 2016). In the absence of official and unofficial programs for mentorship and networking, female employees might experience difficulty in connecting with their female co-workers and senior leadership in a manner that is meaningful (Almaki *et al.*, 2016). Due to restrictions in time availability because of household duties like caring for their children, women’s capabilities in the building of their networks external to business hours and premises are limited (Beckwith *et al.*, 2016). Altering the engrained organisational hierarchical systems and designs in the corporate environment and tackling the shortage of females in senior leadership, entails the removal of the barriers and obstacles. Organisations can instate the appropriate official strategies, plans, and systems of measurement to begin the transformation away from the old dynamics. It is important to tackle the barriers as they serve as difficult challenges to female leadership consequently causing a reduction in their bid for confidence when faced with an environment of toxic masculinity (Beckwith *et al.*, 2016).

2.13.6 The glass ceiling

The glass ceiling is a concept that refers to the occurrence of work-related exclusion, where often women in management are likely to be found in corporate support roles, for example business administration, human resources, and finance. In these positions, women have inadequate authority to make decisions or provide strategic contributions, consequently they will have restricted prospects to progress in the organisation (Amon, 2017). The glass ceiling also prevents previously disadvantaged groups and women from the attainment of particular jobs, in spite of these individuals possessing the necessary skills and qualifications (Amon, 2017). This phenomenon has a negative impact on one's professional path, position, and current and future earning potentials (Ganiyu *et al.*, 2018). The idea of the glass ceiling is likely to have originated in developed nations, where men experience an overwhelming advantage in the occupation of leadership roles (Ganiyu *et al.*, 2018). The glass ceiling is gradually gaining momentum in developing nations too as females still experience intense scrutiny in justifying their ability to lead therefore wearying away at their probability for accomplishment (Amon, 2017). The social insights are inclined to support the idea that females are not suitable to occupy positions of power so they should continue to be subservient to males. Therefore, females are faced with double-sided obstacles which manifest in social and traditional customs and work life demands. Due to the un-conquerable glass ceiling, topmost leadership roles seem like they are unachievable. The obstacles are inclined to be clearly observable in high level leadership roles (Ganiyu *et al.*, 2018).

The studies that exist mostly focus on the gender glass ceiling entirely around the subject of salaries and the visibility of women in middle management roles (European Commission, 2018). There is only minimal information available on the entry of women into the top decision-making roles of a company, for example the position of CEO or directors of their respective departments. It has been stated by Carrasco-Santos *et al.* (2020) that in spite of women having similar or higher education levels, the quantity of women occupying management positions is significantly lower, owed to supplementary factors that prevent the fulfilment of equality in the workplace. There are often self-imposed barriers related to household, work, and individual compromise, leading to the stereotype that women are less efficient at planning and organisation and have a reduced level of flexibility (Sheppard, 2018). Despite, the transformation that is required equally at the social and attitudinal levels of a company, the "glass ceiling" stopping women from progressing into top positions of leadership is unlikely to be removed until their own self-imposed barriers are completely dealt with (Quezada, 2018).

The progression of women into executive roles appears to be a dreary path and consequently, slow, and problematic. Females and previously disadvantaged groups are often excluded from meetings and

communications as well as from networking events that are outside of the workplace (Helgesen, 2017). When these exclusions are considered, they are likely to deprive the individuals affected of mentorship opportunities and influential relations as they are out of the loop on future proceedings and prospects that may advance their careers (Helgesen, 2017). Although most of the obstacles seem to be externally inspired, women have the tendency to considerably add to their own obstacles, causing female underrepresentation to be a complicated and misleading topic (Helgesen, 2017). The glass ceiling appears to be an informal barrier created from complex causes that is expected to negatively affect a female's progress to the top. Though, it remains uncertain as to whether women in leadership positions face more undesirable appraisal from other women or their male colleagues and subordinates (Hill *et al.*, 2016). The glass ceiling has been around for years, with data indicating that in the United States, only 25 percent of female representation for Ph.Ds. in mathematics and science, and fewer than 17 percent in engineering, and data science (Baldoni, 2013). In spite of widespread studies being conducted in Sub Saharan Africa, only minimal data exists on the subject. Diehl *et al* (2016) declared that the deficiency in certain trainings and qualifications contributes as a cause for the glass ceiling. Further blockades are related to domestic obligations where there is the expectation for females to serve their husbands in the household. At work, managers want them to take care of the secretarial and administrative duties deeming these tasks comparable to the domestic roles that they are proficient in dealing with (Amon, 2017). Adichie (2017) thinks that supporting females that pursue the climb towards leadership roles goes beyond attaining the relevant qualifications, and mentorship is expected to be an important contributing factor. In Sub Saharan Africa due to widespread cultural prejudices, the social interaction of female children often neglects the introduction to any leadership involvements which is expected to be assimilated in time. The consequence is that a higher number of females are concentrated in technical and supervisory roles, instead of leadership positions and roles that require ingenuity and personal interactions (Douglas & Leite, 2017).

2.13.7 The business case for more women in leadership in healthcare

The healthcare industry, if observed superficially may seem overpoweringly 'female'. Females signify 70 percent of the 44 million employees in the healthcare industry around the globe (Rock Health, 2018). In many nations irrespective of the total female workforce contribution, the share of employment of women in healthcare is higher than their portion of employment in the entire economy (Rock Health, 2018). The World Economic Forum, states that only 35 percent of the leadership positions in the healthcare industry internationally are occupied by female executives (World Economic Forum, 2020). Considering international companies, just 25 percent display gender equality in senior management, and a value of only 20 percent on governance boards (World Economic Forum,2020). In 2015, it was found that there were only 51 female health ministers out of 191 countries researched (Rock Health, 2018). Widespread

international studies by McKinsey & Company and the International Monetary Fund noted a directly proportional relationship, between a greater quantity of females/diversity in leadership and improved financial gain for an organisation (World Economic Forum, 2020). A worldwide study conducting research on 21,980 publicly listed businesses in 91 nations discovered that the prevalence of more woman leaders in higher business management positions correlates with the improved financial success of these businesses (World Economic Forum, 2020). Research that ranked Fortune 500 businesses by the quantity of female board executives, discovered that those businesses in the uppermost quartile of females on boards experienced a 53 percent greater return on equity and a 42 percent better sales return than the other businesses observed (World Economic Forum, 2020). The Fortune 500 healthcare companies in the United States with greater proportions of females in leadership roles were even more highly regarded by their employees. Research conducted has also indicated that leadership teams that are gender-diverse display higher levels of innovation, designing more optimal solutions in tackling difficulties; evading collective thinking; and are more equipped in their response to varied client requirements by designing modified products and services (World Economic Forum, 2020). In those firms, there may be a more inclusive organisational culture, which leads to more improved worker engagement and fulfilment, better efficiency, and ultimately healthier financial performances. Females control the market as consumers of healthcare products and make 80 percent of buying choices, affecting their own well-being as well as the health of their family (International Finance Corporation, 2019). Consumers of these pharmaceutical products are attentive in getting timely and high-quality care. The retention of customers is influenced by the efficacy of the product, superiority of patient care and client services, and the availability of products. These factors ultimately affect the business' reputation and market share (International Finance Corporation, 2019). When there is a leadership team that is familiar to the majority of the consumers' requirements, experiences, and viewpoints, this may lead to improved invention and commercial prospects. Thus, healthcare corporations can gain an advantage through the consideration of worker dynamics and exploiting their openings for increasing female representation in top leadership roles (International Finance Corporation, 2019).

2.14 The gender inequity in the pharmaceutical industry

In the last few decades, the pharmaceutical industry has been drastically transformed, this is not limited to the massive scientific advancements that have occurred, but the leadership outlook has also been altered. In the past, the probability of a female CEO in the pharmaceutical industry was highly improbable and unheard of, yet today Emma Walmsley is at the head of GlaxoSmithKline which is one of the major international pharmaceutical corporations (Assured Pharmacy, 2018). Current research has shown that around 65 percent of the workforce in the healthcare industry is made up by females (Assured Pharmacy,

2018). This is a meaningfully higher percentage if likened to different significant industries such as Tech and Financial Services which is 26 percent and 46 percent respectively (Assured Pharmacy, 2018). The quantity of females in higher leadership roles is dejectedly low in the healthcare sector, in spite of their purchasing power and employee influence.

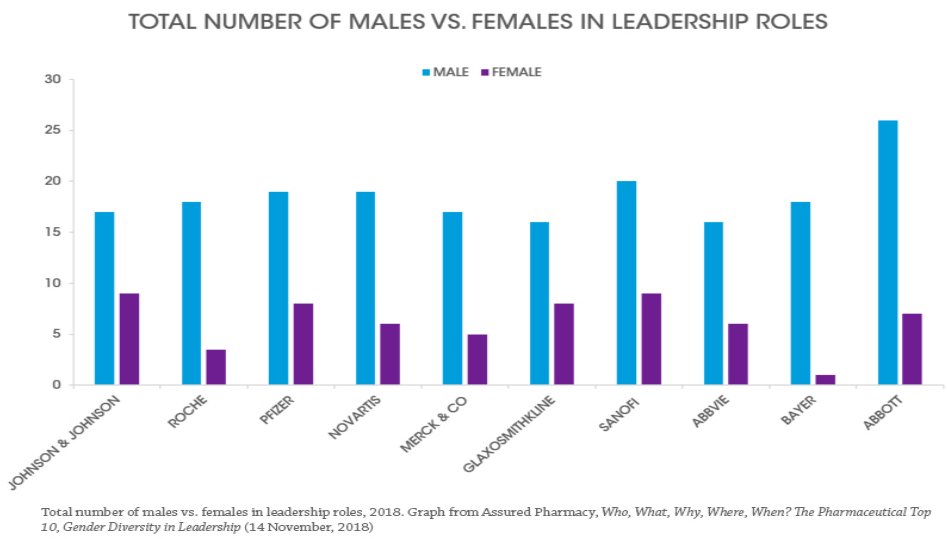


Figure 2. Depicting the Total number of males vs females in leadership roles at the top ten pharmaceutical companies (Assured Pharmacy, 2018).

When examining gender-based leadership in the pharmaceutical industry in particular, an even higher gap can be seen as displayed in **Figure 2**. Despite the efforts of big pharmaceutical companies putting in place systems for improved gender equality, there is still a long way to go. According to Insider's evaluation of approximately 200 top pharmaceutical corporations, males account for 92 percent of the CEO positions (Insider, 2021). As per the Insider's analysis, the shortage of females in business leadership positions costs women around \$532 million in forgone yearly recompense with discrimination also having a highly negative influence on corporations and humanity (Insider, 2021).

The statistic that females make up just 25 percent of leadership teams and that there is only one CEO that is a woman amongst the top ten pharmaceutical corporations by revenue, is an indication that more progress is necessary (Insider, 2021). These statistics are not just a problem faced in the healthcare sector and pharmaceutical industry. It is well known that there is a gender gap in corporate, numerous research has indicated that females outnumber males at universities (Insider, 2021). So, despite them being well educated, capable, and equally as hardworking as their male colleagues; the fraction of CEOs of worldwide Fortune 500 corporations is below 5 percent (Insider, 2021). Considering the high number of brilliant

pharmacists, chemists, microbiologists, and other scientists that are women in the pharmaceutical industry, it can be said that there are no perceptible obstacles preventing females from admission into the workplace (Weham, 2020). Though, with regard to career progression, the barriers appear to be vast, ranging from unconscious prejudices, microaggressions, pay gaps or motherhood. Interrelated with progression, it seems apparent that as females take on higher positions, the intolerance, confrontation, discrimination, and isolation also increase. It is important for businesses to be concerned about this, as gender disparity is on an extensive list of data displaying the disproportion of control amongst males and females (Weham, 2020). Gender inequality is a key matter that has an effect on not just the lives of individuals of both genders, but negatively influences innovation and financial development, whilst delaying societal advancement (Weham, 2020). The United Nations listed gender equality as a Sustainable Development Goal for the “2030 Agenda” due to it being the smart action to take not just the correct action to take (Insider, 2021).

Statistics from a Peterson Institute for International Economics Report indicates that increasing the incidence of women in company leadership teams to 30 percent is directly proportional to a 1 percent growth in net margin, translating to a 15 percent rise in profitability (Insider, 2021). Furthermore, Credit Suisse discovered that corporations with females in leadership roles reported a 9 percent better dividend yield as well as a 19 percent higher return on equity value (Insider, 2021). Female-run biotechnology companies such as Halozyme and Veracyte are significant cases of businesses making gender diversity a priority. The percentage of female Halozyme's employees at senior executive level and above is 45 percent (Oliver Wyman Report, 2019). At Veracyte, women make up around 60 percent of all staff and approximately 40 percent of leadership at the vice president position and above are female. Dr. Diana Brainard, the chief executive of AlloVir and previous top executive at Gilead Sciences emphasized the significance of CEOs making more attempts for improving diversity (Oliver Wyman Report, 2019). After the main concerns are established, and diverse candidates have been employed, the righteous cycle of enticing further diverse talent to the business will commence on its own. Leaders need to examine the current talent pipeline, exploring each step to perceive an organized drop-off in diversity in the employees progressing to the subsequent level is present (Oliver Wyman Report, 2019). If a higher number of females are to reach those top executive roles, then it is vital for the pharmaceutical industry to redefine its definition of leadership by implementing the various styles. The exceedingly extroverted and dominant leadership styles that are common in the corporate world business might appear contrarily in females (Chang & Milkman, 2020). There needs to be inclusivity and openness to permit women executives to be their true selves without the pressure to exemplify the conventional styles of leadership (Chang & Milkman, 2020).

The glass ceiling frequently occurs accidentally as individuals are oblivious to it being in place or the reason for it to be there therefore to tackle it effectively a greater change in culture needs to take place. Queries

and doubts will certainly result from this concerning the commencement and accommodation for changes and around what will the end goal look like (Oliver Wyman Report, 2019). Corporations may even provide the plan for a diverse organisational culture but will still be met with a degree of hesitation on the matter and by what means to inspire an inclusive and open interchange between workforces. The conversations are not generally easy, due to some hesitancy teams may require a slight nudge for the discussions to take place. There needs to be a zero-judgement approach as sincerity and curiosity leads to collaboration, whereas judgement builds barriers (Chang & Milkman, 2020).

Companies must be dedicated to tackling these problems and strengthening their diversity profile by means of initiatives planned to enable the career development of women, using mentoring and management programs as well as having access to the right individuals and prospects. Having the correct support and programs in place will ensure that there are no obstacles blocking the move to the top. Though different corporations play a part, the problem must be dealt with on a larger scale with constant determination experienced in the entire pharmaceutical industry to generate a drastic transformation (Chang & Milkman, 2020). The change will not take place instantaneously, nonetheless the drive for transformation is a constructive move forward. Simultaneously, the focal point should not just be on the senior executive roles and disregard the other components of the talent pipeline, therefore it is important to engage women at their initial advancement and assure they are staying on track (Chang & Milkman, 2020). Gender diversity is not just an issue that is exclusive to women all employees must come together to be unified in initiatives concerning diversity and inclusivity at work. This necessitates a comprehensive approach with all genders involved in the deliberations and actions, sharing their own understandings, offering chances to ambitious personnel, and seeking diverse viewpoints (Oliver Wyman Report, 2019).

2.15 Remaining visible in a virtual setting in the pharmaceutical industry

During the “7th Advancing Women’s Leadership Skills & Opportunities in Pharma & Healthcare” conference, senior directors from throughout the pharmaceutical industry assembled to reveal individual experiences of achievement and determination to upskill and motivate the subsequent group of women leaders (Pharma Marketing Network, 2021). Females continue to encounter specific challenges in the workplace despite an increased focus on inclusion and diversity, and a further recognized insight of the corporate influence that may be attained because of greater gender parity in administrative leadership. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, numerous females in senior leadership roles regularly found that they were the only woman in the boardroom, increasing their susceptibility to unconscious bias as well as displays of microaggression in the workspace. With meeting areas being swapped for virtual spaces since 2020, many women have discovered that it is now more difficult to be noticed and heard. Developing simulated

dynamics and mixed methods of functioning requires innovative strategies and approaches to remain visible (Pharma Marketing Network, 2021).

Dr Abbott, a senior director at Bio Haven Pharmaceuticals, gave some valuable guidance to attendees of the conference attendees on ways to find the way to remain visible, employed and promoted in the virtual space. She has a 4-pronged methodology for professional progress in a virtual work environment, summarized by four major themes: Investment in oneself and connections, enhancing one's energy, being one's own supporter and over-communication. Even though working from home flexibility provides benefits for female employees, it also comes with a small number of trade-offs. The public networking which takes place spontaneously in corridors, in conferences or in the canteen cannot occur naturally in the manner as it did when operating at the workplace. The only visibility one would get in the present day is the visibility that they purposely create; therefore, women must be more purposeful and practical in ensuring that management and co-workers have an awareness of the work they are performing and its impact and value for the company. Female employees need to have a hands-on approach in pursuing formal and informal contacts that may provide them with good advice and link them to different colleagues in the company and throughout the pharmaceutical industry that may aid in their growth and development (Pharma Marketing Network, 2021). Building a strong network is essential for progress as it is not just who you know, but also who knows you and your capability. The greater the number of individuals that have knowledge of the employee and the distinctive value that they offer, the higher the probability that their name will be mentioned in discussions as more job prospects occur. It is important to take opportunity of any opening to interact in person or online, within the company and elsewhere in the industry (Pharma Marketing Network, 2021).

Acquiring different abilities and taking on more responsibilities may act as a catalyst for career progression. If employees are continuing to work remotely or with flexible hours, then it is advisable to capitalize on the additional time saved by not traveling to or spending at work each day and sign up for external training and qualifications to increase skill sets and prospective worth to a company (Pharma Marketing Network, 2021). When new skills are acquired, it is important for the employee to utilize them proactively and efficiently and not just have them on paper. Requesting for different or new duties raises one's importance at the company adds focus on the increasing abilities of the employee. If there are no visible prospects for departmental projects, managers may be approached to find out if there are other business-wide or inter-team developments that require the relevant expertise. It is imperative that the progress journey is tracked, this could take place in the form of a new weekly routine where on one day in the week, preferably the end of the working week, time is set aside to make a plan detailing all the tasks that were successfully completed (Pharma Marketing Network, 2021). It can also include events and tasks that makes one feel proud,

difficulties that were overcome and the impact that was created. This exercise can act as a reinforcement and motivation in the short-term, to assist in focusing on the movement that is created every day. As time passes and the list grows it will be of great use when updating a resume, approaching management for a promotion, or negotiating a higher salary (Pharma Marketing Network, 2021).

2.16 Important business lessons from Lilly for the pharmaceutical industry

A considerable amount has been written about the disturbing absence of females in leadership positions in the pharmaceutical industry. Lilly, one of the biggest pharmaceutical companies in the world, have dealt with the crisis directly. The methodologies that they adopted might be beneficial to more corporations trying to deal with the gender diversity disparity. The company undertook a labour force evaluation in 2015 revealing a substantial lack of females in leadership roles at the organisation (Lilly, 2021). Their worldwide workforce comprised of 47 percent female employees and 53 percent of entry level workers were females (Harvard Business Review, 2018). However, at the upper levels, the proportion plummeted steeply, falling to 20 percent at the top management level (Harvard Business Review, 2018). Despite the number being similar to female executives at Fortune 500 healthcare businesses at the time, it was not something that they were proud of. Businesses with favourable levels of gender-diverse leadership provide superior financial performance than those that are lacking, therefore addressing the difference made business sense as well as being the right thing to do morally (Harvard Business Review, 2018). The company decided that they needed to understand the issue before trying to solve it, they then conducted a comprehensive analysis of the workers, established on a proprietary, multi-dimensional procedure utilised for market exploration. An external company was used to carry out the study to guarantee autonomy and anonymity. High-potential male and female employees were asked very personal questions with the aim of better understanding how the experiences of female employees differed compared to males. In addition, to identifying and removing obstacles to occupational progression so that the representation of females in leadership roles could be increased (Harvard Business Review, 2018).

The company gained much value from the outcome of the study and took note of the lessons learned from the feedback like getting buy-in from the onset. There was visible progression therefore Lilly took a similar approach with ethnic and racial minority populaces at the company (Harvard Business Review, 2018). The following a year after the study, the quantity of females in leadership at Lilly worldwide, grew from 38 percent to 41 percent, and the number of females directly reporting to the CEO increased from 31 percent to 43 percent (Harvard Business Review, 2018). In 2020, females at the company accounted for 61 percent of the advancements to senior director positions and beyond in the United States in comparison to 54 percent in 2016 (Lilly, 2021). This means that one-half of the division leaders in the company are currently females.

The senior leadership team wholly participated in the mission since the start. The CEO Dave Ricks, who at the time was the head of one of the major company divisions, authorized the investigation and backed it during the course of the development. Himself and more leading executives assembled for days with the Human Resources department and the women's network at the company, which is a worker resources group, to come up with solutions to the obstacles discovered within the study. This was a companywide problem and not only a Human Resources concern and leadership went all all-in (Lilly, 2021).

Only by putting in the time and energy to complete the exercise will a company understand its employees, through a demanding internal investigation, asking the correct questions, paying attention to the responses, and expanding on the findings (Harvard Business Review, 2018). It began as a business problem started because if females made up almost one-half of the labour force, why is there such a visible decrease when it comes to senior management positions. Leadership (mainly men) postulated that several female employees displayed less ambition in comparison to males or did not possess the capability to ascend to the greatest heights of leadership. However conventional employment assessments do not have enough depth to indicate if either one of the points are correct. It was not shocking, that surveys revealed, that neither of the claims are based on reality (Harvard Business Review, 2018).

It is important to understand one's research findings because, data is merely a bunch of figures if not interpreted into perceptions that is able to be utilised. The study results revealed that females are just as motivated as males and just as probable to pursue growth prospects (Harvard Business Review, 2018). However, several women did not feel encouraged or acknowledged for their effort. High-potential female employees begin their careers at the company eager to get on additional responsibilities, even though comparatively fewer high ranking female role models, particularly for women of colour (Harvard Business Review, 2018). When women do progress to higher positions the data displayed that several female employees struggled with fitting in and moving forward in a work environment that, as seen at the majority of companies, remained controlled by males. They described the manner in which they encountered biases that were both conscious and unconscious, gender-based stereotypes, and talent-management procedures which destabilised their aspirations (Harvard Business Review, 2018). A case in point, is where female employees recounted events where 'relationship capital', who you know, and trust, was an essential but silent element in judgments regarding career progression. Research revealed that female employees had a probability of focusing on performing the job itself in comparison to interacting with people and networking, hence they occasionally overlooked openings for progression in spite of a solid work performance (Harvard Business Review, 2018).

Transparency and responsibility are crucial, as it is a bold move for a company to be transparent in sharing results with leadership and workers. However, it pays to be clear and years after the research was conducted,

female employees were more outspoken about issues faced, they were prominent at the table and wanted to be heard (Lilly, 2021). The commitment to transformation and gaining knowledge on the origins of gender inequality is the start, but then it is necessary to make use of data collected from employees to set up interventions and change the company culture. Lilly introduced training exercises and arranged facilitators to assist management to lead more inclusively by way of appreciating differences, identifying, and conquering prejudice, encouraging a speak-out culture and they were held responsible for the outcomes. The company's talent-administration measures were revamped to reduce unconscious and conscious prejudices in the recruitment, acquisition, management, and advancement procedures (Lilly, 2021).

2.17 Chapter Conclusion

Some of the characteristics common between the organic, contemporary and the visionary theories presents severe challenges to gender inclusive leadership as they are conventionally deep into cultural views that back male authority. In comparison to the aforementioned theories, transformational leadership or relationship theories are more advantageous to charismatic leadership theories as traits like confidence, amiability and clear morals and ethics are apparent and typically favour feminineness, thus can be used for the transition of woman into company leaders. Relationship leadership encourages and motivates followers, and there is a high probability for females to provide inspiration to subordinates owing to their natural ability to nurture relationships. Females in leadership roles can either pay attention to team performance using shared characteristics or a person's individuality due to biological perspective. The information may be analysed in various ways, but it is evident that there is a strong correlation between upskilling and promoting women and company success. For profitability to be improved, the organisational diversity needs to also be enhanced as business leadership is fundamentally what influences profit. Diversity in leadership enables work teams to question the norms that have been engrained in the way that they think and operate, producing optimal results, greater invention, imaginative resolutions to obstinate difficulties, and finally healthier monetary results. Aspiring woman in leadership, at all stages of their professional journey need to have self confidence and trust in their capabilities. Research findings indicate that females do not apply for roles till they consider themselves completely prepared whereas males are content to apply at only 60 percent capable (Insider, 2021). Therefore, it is dependent on the individual on how high they aim and the steps that they will take to achieve their goals.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

During the preceding chapter, a literature review had been performed to examine the empowerment of women in terms of leadership in the workspace as well as the different leadership styles and traits, concentrating on the healthcare sector with focus on the pharmaceutical industry. The pragmatic, descriptive, analysis employed a conceptual framework, that touched on each subtopic. The methodology in chapter three describes the chosen population, with the sample selection process being discussed, this will be followed by an explanation of the investigational procedure and a comprehensive analysis of the measuring methods employed. The section closes with the discussion of the research approaches utilized for the statistical data analysis.

3.2 Aim of the study

The study's aim is to examine the empowerment of women leadership at a pharmaceutical company in South Africa. The objective of the study is to determine obstacles that may possibly have an effect on women leadership at the pharmaceutical company in South Africa and how the obstacles may be overcome, whilst additionally making recommendations for added strategies that may enhance the empowerment of women in the workplace.

3.3 Research Objectives

The research should have the ability to accomplish the subsequent objectives:

- To evaluate initiatives or programmes to empower women into leadership roles in the South African pharmaceutical industry.
- To determine if women have sufficient role models for their career development into leadership roles.
- To determine what are the barriers that women face, that hinders them from occupying leadership positions and how these barriers can be eradicated.

3.4 Research Questions

To gain deeper insight into the study, further research questions were identified:

- What programmes or initiatives are in place in the South African pharmaceutical industry to develop and empower women into leadership positions?
- Do women have sufficient role models for their career development into leadership roles?
- What are the barriers that women face that hinders them from occupying leadership positions? And how can these barriers be eradicated?

3.5 Research Approach

A Pragmatist research philosophy was utilised as these deals with facts, selecting a research philosophy is typically influenced by the research problem. The real-world results are believed to be most important in the pragmatist research philosophy. Pragmatic researchers acknowledge the idea that there are various methods of understanding the world and conducting studies. They believe a single viewpoint will not be able to depict the whole picture as there may be numerous realities (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Pragmatism comprises of research designs that include working choices grounded on 'what works best', they often use innovative methods in the discovery of answers for the research questions that are being investigated. Alghamdi & Li (2013) believed that the research question is the most significant factor of the research philosophy according to pragmatism. An inductive research approach was selected due to research questions being recognised and not hypotheses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Non- Probability sampling was utilised as not every female employee at the pharmaceutical company in South Africa was given the equal opportunity to participate.

3.6 Research Methodology

Research as defined by Struwig and Stead (2001), is a sequence of analytically evaluating methodical, dependable, and legitimate information. The understanding and interpretation of data is mainly centred on the investigator's understanding of current theories and literature on the subject, in addition to the individual experiences and perceptions of the researcher. The intention of the study is to explore the empowerment and representation of women in leadership to positions in the pharmaceutical industry. The selections regarding the research methodology are defined indicating how the statistics will be collected and analysed. Selecting the correct methodology assists in designing a suitable framework beneficial for creating useable information (Choongwa, 2018). A quantitative study took place in the form of an employee engagement

survey for the collection of primary data. The research design according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 490), is the strategy which defines the conditions and processes for data collection and analysis. The method of analysing theories through assessing the correlation among variables that can be evaluated with the intention of describing, predicting, and controlling phenomena is known as quantitative design (Cresswell, 2013: 4). A quantitative method was chosen as the approach for the study, which is precisely linked to descriptive research, instead of exploratory designs (Hair, Bush & Ortinau, 2000:216). The quantitative approach is additionally known as the traditional, experimental, or positivist approach (Hair, Bush & Ortinau, 2000:216). Quantitative research has a tendency to concentrate on the present, what the research participants instinctively understand as the facts, inclusive of what they have done. The research has not been conducted at the facility before therefore it will provide an important basis for research going forward (Hair, Bush and Ortinau, 2000: 216).

Measuring factors that affect women empowerment is crucial to enlightening attitudes and activities in pharmaceutical corporations. Quantitative metrics may offer support as precise and comparable signals. A desire that has been set by using these metrics is certainly comprehensible and translatable into goals (Hair, Bush and Ortinau, 2000:216). To define the aspiration, the optimal level of each measure needs to be compared against the ideal standards. Quantitative metrics regularly offer indications for multiple aspects (Hair, Bush and Ortinau, 2000:216). There are various important projects that are gaining impetus and producing considerable advancement for this objective in the pharmaceutical work environment. Attaining gender parity in the healthcare and pharmaceutical work setting is essential to the application of the International Pharmaceutical Federations (FIP) Pharmaceutical Workforce Development Goals (PWDGs) (FIP-equity Rx Collection, 2019). PWDG10 asks for every country to put together transparent policies to address gender and diversity inequalities in the pharmaceutical work setting, as well as continual learning and training, and job advancement prospects (FIP-equity Rx Collection, 2019). A few of the objective's indicators and processes involve:

- i. “Demonstration of strategies to address the gender and diversity inequities across all pharmaceutical workforce and career development opportunities” (FIP-equity Rx Collection, 2019:6).
- ii. “Ensure full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision- making in pharmaceutical environments; avoidable barriers to participation for all social categories are identified and addressed” (FIP-equity Rx Collection, 2019:6).
- iii. “Engagement and adoption of workforce development policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender and diversity equity; policies and cultures for the empowerment of all without bias” (FIP-equity Rx Collection, 2019:6).

3.7 Research Design

Data collection comprises of the usage of a measuring instrument applied to the chosen sample for the study (Mouton, 2002: 67). Additionally, McNabb (2002:109) proposes that investigators utilise diverse methods when collecting data in descriptive quantitative research. The compilation of data may be completed by examining and calculating apparent behaviours, questionnaires can be utilised to find answers to particular questions, regarding motives, beliefs and understanding. Flick (2008:15) recommends that data collection for quantitative research be designed in a standardised manner. Ariola (2006: 140) states that the instrument chosen for the research must be appropriate, valid, and reliable. The reliability, validity, and objectiveness can be met through the standardisation of the data collection and the study situation. The measuring instrument selected for this study was questionnaires for which Sekaran and Bougie (2003) proposes are one the highest utilised data compilation methods. The use of questionnaires provides distinct advantages over interviews, they are less costly, simpler to administer and allow for large group administration, as well assuring confidentiality and anonymity needed to honestly answer highly personal or controversial questions Mitchell and Jolley (2012: 286).

In the study the respondents in the Quality department at a pharmaceutical company in South Africa were approached in their free time, briefed about the nature of the study, and invited to take part in the research; when they had consented, the paper-based questionnaires were personally distributed to the respondents. Respondents were prompted via email about the completion of the questionnaire and the due date. At the conclusion of each workday, the respondents were visited, and all completed questionnaires were collected, email notices were mailed preceding the specific, collection times.

Babbie (2015: 254) advises that the format of the questionnaire is crucial as an incorrectly arranged questionnaire might result in a respondent missing questions, confusing them with regards to the nature of the data required and which may result in them discarding the questionnaire or answering questions in a different manner than intended affecting the outcome of the study and reliability of data. Data was collected in the Quality department using questionnaires to assess the opinions of female employees on the empowerment of women at a pharmaceutical company in South Africa. The questionnaires comprised of two sections. The first section intended on gathering demographic characteristics, for example the marital status of the respondents and whether they have children, this helped the researcher when analysing the results as the women in the chosen population are from different cultural backgrounds and may have diverse experiences. The second section was designed to gain an understanding of the beliefs that the women had about empowerment programs at the pharmaceutical company in South Africa, the challenges that they believed affected female employees leadership progression and what can be done to overcome these

challenges. For the purpose of this study, the different elements that affect women as leaders or potential leaders were examined in the questionnaire. The questionnaire contains a set of 30 items about various aspects of women empowerment and leadership. The individual dimensions of self-confidence, the role of the company in enabling women leadership, mentorship, and family responsibility are represented in the questions presented. Some of the other elements included are attitudes towards female leadership and additional pressures that women face outside of work that prevent them from progression in their careers. The questions were designed to assess the “global aspects” of equity and women empowerment and can be applied to any industry. The questions are closed ended and did not require a lot of time to answer, simply assessing whether the responder agrees/disagrees with the statement. A Likert scale was utilized for these questions to assess opinions, attitudes, or behaviours where respondents indicated their level of agreement with the statements. The scale allows for personality traits or perceptions to be examined with ease (Sullivan & Artino, 2013). To gather data, the respondents were presented with Likert-type statements and a range of probable answers; example "Completely agree () Agree () Neither agree nor disagree () Disagree () Completely disagree ()" to answer relevant scientific and practical questions related to the construct of equity. The frequency of the responses to the questions was utilised to determine their attitudes of the responders.

3.8 Sampling Selection

Pride and Ferrell (2010:99) propose that sampling includes the selection of representative groups from the total population. Sampling is the process that the investigator employs to collect individuals, locations, or objects to research. It is the procedure for choosing a quantity of persons or items from a population, in a way that the chosen group comprises of components typical of the traits observed in the total group (Orodho & Kombo, 2002). A sampling technique where the samples are collected in a method that does not allow every one of the participants or groups in the population an equivalent possibility of being selected is referred to as non-probability sampling (Sullivan & Artino, 2013). Convenience sampling which is additionally referred to as Accidental or Haphazard Sampling is a type of non-probability sampling where individuals in the target population satisfy the necessary selection criteria, for example being available at a given time with the subjects of the population easily accessible to the researcher with a close geographic proximity, and the readiness to partake in the research (Sullivan & Artino, 2013). Non-probability was utilised in the study where not every female employee at the pharmaceutical company in South Africa was given the chance to participate. A convenience sample was used inclusive of women in the Quality department who happened to be most accessible to the researcher. The choice of non-probability sampling was useful due to the researcher and participants having limited time due to the nature of the industry. Regardless of using non-probability sample as the chosen sampling technique, the intention was to still

make it as representative of the population as possible. The population was defined as the women in the Quality department at a pharmaceutical company in South Africa and the desired number of respondents for the sample set of 40 women, was obtained. The participants in the Quality department were presented with information about the study, prior to their enrolment, to help establish interest and willingness to serve as research subjects. Participation in the research was voluntary. Thus, the study was introduced in a manner that allowed participants adequate time and ability to freely consider whether they wish to take part. The specific plans, including frequency, timing, how any privacy concerns would be addressed, how undue influence or coercion would be minimised, etc. was discussed at length.

3.9 Target Population

The group selected where the research with particular characteristics is performed, significant to the investigator and is associated to the study is referred to as the research population (Jha, 2014: 183). Kothari (2004) perceives that the classification of the target population describes the chosen population included in the study, at a particular geographical location, like a country, province, or city, with different demographics such as age groups and gender. The chosen target population in the study comprised of staff at a pharmaceutical company in South Africa, ranging from management, mid-level, and entry-level female personnel. The method of non-probability sampling was selected for the study. Sekaran and Bougie (2003) advise that a sample size consisting of more than 30 and fewer than 500 participants is suitable for the average study. The ideal response was achieved and consisted of sample set of 40 participants; this is a good reflection of almost the entire female population of the department. This sample set consisted of female employees in the laboratory as well as office-based employees in the Quality department. The primary occupations of the participants include chemical analysts, laboratory technologists, microbiologists, document reviewers, pharmacists and other quality and validation personnel. The employees possess different skillsets and are from different functional areas, but their education levels are in a similar range with most roles requiring tertiary education. A quantitative approach was undertaken by utilising a questionnaire to gain an understanding of the employee's thoughts on women's empowerment and leadership in the Quality department at a pharmaceutical company in South Africa. The survey was administered through a paper-based questionnaire to employees, and they all participated at their own free will.

3.10 Ethical considerations

Pera (2011) defines ethics as “a code of behaviour considered correct”. It is important for every researcher to be cognisant of research ethics. Research ethics relates to a person performing a study, where they need to be mindful of their responsibilities and duties, and the “researched upon”, whose fundamental rights must be protected. Therefore, the research must be conducted with impartiality and fairness, through eradicating any possible threats with the respondents made aware of their rights. Ethical concerns noted in research can comprise of “informed consent, right to anonymity and confidentiality, right to privacy, justice, beneficence and respect for persons” (Trochim, Donnelly & Arora, 2015). To declare this research as being ethical, the right to purpose, confidentiality, discretion, as well as informed consent have been noted. A letter allowing full approval to conduct the research was obtained from Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC). In addition, written consent from the gatekeeper at the chosen pharmaceutical company in South Africa was attained prior to conducting the research, this requirement is supported by Silk and Markula (2011: 18).

Confidentiality entails not divulging any data obtained from a respondent intentionally or inadvertently, in circumstances that could identify them (Wiles *et al.*, 2008: 417). The researcher collecting data is responsible for ensuring the necessary measures have been taken to avoid the unintentional leak of data, and assurances must be made to the respondents that sufficient safety measures have been undertaken (Henderson 2004). Every respondent in the study undertaken was assured confidentiality and safeguarded from victimisation. There was an application made to obtain ethical clearance via the Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol, HSSREC/00003659/2021, for this study was granted the full approval to ensure that this research would not injure any animals or have a negative effect on the lives of respondents. The research instrument was directly given to the respondents, confirming that they were informed about the research outcome. During the study, confidentiality was preserved by means of not adding the names of respondents to data which will identify them, respondents were also notified of their right to remove themselves from this study without a reason. In the study the questionnaires also included a letter of participation for the respondents to complete. The use of the data obtained from the respondents must not result in any damage or distress to the reputation of the pharmaceutical company in South Africa. The partiality of responses is a worry while presenting surveys to deal with this concern, it was ensured that the survey reached a sufficient number of respondents. The survey was also examined for challenges in the design, like setting up the statements and options with negligible, opportunities for misinterpretation, preserving reliability.

3.11 Conclusion

The study utilised a quantitative research design with non-probability convenience sample being chosen. Questionnaires were administered to female employees in the Quality department at a pharmaceutical company in South Africa after the necessary permission was obtained from the university and the company's gatekeeper to carry out the research. The chapter included the research methodology, the population, sample size, data collection instrument, and the measures utilised to guarantee that the ethical ideals, reliability, and validity of the study were maintained.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

Chapter four presents the research results for the study and examines the in-depth findings of the study surrounding the empowerment of women in a pharmaceutical company in South Africa attained from the questionnaires. The discussion focuses primarily on the outcomes observed in this research establishing a combination of ideas and concepts as appropriate literature in the field. This chapter commences with the results obtained in a graphical representation, followed by discussion on significant barriers that women are confronted with on the path towards top leadership roles. The different themes of mentorship, self-confidence, family responsibility and the role of the company in enabling empowerment were examined in relation to the various questions in the questionnaire based on key observations in the literature review

4.2 Research findings and Discussion

Luton (2010: 42), states that data analysis, is defined as the method of shifting from unprocessed questionnaires and discussions to evidence-built analyses providing the foundation for reporting. Data analysis involves using data to solve research questions generally by a way of finding significant patterns (Bellamy, 2011). The data obtained in this study was analysed using Microsoft Excel, the comparative significance of the elements was analysed on a 5-point Likert scale. The primary measurement instrument was the questionnaire utilised in the data collection and was distributed to female employees in the Quality department at a pharmaceutical company in South Africa. The results for the quantitative data compiled will be presented as descriptive statistics by means of charts, tables, and graphs.

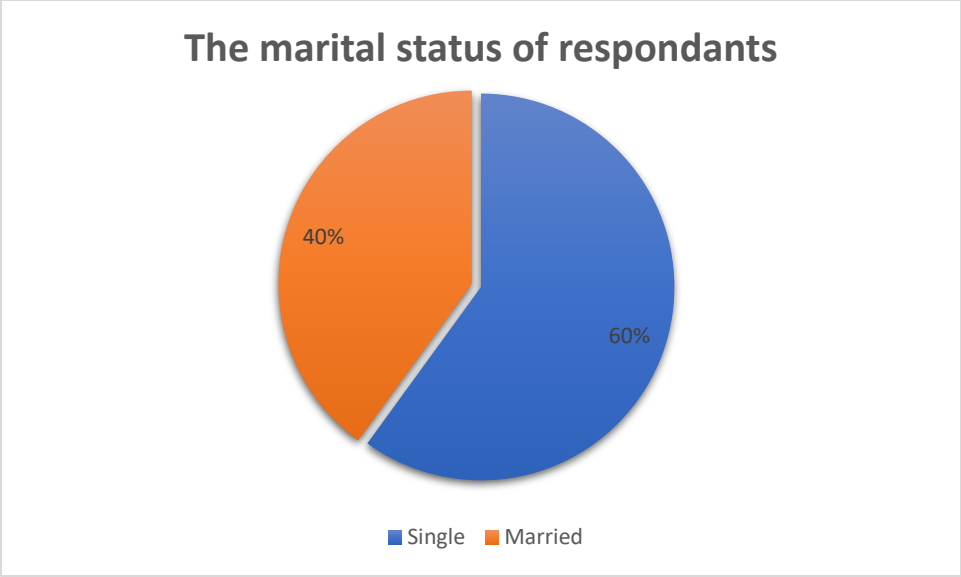


Figure 3. Displaying results for whether the respondents were married (n=40).

As can be seen in **Figure 3**, there is an almost even number of respondents that are married or single, this will provide a good indication of the experiences from both ends of the spectrum as married women often experience different challenges as compared to single women in terms of domestic duties.

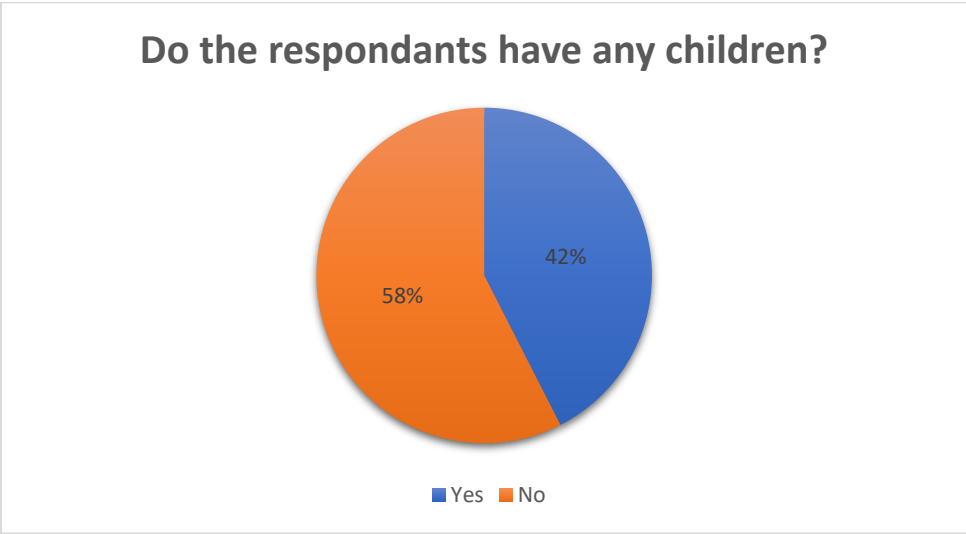


Figure 4. Displaying results for if the respondents had any children (n=40).

In **Figure 4**, there is a good mixture of respondents that are mothers and those without any children. Being a mother is a job in itself and many women are often forced to compromise on their career progression or even give up their job completely to focus on the children.

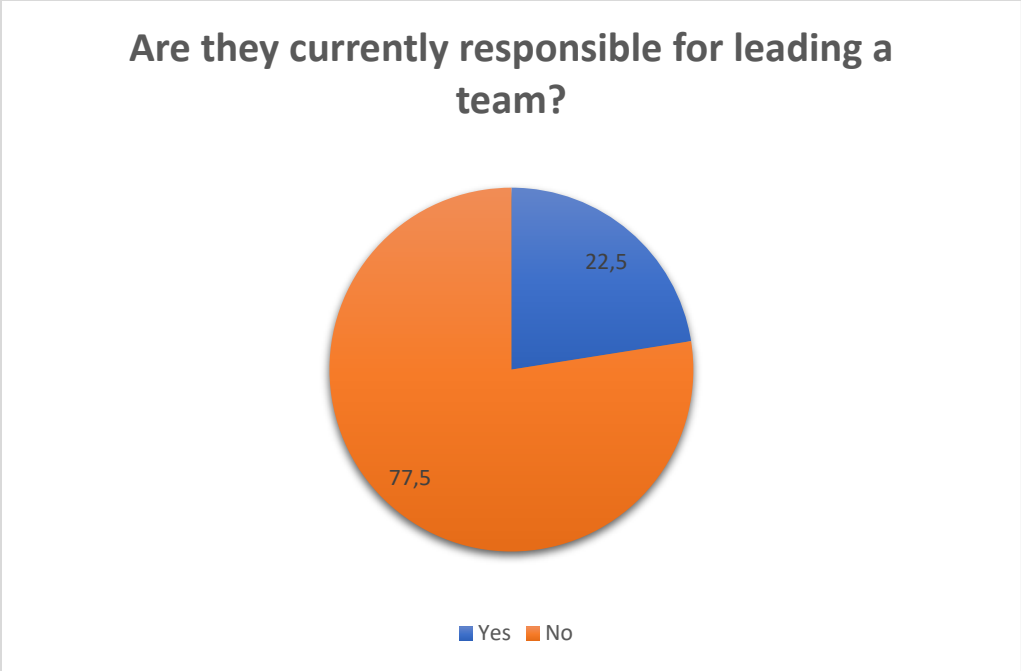


Figure 5. Displaying results for whether the respondents were responsible for leading a team (n=40).

There is a disproportion in the number of leaders vs regular employees that have been recruited as part of the study as displayed in **Figure 5.**, owing to the limited number of females in leadership roles being available in the department as compared to mid-level workers.

Table 2. Displaying the frequency of responses obtained for Mentorship related questions on the questionnaire (n=40).

	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Median
12.	I have learnt important lessons from other women in leadership roles.	9	15	12	3	1	9
13.	I believe that having access to and networking with female leaders will help me in my own career.	12	15	9	3	1	9
15.	The steps I take in the industry today will set the stage for future generations of women.	12	13	11	3	1	11
16.	I would personally take the steps to help advance another woman in their career.	15	14	10	1	0	10
19.	I am more likely to talk to other women about challenges in career advancement than opportunities.	3	11	15	6	5	6
23.	I have worked with an exceptional female leader before.	7	9	15	5	4	7

24.	Female leaders display higher empathy for their subordinates.	7	10	15	5	3	7
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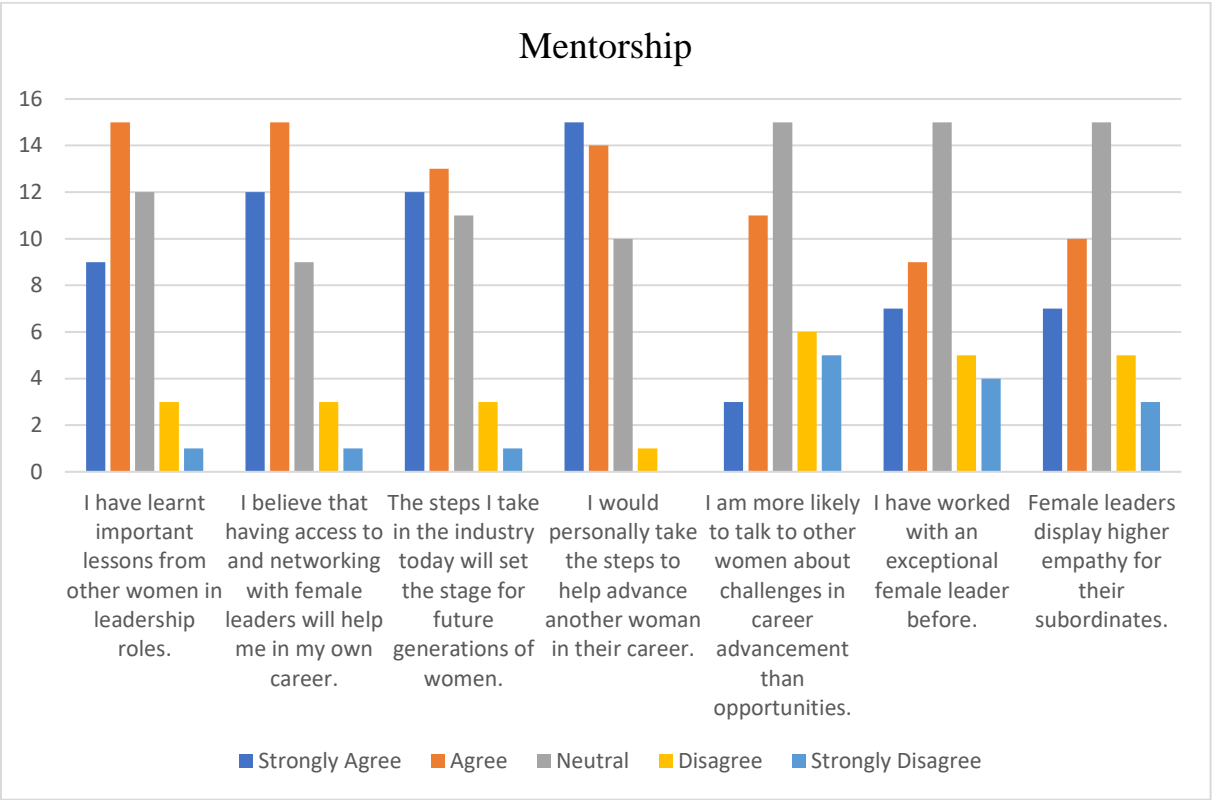


Figure 6. Displaying the results obtained for the Mentorship component of the questionnaire (n=40).

As indicated by **Figure 6.** above, most of the women agree with the first four statements on the mentorship component of the Likert scale questionnaire. The first two statements “I have learnt important lessons from other women in leadership roles”, and “I believe that having access to and networking with female leaders will help me in my own career” received twenty-four and twenty-seven cases of agreement in the Likert scale. This indicates a strong need for female presence in leadership roles to enable other women to believe that they can also progress into these positions one day, as well as helping them in doing so. The high demand for females to be involved in household duties deny them time for effective networking, in a manner where expertise can be swapped with the intention of using it to create a consciousness of the skills and

experiences necessary to develop into a successful leader. Therefore, a common problem is that women are deemed as feeble and less useful since their strengths must be set aside for domestic duties (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016).

The two other statements on “The steps I take in the industry today will set the stage for future generations of women”, and “I would personally take the steps to help advance another woman in their career”, received twenty-five and twenty-nine cases of agreement, respectively. This signifies that most female employees are willing to help their colleagues and other women in their career advancement journey. The other statements received mostly neutral standpoints where some women have worked with an exceptional female leader before or believe that female leaders display higher empathy. This could be due to the lack of female leaders in the pharmaceutical industry or female leaders having to adopt authoritative leadership styles to fit in. Leadership qualities are demonstrated by mentors for potential or aspiring women leaders delivering the expression ‘to lead by example’. It is understood by White *et al* (2018) that the use of role models motivates promising women through delivering suitable leadership behaviours expected to enhance organisational efficiency. There are fewer female role models that can be identified for females to gain knowledge from (Jack *et al.*, 2018). Arifeen (2010:6) states that mentoring is amongst the most important factors recognised as adding to the achievement of female managers and leaders. The existence of mentors can decrease work stress, because females might not have support groups to depend on for emotional support. Mentees are also expected to gain employment satisfaction which transforms into improved dedication to their job, additionally opening chances for career progression. White *et al* (2018) states that the impact of mentoring, uses objective and subjective experiences to create improved work fulfilment and loyalty to the company.

Some prospective female managers in South Africa, perceive entering the highly masculine top management ranks, also known as ‘the so-called 'old boys' network’, as a challenge (Jonkheid & Mango, 2008). Women often experience more difficulty in building social relations in the office, labour market research has deemed these relations as advantageous. The increased incidence of in person connections could result in discriminations at work regarding the manner that advancements, increases, and favouritism is dealt with (Cullen & Perez-Truglia, 2019). The examination of factors which inhibit females from progressing to leadership roles showed that cynicism amongst women occurred frequently, instigated by prevalent jealousy (Bednar & Gicheva, 2014). Females in leadership and underlings are the apparent source of women-centric cynicism in various aspects (Bednar & Gicheva, 2014). It is common for female leaders to separate themselves from subordinates when they progress to roles of power. They often embrace a somewhat autocratic management approach, wanting to grow to be as competitive as men in leadership, to demonstrate their determination (Bednar & Gicheva, 2014). Females were discovered to display a few

distinctive behaviours manifesting in top level managers that form blockades to the women in “grassroot” levels (Bednar & Gicheva, 2014). Rancor is expressed in inadequate female-to-female associations where obstacles emerged among the followers and leadership challenge (Jonkheid & Mango, 2008). Several studies reveal that women in senior management positions were mentioned as reluctant to share their knowledge with other females and opted to relate to their male associates challenge (Jonkheid & Mango, 2008). Female employees are still victimised alongside the obstacles to women leadership, women are inclined to portray low self-esteem resulting in an apparent damage to their level of confidence in applying for leadership roles, particularly noticed in the ‘ambition gap’ where a reduced amount of women choose to take a leap of faith, with the majority opting to stay in their comfort areas (Al-kayed, 2015). The understandings are reinforced by the national executive task force regarding females in the economy of South Africa, it was discovered that the need for attaining leadership roles in females often declines with time as they develop an awareness of the unfulfilled desires experienced by themselves and other women (Fischer, Kret & Broekens, 2018).

Table 3. Displaying the frequency of responses obtained for Self-confidence related questions on the questionnaire (n=40).

	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Median
2.	When I see more women in leadership roles, I am encouraged to get there myself.	25	8	7	0	0	7
4.	I wish that I had more leadership opportunities growing up.	16	15	9	0	0	9
5.	I was always taught to share my point of view.	6	13	14	5	2	6
6.	School and academics are where I felt most like a leader.	6	13	15	5	1	6
7.	I need more support in building my confidence to feel like I can become a leader.	16	14	9	1	0	9
14.	Receiving praise from management and mentors influences my perception of myself and boosts my confidence.	19	14	6	1	0	6
17.	I aspire to one day be in a senior leadership role.	14	8	14	4	0	8
21.	My own perseverance will accelerate my journey to leadership.	10	12	10	4	4	10

22.	I need to take greater ownership of my career.	10	12	11	4	3	10
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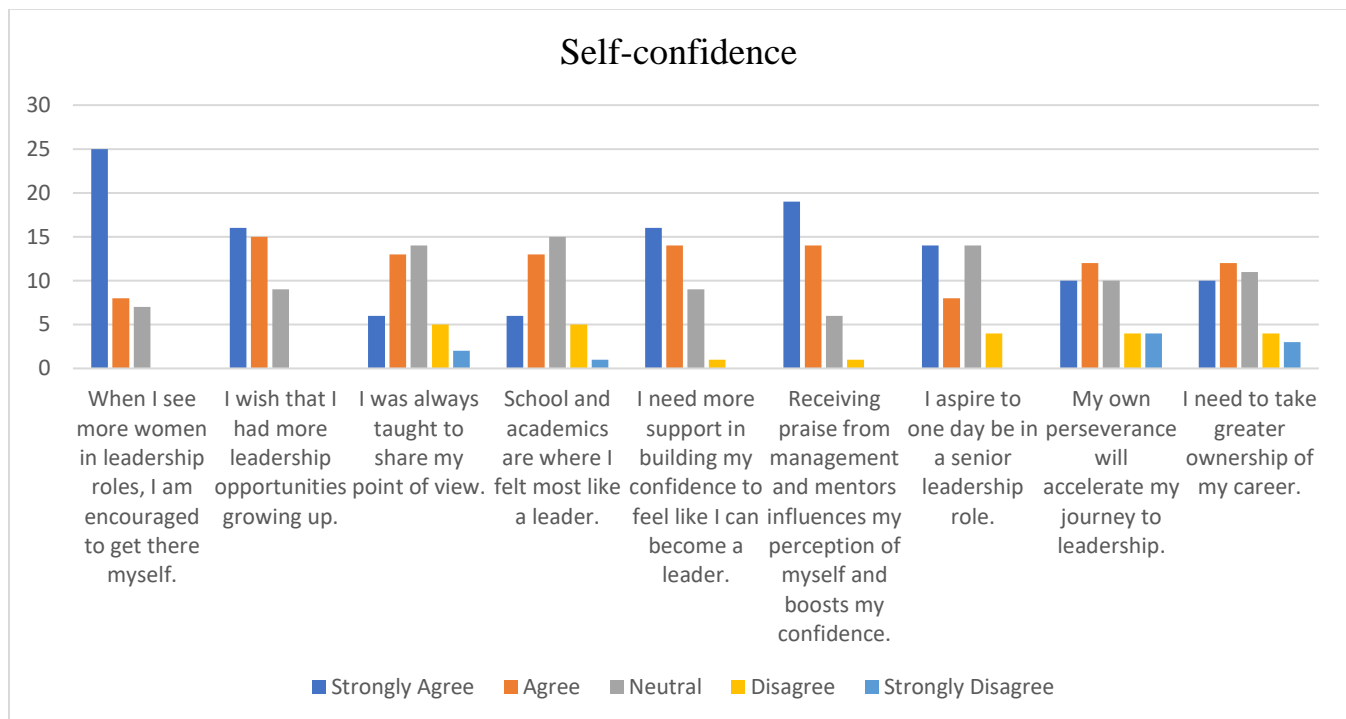


Figure 7. Displaying the results obtained for the Self-confidence component of the questionnaire (n=40).

Despite social opinions influencing the manner in which female leaders are assessed, these leaders are challenged by the formidable task of showing their worth. There is a common agreement that self-confidence founded on a healthy level of emotional intelligence (EQ) is expected to deliver a skillset comprised of self-awareness and being able to effectively handle feelings and interactions, representative of a strong anchor for leadership (Brescoll, Okimoto & Vial, 2018). Females in leadership roles are expected to efficiently oversee their EQ, which incorporates being able to observe emotions correctly, creating emotions for thought development, processing information as well as controlling emotions efficiently to encourage emotional and logical development (Brescoll, Okimoto & Vial, 2018). The self-confidence scale received very diverse agreement rankings. The statement that had received a high level of agreement is “When I see more women in leadership roles, I am encouraged to get there myself”, once again indicating that representation matters, allowing people to dream bigger. The women also wish that they had more leadership opportunities growing up indicating that female children are often not given these opportunities due to gender stereotypes in the household. The response was mixed for “I was always allowed to share my point of view, which may be attributed to cultural viewpoints where women’s opinions are regarded as insignificant. With the people that agree, it may be due to generational differences as the millennial

generation are often regarded as more opinionated. School and academics seem to be where most of the respondents excelled as most of these positions require a tertiary education however, once the individual enters the working world, they experience barriers preventing them from climbing up the ranks often remaining as an analyst or pharmacist for years. The respondents indicate that they require extra support in boosting their self-confidence to feel as if they could become a leader, this is often due to lack of presence of other female leaders or experiencing imposter syndrome where they doubt their abilities and find it difficult to accept their accomplishments. There was strong agreement for “receiving praise from management and mentors influences my perception of myself and boosts my confidence”, it is important to be recognised for work performed to tackle imposter syndrome and provide motivation to take on further tasks and responsibilities. The women also had mixed reviews as to whether they would want to be in senior leadership one day, this could be due to some respondents having more external responsibilities than others, as well some of the employees having lower self-confidence in their leadership capability. Ganiyu *et al* (2018) noted that females shunned away from leadership roles as they were afraid of being deemed unwomanly, tough, and unsympathetic to the requirements of other women, causing a decrease in their self-esteem. Consequently, it continues to be unusual to stumble upon many confident females that are brave enough to disregard this assessment (Hyllegard, Rambo-Hernandez & Ogle, 2017).

Most of the women believe that they are in charge of their own career progression and that their individual perseverance will speed up their leadership journey. They also believe that they need to take greater ownership of their career, where people often become comfortable or complacent when they are in a position for too long. Female employees are faced with biases that consider them feeble, compassionate, and not as dedicated to additional job activities such as overtime in comparison to their male colleagues. In addition, gender stereotypes have a tendency to intensify the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions (Cullen & Perez-Truglia, 2019). Considering the commonly shared social opinion, women view themselves as in a predicament, as there is little to no help available for these women holding leadership roles from their colleagues or members of the family. In fact, there is an increased expectation for females in leadership positions to outperform male equivalents. The stereotype found to be most popular is echoed in the widespread acceptance that ‘think manager, think male’ typecast implying that women in executive roles are believed to be useful only if they adapt towards masculine characteristics and traits as observed in the Great man theory of leadership (Beckwith *et al.*, 2016). Contrary to the above if they were to display the conventional feminine traits like being encouraging and nurturing, they are regarded as overly pleasant thus rendering them as frail (Mekonnen, 2017). These stereotypes have an anchorage in societal structures like the ‘spillover effect’ whereby societal gender norms influence managerial functions, pushing men and women in management positions to hold separate expectations. These beliefs tend to cause immense problems for potential women in leadership, therefore intensifying the obstacles and prejudices seen

through a flawed measurement. Rayyan (2017) identifies the dilemma females are confronted with in deciding to adapt to the common stereotype to be considered as a successful leader or taking the risk to endure the destructive social evaluation.

It was observed by Kalysh *et al* (2016) that female employees often possess an inferiority complex founded on cultural stereotypes that preserve the notion that allowing the boy child instead of the girl to be educated makes more financial sense since the girl will get married and continue to be beneath the custody of her husband (Kamalizeni, 2019). The influence of these opinions is regularly found in both African and Asian cultures, however it appears to be gradually declining, as females are now expending a considerable sum of time in formal or informal employment as well as universities (Kamalizeni, 2019). However, females remain in charge of most household duties therefore leading to apprehensions regarding their effectiveness in handling work pressures. An additional obstacle observed is seen in the absent or diminished assertiveness displayed by women in leadership expected to cause insubordination from both the men and women under them (Kamalizeni, 2019). Female employees may sometimes display an ‘ambition gap’ by rejecting leadership opportunities that might be presented to them in fear of being unable to balance their work and private lives especially with regard to motherhood duties (Kamalizeni, 2019).

Table 4. Displaying the frequency of responses obtained for Family Responsibility related questions on the questionnaire (n=40).

	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Median
18.	Women can cope with leadership positions and be able to take care of their families at home.	7	9	14	6	4	7
25.	Family responsibilities make it difficult to advance in my career.	9	12	9	7	3	9
27.	Maternity leave and other feminine responsibilities are impediments to selecting women as leaders.	9	10	13	4	4	9
28.	Women that want to reach the top in business are better off not having children.	6	7	15	8	4	7

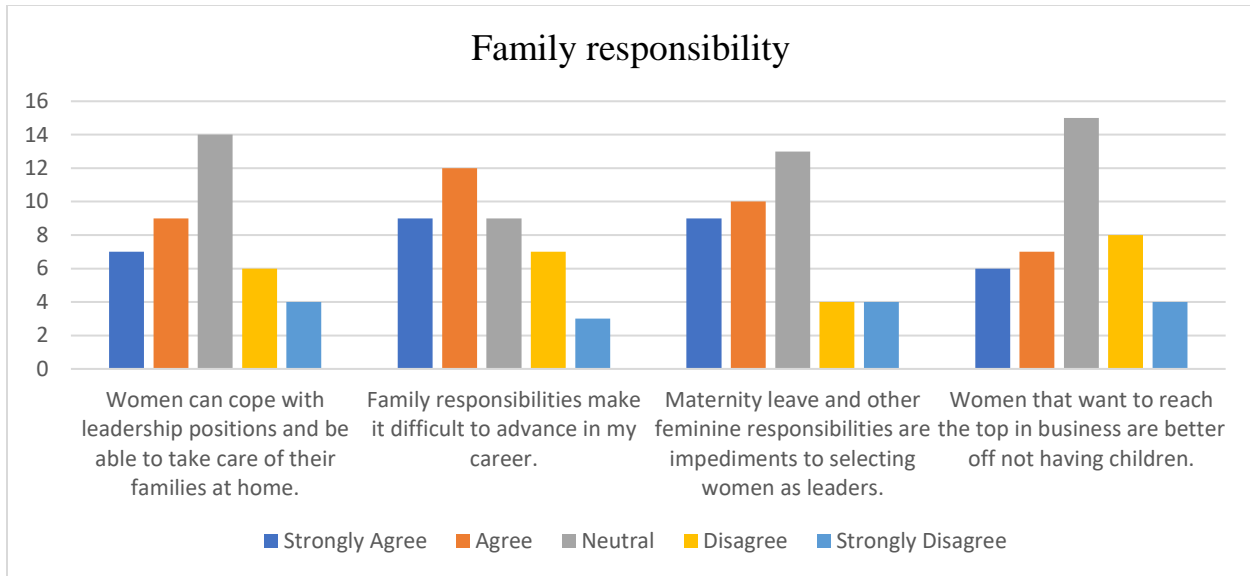


Figure 8. Displaying the results obtained for the Family Responsibility component of the questionnaire (n=40).

Although the majority of the respondents do not have a clear standpoint concerning family responsibility statements, there is a tendency of agreeing or remaining neutral for the majority of items. Many women believe that they can handle leadership positions as well as take care of their families in the household as this has received sixteen cases in total of some agreement, whilst there were also a high number of neutral responses. This means that it is possible and that some individuals are willing to go that extra mile to balance their lives however, it may be too overwhelming for other women that may have additional household duties with little to no help from their partners. McLellan & Uys (2009) reinforce this belief, suggesting that female employees should try to be more accommodating and employ skilled coordination and organisation of their work and personal lives. Mikkola & Miles (2004:6) states that, “gender hierarchy is manifested in family relationships, inheritance laws and customs; valuations of women’s work and its general invisibility; and the power to make decisions in society, the family, workplace, religious and other cultural institutions”. Therefore, it is due to the gender hierarchies that females are considered as inferior and of less value than males, whereas males may be offered a greater position and authority exclusively as a result of their gender (Mikkola & Miles, 2004). It is more common in rural neighbourhoods, where the gender hierarchy is a socio-cultural standard that both males and females acknowledge with no issues caused (Mikkola & Miles, 2004). Cultural and religious stereotypes are significant obstacles that hamper the development of women in every aspect of their lives as they associate males and females with particular responsibilities and duties (Malan, 2014).

The second statement on whether family responsibilities make it difficult to advance in my career has received twenty-one cases of agreement, this ties in with the previous statement as women are also expected

to take care of the children who often take priority over their career. Kabeer (2012) believes that irrespective of the different ethnicities, geographical locations and social class, society's interpretation of the role of women as wives and mothers are fundamental to their character. Regardless of how significant the monetary contribution of the women to the well-being of her family is, or her job title and level of education, as these remain of lesser significance to her status as spouse and mother. Cultural and traditional distributions of duties and socially recognized tasks means that it is women and girls that usually undertake the main accountability for unpaid duties at home, "these obligations pose a serious obstacle to women's labour force participation and have a major impact on their lives and well-being more broadly" (Esplen & Brody, 2007:12). The biases and prejudice in mutually the place of work and home allocate domestic obligations entirely to masculinity causing the woman to be overworked as these domestic duties are considered unmanly (Cullen & Perez-Truglia, 2019).

The statement that maternity leave and other feminine responsibilities are impediments to selecting women as leaders has received nineteen cases of agreement in general as well as a high number of neutral responses, this may indicate that the women may feel some level of judgement when they go on maternity leave. However, the statement that women that want to reach the top in business are better off not having children has received the most mixed review as there were almost equal amounts of agreement and disagreement, with neutrality being the majority of the respondents. Females are likely to experience intolerance throughout their pregnancy as they may not be able to perform particular tasks effectively or may require the assistance of other colleagues, deeming them weak. It is found by Rodden (2009) that females, that choose to delay getting married or motherhood, do so to reduce the pressure of managing the workplace and their responsibility as a mother and spouse in the household This is due to management roles often requiring extended hours at work and making sacrifices to meet targets. This can be observed in the demographics of this study with half the number of respondents being mothers and the other half having no kids, children are a big responsibility, and some women may see this as a deterrence to their career progression journey.

Table 5. Displaying the frequency of responses obtained for the role of the company in enabling in women leadership related questions on the questionnaire (n=40).

	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Median
1.	I believe that there is adequate commitment from the organisation to drive gender equity.	1	10	22	5	2	5
3.	Women leaders and managers at the organisation are treated and respected equally as male leaders or managers.	2	11	15	10	2	10
8.	The company uses appropriate incentives to encourage women in leadership.	4	7	13	13	3	7
9.	I feel comfortable pursuing a job opportunity beyond my experience.	6	9	17	6	2	6
10.	I feel comfortable asking for help with my career path plan.	6	8	14	8	4	8
11.	There are sufficient programmes for high performing women employees to develop into future leaders.	4	5	13	11	7	7
20.	Working hard alone is enough to help me with career advancement.	4	7	10	14	5	7
26.	Women leaders are held to higher standards than their male counterparts.	13	11	10	4	2	10
29.	The company needs to do more to retain high potential women so that they reach leadership levels.	14	16	10	0	0	10
30.	I have a good work life balance.	4	4	13	9	10	9

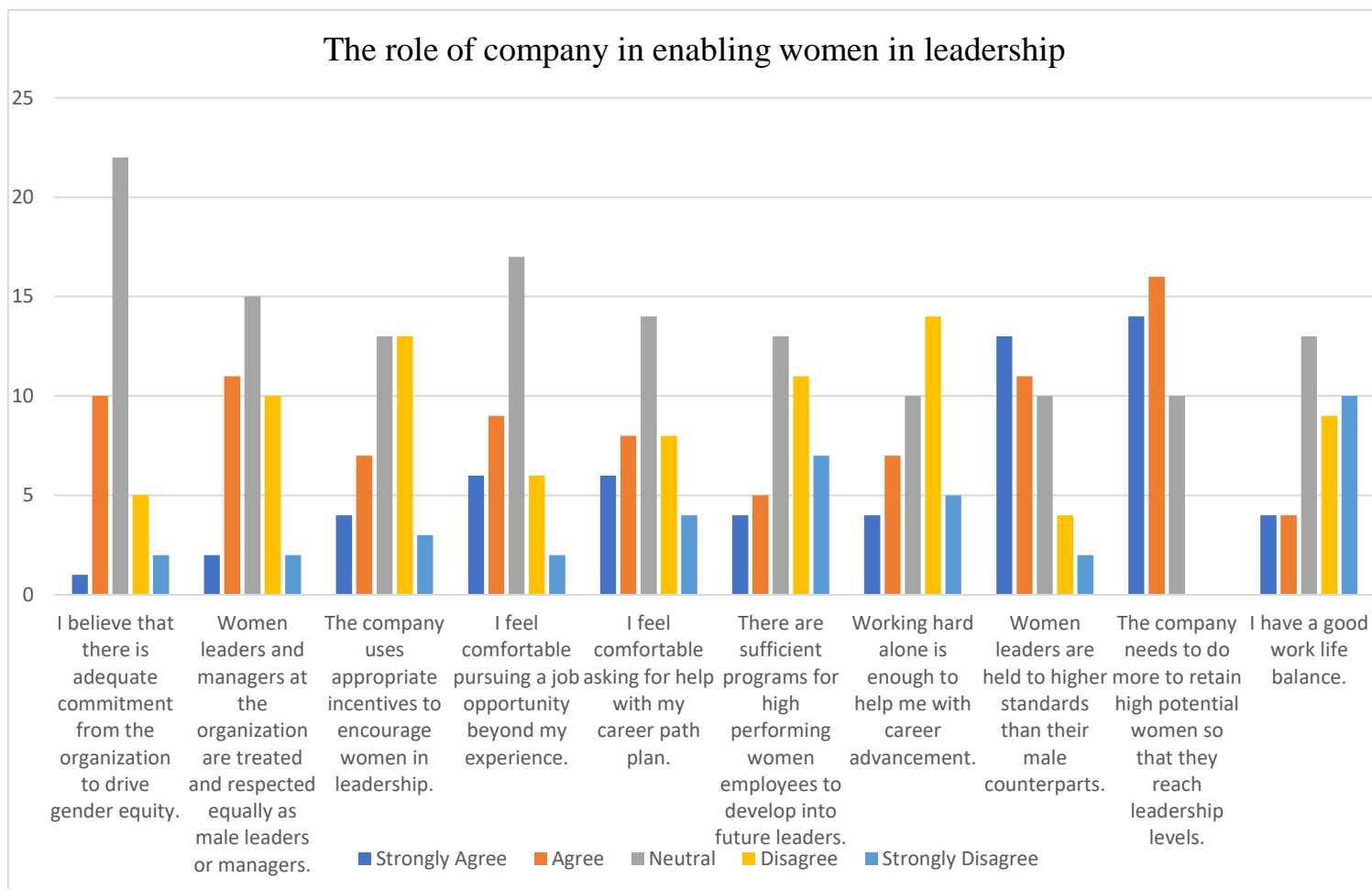


Figure 9. Displaying the results obtained for the role of the company in enabling in women leadership component of the questionnaire (n=40).

Female employees are often dejected when it comes to applying for leadership positions, it may be due to influence from their co-workers or occasionally by the level of difficulty that the position appears to be. The idea is backed by Eagly & Karau (2002), as they propose that, once females occupy leadership roles, they have a higher probability to face extra condemnation in comparison to males, owing to the apparent violation of gender roles. Most of the respondents remained neutral when asked if they believed that there was satisfactory commitment from the organisation to drive gender equity, with some women agreeing that there was adequate commitment and a few disagreeing. So, whilst some initiatives are in place, more programs are required to get everybody on board. Company resources need to be reimagined to include initiatives for fast-tracking gender inclusive leadership to enable females mainly in subordinate positions to be integrated. In agreement with this idea, Acquah *et al* (2017) recommends the financing of

comprehensive programs that promote women leader participation in decision-making. Employee performance is a significant building block of a company according to Abbas and Yaqoob (2009) and all factors that provide the basis for elevated performance needs to be analysed by companies, this may be accomplished by means of developmental programmes.

There were mixed views around the topic of whether female leaders are treated and respected equally as male leaders at the organisation, with the most respondents remaining neutral and an almost equal amount agreeing and disagreeing with the statement. The challenge as suggested by the Pew Research Center Social and Demographic Trends' (2015) is that females in the work environment have to make an additional effort, in comparison to males, to demonstrate their capabilities, this might suggest that there is still no expectation of females to have the ability to perform how males can, as baselines are established upon male capabilities. Many of the respondents disagreed or remained neutral when asked if the company uses appropriate incentives to encourage women in leadership. This can be remedied with the implementation of mentorship and sponsorship programmes. Most of the respondents remained neutral regarding their level of comfort in pursuing a job opportunity out of their experience followed by some level of agreement and others disagreeing. This can be an indication of low self-esteem and self-confidence. The respondents also remained neutral on if they were comfortable in asking for help with their career plan, whilst others displayed discomfort. The respondents chose to remain neutral or disagreed when asked if there were sufficient programs for high performing women employees to develop into future leaders. Many companies have graduate programs in place to accelerate high performing employees into management, this may be a viable option. Majority of the respondents feel that hard work alone is not enough to help them with career advancement therefore having more programs in place will be of benefit to the employees. The respondents agreed with the statement that women leaders are held to a higher standard to their male counterparts, this is often due to most leadership being male, and women have to try to fit in, if not then they are deemed as overly emotional or unable to lead. There was a unanimous response that the company has to do more to retain high potential female employees so that they reach leadership levels. It is common for employees to see their high performing colleagues leave for other companies, which has a detrimental effect to teams and overall performance. Most of the respondents disagreed or remained neutral when it came to them having a good work-life balance, which further indicates that women are faced with many occupational and domestic duties which they have to juggle. Various research has established that women being employed on a full-time basis experience challenges in balancing workplace and family obligations one or the other is expected to suffer, with the work seemingly being the target (Hill *et al.*, 2016). Females continue to suffer from the three-fold responsibility of family duties, laborious household chores, and high fertility rates. In Pakistan due to gender inequality, they are sometimes excluded from participating substantially in both the home and society (Khan & Bibi, 2011). Abalkhail (2017) noted that females employed in mid management

positions on a full-time basis in Saudi Arabia encountered difficulties in harmonizing work and family obligations, affecting the leadership effort at work preventing the individual from further progress into top executive positions. In the countries mentioned above, the predominant religious belief is Islam, in South Africa there are approximately 892 685 Muslims in the country according to a Stats SA's Community Survey 2016 (Stats sa, 2016). These cultural limitations are likely to affect a portion of the Muslim women in South Africa who follow Sharia Law whereby "it is established in sharia that it is impermissible for a wife to go out for work except with her husband's permission" (Dar-alifta, 2022). In the cultural and conventional viewpoint, females are required to accept a bigger role in their families as well as taking care of extended families, whilst males spend a small amount of time in the household and spend most of their free time away the family (Lantara, 2015). As to the role of company in enabling women in leadership, the majority of items received neutral rankings as can be seen in the grey colour that codes neutral standpoints. This can reveal that respondents did not want to divulge too much knowledge about this topic. In terms of the study this deems the efforts made by the pharmaceutical company in South Africa as satisfactory.

4.3 Conclusion

Chapter Four produced the results and analysis from this study, emphasising the major obstacles and reasons as to why women are not being represented more equally in top positions in the pharmaceutical industry with focus on a pharmaceutical company in South Africa for the purpose of this study. The study has highlighted low self-confidence, gender stereotypes, the responsibilities of women in the household, gender biases, insufficient mentorship initiatives and role models, and the oppression of females and their subservience perceived by males, as some of the major influences which deter females from reaching towards leadership roles. The chapter presented a perceptive demonstration of the analysis of data acquired from the questionnaires beginning with the demographics of the participants as well as their attitudes towards women empowerment in a pharmaceutical company in South Africa based on four key areas namely mentorship, self-confidence, family responsibility and the role of the company in enabling in women leadership.

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The previous sections delivered the framework that provided the basis and focal point of the study. The last chapter focusses on closing the interpretation of the findings obtained as conclusions and recommendations, established upon the research problems and purposes. As the conclusion encapsulates the important outcomes of the study, the pragmatic and theoretic effects are outlined by the recommendations, additionally providing ideas for future research to be conducted.

5.2 Research Objectives

The research objectives of the study were:

- To evaluate initiatives or programmes to empower women into leadership roles in the South African pharmaceutical industry.
- To determine if women have sufficient role models for their career development into leadership roles.
- To determine what are the barriers that women face, that hinders them from occupying leadership positions and how these barriers can be eradicated.

5.3 Summary of the findings

Various studies thus far have been centred on females in leadership however this study concentrated on female employees in the pharmaceutical industry, due to the high quantity of women who have inadequate representation in the industry. The pharmaceutical industry is highly important to the country's healthcare sector especially since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and is valued at around R50 464 050 000,00 in South Africa (Insider, 2021). This study discovered that, though females still have minimal representation in leadership positions in the chosen pharmaceutical company in South Africa, there are some efforts created to close the gap with a good level of commitment displayed by the company. The pharmaceutical company in South Africa can implement more programs, such as mentorship and sponsorship programs for prospective leadership and to retain talent. It was found that women often seek role models and representation matters, because when they see other women in top leadership positions, their self-confidence and ambition increases. It is important for the company to have networking opportunities during the working hours because it was found that women take on higher household responsibilities and often find it difficult to juggle their work and life duties therefore losing out on career

progression opportunities. This study will add to the already available literature surrounding the research area and in addition concludes with recommendations for pharmaceutical industry leaders and future researchers.

This study adopted a research design that was quantitative in nature, and questionnaires had been utilized for the data collection process. The chosen target population for this study encompassed female employees from the Quality department at a pharmaceutical company in South Africa with respondents ranging from mid-management, leadership-career, and entry level employees. The sampling technique that was selected was non-probability convenience sampling. The sample size consisted of 40 participants that were selected from the entire population in the Quality department. 5-point Likert scale questionnaires were created with closed-ended questions. Respondents shared their agreeability to various statements based on four main themes namely mentorship, self-confidence, family responsibility and lastly the role of the company in enabling women in leadership. The questionnaires were personally distributed to the respondents once they had agreed to participate in the study. The data from the results obtained was analysed using, Microsoft excel and was presented through graphical representation in the form of bar graphs and pie charts as well as frequency tables.

5.4 Findings from the research

Most of the respondents that participated in this study were single, but a good percentage of the women were married. A higher number of women did not have any children, but a somewhat comparable percentage did have children. The greater majority of women that participated in the study were not responsible for leading a team due to the organisational structure of the department. The pharmaceutical company in South Africa has an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Framework. The purpose is to formalise their dedication to encourage and strengthen EDI at every level, to preserve a culture of high performance. The current outlook together with the federated business model, is administered by a Global EDI agenda speaking to international standards and values about EDI. The company recognises that to protect market value, EDI programs, plans, policies, and practices needs to be ensured. By doing this a diverse, impartial, and inclusive work environment is sustained with the hope of creating an encouraging employee experience. The pharmaceutical company in South Africa believes that equity at work indicates that everybody experiences reasonable treatment and equivalent admittance to opportunities, whereas diversity is based on acceptance and respect founded on the understanding that due to our differences, every employee is exclusively valued. The pharmaceutical company in South Africa believes that it is important to continuously be committed to cooperative and deferential efforts to eliminate unconscious bias, inspire the involvement of all members of staff to foster inclusion, resulting in a significant cultural transformation.

From the above findings it is evident that the pharmaceutical company in South Africa does offer some degree of commitment and support to empower women however more programmes would be beneficial in order to enhance this hence mentorship programmes are vital. One specific programme of significance at the pharmaceutical company in South Africa is a women's forum where members get to choose one of three different challenges for their personal growth every month based on different themes. It is a highly motivating and encouraging platform that needs more outreach and awareness as participation is poor in terms of the company's female population.

This study found that women are highly likely to learn important lessons from female leaders and that networking with them can be very beneficial to their own career path. They also believe that what they do now paves the way for future generation as any progress, no matter how small has some significance and will eradicate some of the barriers experienced currently. As even the current situation is far ahead of what women experienced in the workplace in the past, without any laws protecting them from discrimination and harassment. The women would also personally take the necessary steps to help other women with the advancement of their careers, which is highly progressive as it is not uncommon for women to discriminate against each other due to jealousy. The women indicated that they are more likely to talk to women about challenges in career advancement opportunities possibly due to them relating more to common experiences not encountered by men. Although some of the women have worked with exceptional female leaders, most of the women remained neutral indicating the need for more strong female leaders in the pharmaceutical industry. More women agree that female leaders display a higher degree of empathy for subordinates which is beneficial for entry level employees finding their footing or employees with a difficult home life situation.

When women see more females in leadership roles they are encouraged to strive towards these roles, in the past it was almost unheard of to find a woman on a pharmaceutical board which would discourage one from reaching their full potential at work as they do not see the point. The women also wished that they had more leadership opportunities growing up, this often happens in households where girls are often seen as a burden to the family, as boys will one day grow up and take care of their parents whereas a girl will get married and leave the home, so they are tasked with more domestic duties. Most of the women felt comfortable in sharing their views. A lot of the women felt like school and academics is where they felt most like a leader, this is often because these are more neutral settings based purely on achievements. The women agree almost in unison that they need more support in building their confidence in becoming a leader and receiving praise from leadership and mentors will enable this. Lower self-confidence is often linked to imposter syndrome where women find it difficult to embrace their abilities and accomplishments, this is also why a mixed response was received to whether women aspire to be in leadership roles. This also could be due to them being uncomfortable displaying authoritative traits that are often associated with

leadership. The women believe that they are in charge of their own career progression, and they need to take greater ownership of their career to not fall victim to the ambition gap with time.

It was found that most of the women remained neutral regarding the ability to take care of one's family at home as well as cope with leadership positions with some agreeing or disagreeing completely. This is not surprising as the industry is very demanding on employees, that often work additional hours to ensure that lifesaving medication is available to patients. The study found that some women are restricted by family obligations, whilst others are not affected by it, this can be explained by some of the women being married or having kids creating greater responsibility in the household compared to single employees without kids having more free time. This highlights the need to assist potential woman leaders, to share some of their burdens, for example with childcare as they cannot handle the difficult pressures of leadership and their household duties and a consequence of this is women not being taken seriously as leaders if there are any visible signs of fatigue or emotion. The cognitive structures in society are difficult to change, and there is often a common perception about how males and females should conduct themselves and anything that deviates from this is received negatively and deemed unmanly or unwomanly. Many of the women agreed or remained neutral on maternity leave and other feminine responsibilities are obstructions to choosing female leaders possibly due to the employee being away from the company for such a long period makes it difficult for someone else to perform their critical function and the company would have to spend additional funds in hiring temporary staff to take on additional burdens. The women had mixed opinions on whether aspiring female leaders are better off not having children. This ties in with the statement on maternity leave where women see this as an impediment to leadership roles. With half the respondents having children, they will not see their motherhood responsibilities as a factor in achieving their goals. The women without children, most of which are part of the millennial generation are most associated with prioritising their education, careers and even pets over children and marriage.

The women are neutral as to whether the company is committed to driving gender equity with the large number of women also agreeing that there is commitment displayed. There was a highly mixed response from the women as to whether female leaders at the company are treated equally and respected in the same way as their male counterparts, with a lot of women agreeing or disagreeing but most remaining neutral. This could be due to the women occupying different positions and seniority levels therefore having diverse experiences. Most of the women remained neutral or did not believe that the company uses appropriate incentives to encourage women in leadership or has sufficient programs for talented female employee to develop into future leaders. The women also felt neutral about whether they would feel comfortable to

pursue an opportunity beyond their experience with some agreeing and others disagreeing, this can be linked to reduced levels of self-confidence as well as the growing ambition gap with age. The women disagree that working hard alone is enough to help with career advancement, they also believe that female leaders are held to higher standards than males. They strongly believe that the company needs to do more to retain their talented female employees so that they can develop into future leaders at a diverse organisation. Most of the women remained neutral or disagreed that they have a good work life balance further indicating the pressure faced by working women.

5.5 Recommendations for Increasing Women's Leadership in the pharmaceutical industry in South Africa

5.5.1 Inclusive Leadership and Communication

Senior leadership and executives in the pharmaceutical industry have the authority to transform the company cultures as well as the present status of women in leadership. Leadership teams can study global best practices demonstrating what is desirable for business. Additionally, the organisation can utilise workplace culture and diversity surveys to gain employee insight. One of the main key performance indicators (KPI's) should be the amount of commitment from senior leadership in addressing or taking measures to tackle the gender gaps. For an organisation to have integrity and a positive representation amongst their stakeholders, working on gender equity is of paramount importance. In areas where social and cultural, blockades remain in place to limit the employment of females, corporations can endorse the picture of the 'career woman' to assist in addressing the perceptions of the communities.

The tone of the workplace setting that is inclusive of gender and diversity must be put in place by senior leadership and this should easily be conveyed to the employees. If this is done genuinely, then it will provide the framework for an inclusive workplace culture, forming the basis for more actions to attain positive and significant outcomes. This means facilitating and leading discussions on gender equity and diversity and establishing the tone for courteous conduct in the work environment. Leadership can then authorise openness in HR activities, such as promotions and compensation impartiality as well as conveying a message of zero tolerance for prejudiced conduct or sexual harassment, through the establishment of disciplinary measures. There needs to be policies in place encouraging women in leadership and not just satisfying quotas for a 50/50 gender ratio of all employees. Outwardly, there are numerous prospects available for the pharmaceutical company in South Africa and their senior directors to display good governance on the matter. The pharmaceutical company in South Africa can be viewed as an employer of choice, consequently enticing talented potential female employees and leaders through the participation in

external initiatives, for example adopting the United Nations Women’s Empowerment Principles, or being involved in state and provincial gender initiatives. The fact that women are the highest consumers of pharmaceutical products, inspiring a workplace setting that is more inclusive may be an optimal financial choice for the organisation.

5.5.2 Analyse Talent Management Data, Establish Targets and Develop a Strategy

In order to have an improved insight into gender subtleties and increasing the presence of women in leadership positions, it is favourable for the pharmaceutical company in South Africa to undergo a detailed investigation of the talent management system. This must be done by viewing it through a “gender lens” frequently gender-disaggregating their complete set of employment statistics. The percentage of male and female representation on the executive board need to be reviewed, as well as C-suite, middle management, and every additional area of the corporation. The percentage concerning the gender analysis by job function needs to be reviewed to establish if gender patterns are evident in the number of males and females that are employed for roles and if there are unseen prejudices in the staffing procedure that must be removed. Standard practices can be elevated without exposing the age, sex, matrimonial status, and further discriminatory features. The skills that are necessary for senior leadership roles need to be examined to see if they are dissimilar from the roles in the primary labour force. Research needs to be conducted to determine if females in the talent pool are in a disadvantaged position and what procedures can be undertaken to tackle the disparities. The statistical rates for promotions by gender and level need to be determined to see if males and females have equal representation, if more time is required for females to be promoted to higher positions than males and, what are the contributing reasons if yes. A gender pay gap investigation must be conducted to find out if some inexplicable disparities in compensation among males and females are occurring within the company. The equitable compensation to women, inclusive of every level in their career, is a major determining factor in occupational progression, due to it enabling them to create the required arrangements to deal with household matters and hold a job. It is important for HR to attain worker opinion by means of employee engagement evaluations, focus groups and individual sessions. By undertaking an evidence-centred method, corporations can create personalised procedures and put in place the suitable aims and targets for enhancing the work culture, improving the talent pipeline of prospective female employees and leaders, and creating targeted employment plans for leadership roles.

5.5.3 Leadership Development, Mentorship Programmes and Networks

In pharmaceutical industry employee surveys and additional studies, it is not surprising, that an emphasis on education, mentorship and added professional training programs are frequently mentioned as the primary

answers for improving female representation in leadership. However, the number of organisations with a proper leadership and mentorship and management training programme in place is far and few. Following labour laws related to gender like maternity leave and tackling harassment is essential to encouraging female leadership. It is important for the pharmaceutical company in South Africa to have an open-door policy and anti-sexual harassment committee to focus on every kind of matter of females in the workplace, making them feel comfortable to come forward with issues without fear of being further discriminated against or victimized. Resource groups at the organisation like women's networks and forums are vital to creating a future leader pipeline and eliminating obstacles related to entry into senior leadership positions, self-confidence, and involuntary prejudice. Having in place official mentorship and sponsorship programmes, introduced, and managed by the business, enables the discussion on the path towards developing and maturing skills, providing chances for advanced projects and allowing senior executives, and male managers, to have an improved understanding of the apprehensions and challenges faced by their female co-workers. Through the support of large-scale staff resource groups like the women's network and connected outside prospects, the pharmaceutical company in South Africa could empower employees to identify more with role models that are women; reinforce their empathy with co-workers and the firm; and decrease the separation of female subject matter experts and innovators that might be thinking of leaving the company.

Initiatives that are funded by the company that take place during the working day can in addition make sure that all employees with household support duties preceding work times are included. In developing countries specifically, endeavours can be put in place to recognize women employees that are extremely gifted having a high capability and guarantee that they will be incorporated in the mentorship and preparation curricula as well as being offered developmental tasks. HR can finance in provision of the suitable and leadership and management training programs that have the most impact on the organisation and the career progression of the employee. The programs need to be founded on talent advancement, development, skillset evaluation, response processes and objective statistics to make sure that employees receive the correct expertise and knowledge both practical and soft. This is necessary to ensure that the employee will be able to carry out tasks effectively, increasing the probability of them being promoted. Wherever applicable, it is also important to provide prospective exceptional intermediate-career females with executive-level training and complementary formal coaching programmes. It is important to hold organised seminars intended at boosting the number of women in leadership positions, risk decision-making, innovation management, and tactical agility. Providing female employees with training boosts their knowledge, ability as well as their self-confidence. Providing leave for any training and educational programmes is also essential to not overwhelm employees. Supporting new professionals in the early stages

of their career reinforced by strong career progression proposals also creates confidence from the onset through career advising.

Those individuals that have been selected as mentors should follow specific rules to form a valuable association with the mentees. They should continually try to be on the side of the mentee, considering what is best for the individual instead of just the company's interest. The mentors need to have adequate knowledge and understanding of the company to offer guidance equally reliable and of value. A safe space needs to be created for discussions to inspire open deliberations, guaranteeing the transmission of valuable results, and collaborative problem resolutions. The mentor needs to make sure that mentees are consciously thinking of their future and proactively driving their careers. When mentorship programmes are conducted efficiently, the advantages can be far-reaching as they assist the persons directly concerned as well as the company. Mentorship offers a key source of allegiance, because knowing that somebody is invested in your personal accomplishment is a major reason to remain at the business. Mentors assist in reducing prejudices and levelling the playing field, particularly for females, by means of advocating for the mentees in important discussions making sure that a genuine image of the ability of the mentee is presented. All of this assists in reducing undesirable attrition creating a healthy talent pool. Expanding on the benefits of a mentorship program at the pharmaceutical company in South Africa, a sponsor may perform a crucial role by proactively dedicating themselves to the career accomplishment of co-workers, mostly lower-level employees. A sponsor usually has a larger investment as compared to a mentor, thus, deriving greater satisfaction from the success of the 'sponsee'. In recognition of the advantages explained above, it is crucial that the company takes the necessary measures to create a workplace environment that supports and enthusiastically encourages mentorship and sponsorship programmes at every level. The subsequent move that would pay off instantaneously would be, ensuring that every female middle-manager and higher have a proper mentor or sponsor.

It is also a good practice to give praise to colleagues and assist them in earning acknowledgement for the significance they give to the group, developments, and company. If a co-worker completes an important or difficult project or makes an additional effort to assist a co-worker or the company, they should be applauded. Virtual platforms can be created to appreciate co-workers for certain tasks allowing fellow colleagues including their direct manager to be aware of their efforts. These appreciation posts can also be created in line with the credos and values of the company and be linked to a rewards system. A cooperative company spirit needs to be created that raises and acknowledges each other, and in turn employees will respond positively by enabling their colleagues' achievements to be honoured and published.

5.5.4 Fostering Gender Equity and Diversity in the pharmaceutical industry in South Africa

Senior leadership executives need to lead by example as it either begins or stops with them. Direct reports need to be encouraged to develop a minimum of one or two females as prospective replacements. It is important to understand the present reality using analytical tools to correctly identify the level of gender equity at the company. When communicating with female employees' assumptions should not be made about what they require in the workplace. A chosen end point must be kept in mind and acknowledge that achieving it will involve a long process. There needs to be clear objectives and goals, and not necessarily quotas where targets are established and tracked. Preceding this the resultant consequences, that are either positive or negative should then be and implemented similar to procedures related to financial targets. Metrics that are based on culture for example employee's eNPS scores, used to measure employee engagement and loyalty, in combination with demographics, is a helpful gauge of opinion.

To make a business case for gender diversity at the company, data, and examples outside and within the company to display the advantages should be considered while simultaneously acknowledging that opposition to change might occur. If it possible there should be males championing the concept and not just women as men are often more influenced by other men and doing so aids in preventing an "us vs. them". There is a high risk in smaller minority groups pushing forward an agenda even when a lot of men might be okay with the idea. There is a necessity for individuals that are established in their positions, holding some authority, to motivate for the transformation plan; thus men, who hold the majority of senior leadership roles, are essential in the quest for gender diversity. The CEO and executive committee commitment have to be visible to employees and multiyear goals with yearly targets need to be set. It is critical to guarantee that the message is conveyed to each level, and the employees that make the effort to achieve them are compensated and acknowledged. There should be a main transformation champion at every level, particularly senior management that are overseeing mid-level managers. At this level talent is regularly wasted therefore a sponsorship backbone of support needs to be created at the company, cascading the commercial benefits of diversity down the support system reinforcing them regularly. Offering assistance to female in middle managers, that are the talent pipeline for potential business leaders, needs to be a focal point for companies that choose to keep and promote women into higher positions. A no tolerance policy needs to be applied to any harassment as well as increasing awareness of undesirable experiences and consequences to perpetrators. A work setting that is nonviolent, inclusive, and relaxed is critical to safeguarding those personnel are pleased to continue working for the company as well as being encouraged to develop and represent the business. This creates a space for people to communicate about harmful encounters and the way in which these experiences have influenced them. In South Africa damaging events

experienced at work impact males nearly as regularly as females. A company where such incidents, and the conduct that triggers them, goes unchecked will find it difficult to form a solid business advocacy which can impede the bottom line. The intolerable actions like jokes of a sexual or racist sort should not be tolerated and a means to emphasize the zero-tolerance policy is for the company to have transparency, without forgoing privacy, with cases reported that have been resolved to establish vigilance and create confidence.

5.5.5 Nominate Women to Company and Industry Boards

The pharmaceutical company in South Africa would benefit from increasing the representation of females on the company and industry boards. It is important for the company to deal with issues through attempting to attain gender parity. The recommendation is to have a target of a minimum 30 percent of either males or females on the board to guarantee a good representation. Senior executives can commence through increasing the quest for brand-new members of the board outside the narrow pool and appoint more females.

5.5.6 Ensure Work life Integration

To effectively deal with the task of overseeing job and household obligations, the pharmaceutical company in South Africa may offer flexible working hours to employees, except those that are required to work shifts due to production constraints, irrespective of gender and marital status. The company should also show some support to employed parents and personnel that may have duties for other members of the household like young siblings or aging parents and grandparents. Effective communication and support to use the flexible working options is crucial for decreasing stigmas; conquering prejudices that visibility is constantly equal to efficiency; and improving perceptions. Adaptable workplace agreements like as home-based work, reduced working times, alternate work plans, and part-time plans should be tailored to the business role and position for it to happen successfully as the pharmaceutical industry is highly demanding. A phased approach for re-entry plans following maternity leave would assist mothers to balance out conflicting pressures, operate with a higher efficiency and stay within the company, as the period that occurs after maternity leave is often when companies lose gifted female personnel. The provision of adequate parental and family leaves is key to addressing barriers of work-life conflict. It is normal in most industries, to have minimal days of paternity leave with a range of five to fifteen days motivated by legal guidelines. There needs to be reasonable involvement of fathers in the care of kids as this is a significant element for allowing females to be successful in the workplace. Through offering additional leave to new parents and parental leave for adoptive parents and guardians, the company can create a more equal setting for females with leadership ambitions. Other areas of care can be found in the presence of lactation hours and available areas

for new mothers as well as offering on-site day-care, or third-party day-care suppliers and back up support for elderly and ill relations. Financial support in the form of vouchers, reimbursements and school subsidies can successfully deal with the childcare concerns encountered by employed parents. Confronting childcare concerns does not have to be expensive yet will have a significantly rewarding impact for the employees and the company.

5.5.7 Engage with Men

Without the effective engagement of men, all of the recommendations mentioned thus far will not be able to be executed effectively. Males that occupy leadership positions must set the correct tone for leadership that is inclusive; address matters concerning sexual harassment; make sure that the appropriate procedures are established and applied; and in the event of problems HR and management should be held accountable. Due to the pharmaceutical industry having a high number of males in senior leadership roles, these men can assist in mentoring their female colleagues, actively involving female-run companies in the business's supply chain process and act as change champions through the nomination of more females to boards and further leadership roles. Male co-workers, need to demonstrate proper work conduct to support gender equality. They also can support better work flexibility through applying adaptable work schedules if the option becomes available; taking part in exercises and discussions on gender-based matters; and utilising their employment benefits like paternity leave. It is also necessary to create a comfortable work environment so that female co-workers believe that they are appreciated. This can be achieved by simple acts like not partaking in sexist jokes, prohibiting colleagues that are women from events, or remaining silent while a female co-worker is harassed.

Men in the pharmaceutical industry to strive to create transformation from the bottom up through educating the next generation on gender diversity issues. The close family background plays an important part in improving gender equality, through the creation of domestic role models of either gender that confront conventional stereotypes. Similarly, the stereotypical responsibilities of kids in the household should be re-examined as ambition is influenced by family support. Females that do not aspire towards senior executive positions often state that their relatives do not support gender equality. Gender equity in the work environment has an influence on the wider topic of gender equity in the public. All-inclusive endeavours are necessary to construct encouraging transformations as there is still a lengthy journey to embark on prior to communities completely believing in equivalent job prospects for males and females. Altering attitudes requires patience and involves a determined attempt by people to make changes, however several success stories demonstrate where developments have occurred. The distinctive past of South Africa has an impact on how these may be used.

There are many useful approaches to generate understanding of gender equality issues such as communicating about in-person experiences, in a place where personnel are encouraged to share a destructive incident, that occurred at work, and how it affected them. The method is especially useful when encountering lack of respect and sexual harassment at a company. In addition, there can be a wider group that embark on a business writing task where every individual writes an explanation of what an “inappropriate conversation” would entail. Persons can leave red and green labels to denote the themes that they identify with the best compared to the topics that not.

5.5.8 Creating a Thriving Plan to stay on track

Even though it is important in South Africa to address critical factors such as social customs and company culture to achieve gender equality, every woman can adopt the necessary measures to find their individual journey to their career peak. Women in the pharmaceutical industry need to be proactive in gaining knowledge from other people, composing a plan for career and personal growth to monitor the route, and encourage other individuals with their plans. Women in the pharmaceutical industry must have some career intention and connect it to a greater extent to their overall life, as there are often regrets when people reflect on how they could have been more mindful of their professional and individual aspirations and staying on the path to attain them with time. The creation of a Thriving Plan can assist in achieving this. An important component of occupational longevity is feeling as if you are flourishing, workwise and individually and not just excelling at work. Achievements at work may feel good but does not certainly provide the necessary ability to follow a long-term career. When a person is thriving, it involves them to have more holistic thoughts around their job and individual ambitions, allowing more energy to follow them. Thriving entails specific thinking and planning for whatever an individual wants to be recognized for and what inspires them each day. It is beneficial to purposely allocate a moment in time to think about the way to thrive, creating a continuous navigation with purpose. The development of a plan does not guarantee that it will go smoothly as with time and a long-term career, numerous workplace and individual experiences will need decisions to be made regarding how to stay thriving. Individuals that do not enthusiastically make sure that they are keeping on the ‘thriving path’ frequently discover that they have wandered off.

Thriving is simpler when one has the support of the people closest to them whose encounters teach them important lessons, and those people that offer objective viewpoints, holding you responsible to your long-term priorities and aspirations, supporting you each day. When an individual’s plan is complete, they should pursue further ways through which they can assist more women. There is an awareness, crossing race and gender, that females are not continually supportive of each other and their professional advancement. An excellent approach to do this is to ask female colleagues about their Thriving Plan and anything which they

are concentrating on and in what manner you can provide assistance for example being a part of somebody's support structure in helping them attain consciousness within their careers.

5.1 Future Research

It is suggested that additional studies be conducted at other pharmaceutical companies in South Africa serving as comparative studies, to observe the percentage of females in leadership positions and the initiatives that they have executed to make sure that women employees in leadership positions are offered further prospects. Future studies could also examine male views on similar questions to form a baseline for better understanding the issues that are person-centric and which are female-centric.

5.2 Delimitations

The focal point of the study is centred on the Quality department at a pharmaceutical company in South Africa. The research may perhaps have been extended to more departments at the company however owing to scheduling and work restrictions, this study happened to be restricted to just one department.

5.3 Limitations

The term limitations refer to possible vulnerabilities in a study that are not in the control of the investigator (Peterkin, 2014). This study merely pursued 40 respondents from one department, at a single pharmaceutical company in South Africa due to time and travel constraints. The sample size could have been increased if probability sampling was included to gain more accurate results. The population chosen only comprised of female employees, it would be beneficial to also gain an insight on male employee's views on women empowerment as they too have a direct impact on the progression of females be it their colleagues, relatives, or spouses. The results obtained were mostly neutral opinions therefore it cannot be generalisable across the entire pharmaceutical industry in South Africa.

5.4 Conclusion

The previous segment included the recommendations of this study and proposed further research in the future the research areas. Considering the findings, of this study respondents agreed that there are hidden barriers faced by women in the industry preventing them from moving into better positions. The barriers were most associated with gender and cultural stereotypes together with the belief that female employees must work extra hard to establish themselves at work compared to their male colleagues. There are also barriers experienced in the form of domestic responsibilities at home inclusive of childcare and chores, being a career woman but expected to also perform as a housewife. In addition, it was discovered that women employees desire more role model women leaders, at the pharmaceutical company in South Africa, that can mentor and inspire them towards leadership roles, providing support and guidance to ambitious and talented women. Even though the pharmaceutical company in South Africa has made substantial advances in the direction of gender parity in the work environment, there remains a lengthy journey ahead. Gender equity is not merely a concern of pursuing targets, the company needs to put in place policies for women to be able to succeed and for them to gain the business benefits that diversity may bring about. The pharmaceutical company in South Africa makes a significant effort to encourage the development of women into leadership roles, plans, and structures and implement further programmes to ensure that the environment is conducive of women empowerment into leadership roles. Women in this industry are often doomed to fall into the ambition gap or leave for external opportunities. As a result of this research, some of the organisational, social, and personal factors that hinder a woman's capability of reaching the top has been uncovered.

Acknowledging, accepting, and honouring gender diversity are difficult for most companies, but prioritising this has a high reward when executed properly. In companies, diversity endeavours must start at the top, where CEO's spearhead the transformations, focusing on the mid level of the company which is considered the talent pipeline and tracking and evaluating progress. However, everybody must participate in altering the status quo, be it in their own capacity as an employee, an executive or as a part of society. As the quantity of women in leadership roles increase the company will be in a superior position to improve the diversity of clinical trials, enhance innovation, and accurately and conscientiously market medication that are related to female health. There is a need for purposeful hiring processes having women take the lead in marketing efforts for products that treat illnesses that disproportionately impact the female population. Attempting to develop leadership teams and work forces with higher gender-diversity will continue to be sluggish unless blind spots are addressed, only then can the company develop their pipeline of prospective women leaders. Authenticity is key for prospective female leaders, there are various leadership styles and guidance however not everything will be suitable as everyone is unique and must discover what works for

them and the company. Leadership does not always mean agreeing with or appealing to everyone, but the most important factor is leading with integrity, high ethical behaviour and believing in one's own ability. Women aspiring to leadership roles need to create their individual roadmap influencing the route to follow to accomplish their objectives which does not always involve linear progression, requiring some detours. Female employees at the pharmaceutical company in South Africa have a high potential and capability to be top level leaders, provided that they are supported, granted opportunities, and receive the necessary mentorship.

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APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire

THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN LEADERSHIP SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete this survey and return it to Raeesa Dawood by December 23, 2021.

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

Please answer all of the questions below.

1. Please indicate your marital status:

Single () Married ()

2. Please indicate if you have any children:

Yes () No ()

3. Are you currently responsible for leading a team?

Yes () No ()

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I believe that there is adequate commitment from the organization to drive gender equity.					
2. When I see more women in leadership roles, I am encouraged to get there myself.					
3. Women leaders and managers at the organization are treated and respected equally as male leaders or managers.					
4. I wish that I had more leadership opportunities growing up.					
5. I was always taught to share my point of view.					
6. School and academics are where I felt most like a leader.					
7. I need more support in building my confidence to feel like I can become a leader.					
8. The company uses appropriate incentives to encourage women in leadership.					
9. I feel comfortable pursuing a job opportunity beyond my experience.					
10. I feel comfortable asking for help with my career path plan.					
11. There are sufficient programs for high performing women employees to develop into future leaders.					
12. I have learnt important lessons from other women in leadership roles.					

13. I believe that having access to and networking with female leaders will help me in my own career.					
14. Receiving praise from management and mentors influences my perception of myself and boosts my confidence.					
15. The steps I take in the industry today will set the stage for future generations of women.					
16. I would personally take the steps to help advance another woman in their career.					
17. I aspire to one day be in a senior leadership role.					
18. Women can cope with leadership positions and be able to take care of their families at home.					
19. I am more likely to talk to other women about challenges in career advancement than opportunities.					
20. Working hard alone is enough to help me with career advancement.					
21. My own perseverance will accelerate my journey to leadership.					
22. I need to take greater ownership of my career.					
23. I have worked with an exceptional female leader before.					
24. Female leaders display higher empathy for their subordinates.					
25. Family responsibilities make it difficult to advance in my career.					
26. Women leaders are held to higher standards than their male counterparts.					
27. Maternity leave and other feminine responsibilities are					

impediments to selecting women as leaders.					
28. Women that want to reach the top in business are better off not having children.					
29. The company needs to do more to retain high potential women so that they reach leadership levels.					
30. I have a good work life balance.					
1.10 Additional Comments on how to improve the empowerment of women leadership:					

APPENDIX 2: Gatekeeper's letter



Aspen SA Manufacturing Operations (Pty) Ltd

Robbie de Lange Road, Wilsonia, East London, 5201

PO Box 422, East London, 5201 Registration No: 1992/004769/07

Tel +27 43 705 7000 Fax +27 43 745 2130 www.aspenpharma.com

Dear Raeesa Dawood,

Re: Permission to Conduct Research

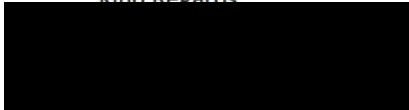
Permission is granted for Raeesa Dawood to conduct research on the topic:

The empowerment of women leadership: A case in the South African pharmaceutical industry.

On the basis that Ms. Dawood will ensure that:

1. All responses will be treated with complete confidentiality in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal.
2. Personal Information provided by the participants in the study will be handled in compliance to the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013.
3. The thesis will be submitted to the Governance and Ethics Officer for review prior to submission.

Kind Regards



Dranson Doshman
Head of HR

APPENDIX 3: Ethical Clearance letter



09 December 2021

Raeesa Dawood (209510545)
Grad School Of Bus & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear R Dawood,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00003659/2021
Project title: The empowerment of women leadership: A case in the South African pharmaceutical industry.
Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 26 November 2021 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

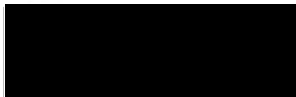
This approval is valid until 09 December 2022.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campus: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

APPENDIX 4: Informed letter of consent

Dear colleagues

My name is Raeesa Dawood. I am currently a master's student from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am engaged in research work for the completion of the master's in business administration qualification. I have selected the Quality department as the study site, and you are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research. The title of my research is: The empowerment of women leadership: A case in the South African pharmaceutical industry.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the empowerment and representation of women in leadership positions in the pharmaceutical industry. As well as to evaluate initiatives or programs to empower women into leadership roles in the pharmaceutical industry. The study will also aim to determine if women have sufficient role models for their career development into leadership roles and, to determine what are the barriers that women face, that hinders them from occupying leadership positions and how these barriers can be eradicated. Gender diversity and inclusion within the pharmaceutical workforce is integral to optimal patient care. This highlights the need towards gender equity and discussing the key initiatives required to progress towards this agenda in the pharmaceutical workforce. The study is expected to enrol 40 participants of which are female and have roles in the Quality department at Aspen SA Operations.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number HSSREC/00003659/2021). All the information will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed to the company or the management team. The only person with access to information will be Professor Theuns Pelsers (MBA supervisor) and I. All written reports and accounts of this study will not reveal the people involved in the study. The information gathering process will not harm or deform characters of the participants. The data generating process will not put research site into disrepute.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at:

Raeesa Dawood Cell: 073 031 3419 E-mail: 209510545@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Professor Theuns Pelsers Cell: 0833240402 E-mail: pelsers@ukzn.ac.za

or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this research is voluntary (and that participants may withdraw participation at any point), and that in the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the participants will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which they are normally entitled. The researcher acknowledges that information provided by the Participant during the term of this research topic may contain Personal Information, the handling or Processing of which may be subject to applicable data protection requirements and/or legislation, which includes the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013, and Aspen SA Operations Data Privacy Policy. The Researcher agrees that it will take appropriate measures to ensure compliance with all such data protection requirements and/or legislation.

Declaration:

I understand that:

- My participation in the research is voluntary and subject to informed consent.
- I can withdraw from the research process at any time.
- Participants' rights will be respected.

- The information obtained will be used with the strictest of confidentiality.
- My identity will not be disclosed in the thesis.
- The research will not impact on my working time.

I _____ (name of participant) have been approached to participate in the research entitled “The empowerment of women leadership: A case in the South African pharmaceutical industry”. I hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time. I agree to participate in a study that Raesa Dawood is conducting. If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at:

Raesa Dawood Cell: 073 031 3419 E-mail: 209510545@stu.ukzn.ac.za

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Name of participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 5: Turnitin Similarity Report

The empowerment of women leadership: A case in the South African pharmaceutical industry.

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